

Students' Voices on Gamified Grammar Learning: Exploring Kahoot As A Digital Tool for Understanding Parts of Speech

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Abstract

Grammar is an important component in English language learning, but it is often perceived as difficult and boring by EFL learners, especially when it comes to Parts of Speech. This perception generally arises from the use of traditional learning methods that focus on memorizing rules and mechanical exercises without communicative context. Therefore, a more interactive and engaging learning approach is needed to increase student motivation and involvement. This study aimed to explore the perceptions and experiences of EFL students in using Kahoot as a gamified medium for learning Parts of Speech. This study used a descriptive qualitative design involving 19 students from the English Education Study Program at a private university in Indonesia. Data were collected through participatory observation and semi-structured interviews, then analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña data analysis model. Data validity was ensured through data source triangulation. The results showed that the use of Kahoot increased students' motivation and engagement in learning, created positive affective experiences, helped them understand Parts of Speech, and encouraged more active social interaction in the classroom. These findings indicate that Kahoot is an effective gamification medium to support grammar learning in the context of EFL. This study recommends using Kahoot as an alternative to more interactive and engaging strategies for grammar learning.

Keywords: Gamification, Kahoot, Grammar, Parts Of Speech, EFL Learning

Introduction

Grammar has long been recognized as a fundamental component in mastering English language skills. Furthermore, grammar is one of the primary foundations for mastering English, both in receptive and productive skills. Nassaji and Fotos (2011) emphasize that the role of grammar teaching has long been debated. However, empirical evidence suggests that learners still require explicit guidance on linguistic forms to communicate accurately and appropriately. However, field practice shows that many EFL learners view grammar as difficult, boring, and tending to "burden" the learning process. When grammar teaching focuses too much on memorizing rules and mechanical exercises, students often experience boredom and low engagement. This finding is consistent with the book *Teaching Grammar in Second Language Classrooms*, which highlights that grammar learning that is detached from communicative contexts often fails to motivate students and makes it difficult to transfer knowledge to real language use (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011).

However, this aspect remains one of the most challenging for EFL learners to master. Research indicated that some students perceive grammar as a burden, which impacts their confidence and writing fluency (Lutfiyah et al., 2025). This view arises mainly when grammar is taught through traditional methods that are mechanical, repetitive, and lack real-world context. Traditional grammar instruction dominated by rule memorization and mechanical drills often leads to learner disengagement, low motivation, and perceptions of grammar as monotonous or difficult (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). Previous studies have shown that students encounter various difficulties when learning grammatical structures, indicating the need for a more varied and engaging approach to help them understand sentence patterns more effectively (Lutfiyah et al., 2022). In particular, basic topics such as Parts of Speech can feel abstract and disconnected from meaningful language use when taught through conventional approaches. This concept requires an understanding of the function of words in sentences, which is often taught separately from the context of communication. When material is presented in the form of definitions and rules without contextual application, students tend to find it abstract and meaningless. Thus, theoretically and empirically, there is agreement that Grammar remains important and cannot be ignored. The way it is presented greatly determines students' attitudes and engagement, and an overly traditional approach tends to breed resistance and boredom. These conditions form the basis for the need to find new approaches that

are more interesting and participatory in teaching grammar. Parts of speech are one of the basic materials that form the foundation of sentence formation.

According to Chawla (2022), learners frequently struggle to identify word types in sentences, such as distinguishing between nouns, adjectives, and verbs, despite the fact that this skill is essential for comprehending the overall structure of English. Other research in the context of EFL has also found that students still make many mistakes in the use of parts of speech in both writing and speaking. Rubiyanto (2024), for example, identified various errors in the use of parts of speech in student essays and concluded that weaknesses in this aspect have a direct impact on the clarity and accuracy of sentences. Whereas, in the context of higher education in Indonesia, Munthe (2023) highlights that students in English language education programs still experience difficulties when asked to identify and use parts of speech in specific texts, despite having studied grammar for several semesters. In addition, Khairani (2019) emphasizes that English teachers need to have a deep understanding of all parts of speech categories and be able to explain the functions of each in a communicative context, rather than just providing isolated definitions and examples.

Thus, this situation highlights the need for pedagogical innovation that not only teaches grammar rules but also increases student engagement in the learning process. As digital transformation in education progresses, gamification is becoming an increasingly popular approach to overcoming problems in traditional learning. Therefore, in modern pedagogy, researchers and practitioners are increasingly seeking innovative methods that can enhance grammar learning while maintaining student engagement. Gamification has emerged as a promising pedagogical approach that integrates game elements such as points, competition, feedback, and real-time interaction into instructional activities (Deterding et al., 2011; Werbach & Hunter, 2012). In the context of language teaching, gamification has been proven not only to increase interest in learning but also to create an interactive and enjoyable learning environment that encourages learners to actively participate (Dehghanzadeh et al., 2021). Gamification is generally defined as the use of game design elements in non-game contexts. Deterding et al. (2011) define gamification as the use of game design elements. Such as points, levels, challenges, and feedback to increase engagement and motivation in various activities, including education. Werbach and Hunter (2012), in *For the Win*, explain that game thinking can be used to design more engaging learning experiences by utilizing game mechanics (e.g., point systems, leaderboards, and rewards) to encourage participation and long-term commitment.

Several systematic reviews have demonstrated that gamification has a positive impact on motivation, engagement, and, in some cases, learning outcomes. For example, Demir (2021) found, in his systematic review and meta-analysis, that gamification generally has a moderate and significant effect on student motivation and academic performance at various levels of education. Additionally, Cavus et al. (2025) reviewed gamification in education and reported that the constructs most frequently measured in gamification research are motivation, engagement, self-efficacy, and the experience of “flow” or cognitive immersion. In the field of language learning, Reinhardt (2020) introduced the concept of gameful second and foreign language teaching and learning, emphasizing that game-based or “gameful” learning designs can increase learners' emotional and cognitive engagement, provided that the games are designed in line with clear linguistic objectives. From a theoretical perspective, the literature on gamification in education highlights several main constructs relevant to this study: motivation and interest in learning, engagement (both behavioral, cognitive, and affective), perceived usefulness and meaningfulness of activities, and Affective experiences such as enjoyment, enthusiasm, and reduced boredom.

One of the most popular gamification platforms in education is Kahoot, due to its ease of access, real-time interactivity, and competitive quiz design. This finding is consistent with a study that demonstrated the use of Kahoot can improve student concentration, foster a positive learning environment, encourage collaboration, and reduce anxiety when students learn challenging grammar material (Wang & Tahir, 2020). Kahoot is one of the most widely used gamification platforms in language classes. Zarzycka-Piskorz (2016) in her article “Kahoot it or not? Can games be motivating in learning grammar?” found that the use of Kahoot in grammar learning significantly reduced boredom and increased student enthusiasm during the learning process. Recent studies show that Kahoot is not only entertaining but also contributes to understanding language structure. Chang (2024), who researched the integration of Kahoot in EFL grammar learning, reported that this platform helps increase class engagement and encourages previously passive students to participate more actively. Besides that, Licorish et al. (2018) also found that students enjoyed the learning process more when using Kahoot because the platform provides an interactive and challenging

learning experience. In EFL learning, features such as live scores, time limits for answering, and attractive visual elements can help simplify complex grammar concepts, including Parts of Speech. When students engage in healthy competition, they are encouraged to process information more quickly and accurately. This can strengthen their understanding of word categories in English, which is a crucial foundation for constructing effective sentences. Additionally, the leaderboard feature and instant feedback enable students to monitor their level of understanding in real-time, making learning activities more dynamic and engaging. Furthermore, students' perspectives on gamification-based grammar learning are an important aspect that warrants exploration. In applied linguistic research, student voice provides in-depth insights into how students interpret their learning experiences, what factors influence their motivation, and how they respond to specific learning strategies. Reinhardt (2020) asserted that the use of technology in language learning will only be effective if it is aligned with students' needs and perceptions.

Several other studies have also specifically examined the use of Kahoot in grammar learning. Samsudin (2025) evaluated the effectiveness of Kahoot as a gamification tool for grammar reinforcement and found that its use had a positive impact on class participation and learning motivation, although implementation was still influenced by technical factors and variations in student abilities. Besides that, in the Indonesian context, several studies have also focused on students' perceptions of Kahoot. Pratolo (2021) found that students view Kahoot as a medium that increases their interest and motivation in learning English, although there are still obstacles, such as internet access and devices. Kusumaningrum (2022) reported that the majority of students had a positive perception of Kahoot as a learning medium, primarily due to its competitive and interactive nature. Furthermore, Darwis (2023) analyzed students' perceptions of Kahoot use and found that students rated Kahoot as increasing their interest, vocabulary, and motivation to engage in learning. Another study by Yulinar (2023) specifically examined students' perceptions of using Kahoot as a medium for assessing grammar competence and found that students felt Kahoot helped them quickly and in an engaging way check their understanding of grammar. In addition, Paramastuty's (2023) research on the use of Kahoot for cause-and-effect text learning shows that gamification through Kahoot helps improve student concentration and participation in learning activities that are typically considered challenging. These studies indicate that Kahoot can serve as an effective support tool in grammar learning, including for abstract topics such as Parts of Speech.

Therefore, understanding how EFL students feel about using Kahoot in learning Parts of Speech is an important step in designing grammar learning strategies that are more relevant, engaging, and adaptive. Given the importance of this issue, this study aimed to explore the voices and experiences of EFL students in using Kahoot as a gamified learning tool in understanding Parts of Speech. This study used a descriptive qualitative design to explore students' real experiences in greater depth. This approach allows researchers to capture students' perceptions, motivations, and challenges during their interaction with gamification in the context of grammar learning. By exploring students' perceptions of using Kahoot in learning Parts of Speech, this research not only provides a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of gamification but also offers insights for educators in designing more interactive, engaging, and meaningful learning experiences. The results of this study are expected to provide practical contributions to the development of grammar teaching strategies in EFL classrooms, particularly in the use of digital technology to improve the effectiveness and quality of learning.

Research Method

This study used a descriptive qualitative research design. This approach was chosen because the purpose of the study is to explore students' voices, perceptions, and experiences in using Kahoot as a gamification tool to understand Parts of Speech. Qualitative research enables researchers to gain a profound understanding of learners' experiences in real-world contexts, rather than testing hypotheses or measuring numerical variables. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is appropriate when researchers aim to explore phenomena holistically, based on participants' perspectives. Thus, this design is well-suited for addressing research questions about how students perceive the use of Kahoot in the context of grammar learning. This research was conducted in the English Education study program at a private university in Indonesia. Data collection was conducted in the classroom during grammar lessons that utilized Kahoot for parts-of-speech material. The research subjects were 19 students enrolled in grammar courses. According to the principle of purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002), participants were selected based on their relevance to the study's purpose. Additionally, the research instruments were interviews and observation.

Whereas, for data Collection Techniques, data was collected through these 2 techniques: Participatory Observation: The researcher observed the learning process when lecturers used Kahoot for the Parts of Speech material. The observation included classroom dynamics, participation patterns, emotional reactions, and social interactions among students. Semi-structured interviews were conducted after classroom observations to explore participants' perceptions, experiences, and interpretations of using Kahoot in grammar learning. After that, the data were analyzed following the model proposed by Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2014), which consists of data reduction, data display, conclusion, and verification. In this study, data validity was assessed through triangulation techniques, specifically by comparing findings from interviews and observations. Interviews were used to explore students' perceptions, experiences, and interpretations of Kahoot usage, while observations were used to observe actual behavior, classroom interactions, and student engagement during the learning process. Comparing data from these two instruments ensured that the information obtained was consistent and credible.

Findings

This section presents and discusses research findings obtained from interviews and observation checklists with students regarding the use of Kahoot as a gamified learning medium for understanding parts of speech. The analysis employed a descriptive qualitative approach, aiming to provide a detailed and comprehensive description of the students' experiences, perceptions, and views. The distribution of five major themes that emerged from the interview data is presented in Figure 4.1 to provide a summary of the research findings. These themes, perceptions of grammar, motivation and engagement, emotive experiences, comprehension of parts of speech, and social interaction, represent important facets of students' experiences studying Parts of Speech with Kahoot.

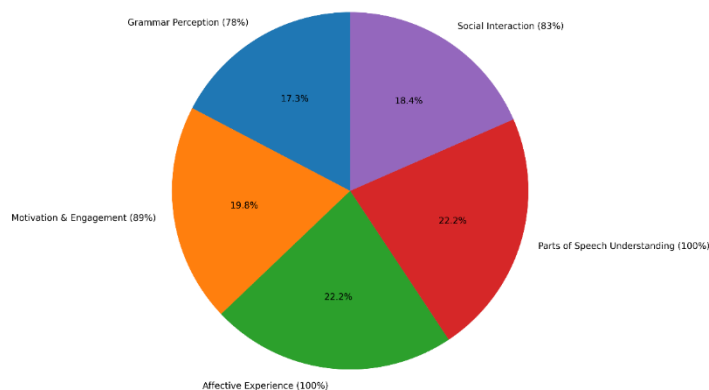


Figure 4.1 The Distribution of the Five Main Interview Themes

The first indicator of interview questions pertains to students' Initial Perceptions of Grammar and Parts of Speech Learning. The findings showed that before using Kahoot, most students had a negative perception of grammar learning, especially regarding Parts of Speech. Grammar was perceived as boring, difficult, and requiring memorization. Students reported that they often struggled to distinguish between word categories, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, especially when learning was conducted using conventional methods. This perception arose because previous grammar learning has placed more emphasis on explaining rules and written exercises without meaningful context. As a result, students feel that grammar is separate from actual language practice. Thus, students' initial perceptions become an important background that indicates the need for a more innovative and interactive learning approach for basic material such as Parts of Speech. The Second indicator is about Student Motivation and Engagement when using Kahoot. After using Kahoot in the classroom, students consistently reported increased motivation and engagement in their learning. Students felt more enthusiastic, more focused, and more active during the learning process. Kahoot was perceived as a medium that made grammar learning more interesting and less monotonous. Students stated that game elements, such as points, rankings, time limits, and competition, encourage them to pay more attention to questions and try to answer them

correctly. This engagement is not only passive but also active, as students are directly involved in the thinking and decision-making process when answering questions.

The third indicator concerns students' Affective Experiences during Learning Using Kahoot. In addition to increasing motivation, the use of Kahoot also evoked positive affective experiences in students. Students described feelings of joy, enthusiasm, and challenge while participating in Kahoot quizzes. Although some students admitted to feeling nervous or pressured by the time limit, these feelings were still perceived as enjoyable challenges, rather than sources of negative stress. These affective experiences indicate that Kahoot is capable of creating a more lively and enjoyable learning atmosphere. Thus, Kahoot not only functions as an evaluation tool but also as a medium that builds a positive emotional climate in grammar learning. The fourth indicator is about Kahoot's Contribution to Understanding Parts of Speech. The findings showed that students experienced an increase in their understanding of parts of speech after using Kahoot. Students stated that the quick and repetitive practice questions helped them recognize and distinguish between different categories of words in a sentence more easily. One of the most helpful features of Kahoot, according to students, was the instant feedback, which immediately showed whether their answers were correct or incorrect. Through this feedback, students can immediately realize their mistakes and improve their understanding of the next question. This process helps students build metacognitive awareness of their own grammar comprehension. The last indicator concerns Social Interaction and Classroom Dynamics during Kahoot Games. This indicator showed that the use of Kahoot has a positive impact on social interaction and classroom dynamics. Students reported an increase in discussion, cooperation, and communication among friends during the learning process. Some students mentioned that they discussed the correct answers and the reasons for choosing certain word categories with each other. Classes became more lively and interactive, no longer dominated by the lecturer's explanations alone. The competition created through Kahoot was healthy and encouraged students to support each other in understanding the material. Thus, Kahoot not only improves individual understanding but also enriches the social and collaborative learning experience.

Meanwhile, classroom observations revealed consistent patterns of student behavior that aligned with the findings of the interviews. An observation checklist was used to record the actual behavior of students during grammar lessons using Kahoot, thus serving as supporting data to verify the perceptions and experiences expressed by students in the interviews. Based on observations, before using Kahoot, students appeared less enthusiastic and showed limited participation when grammar was taught in a conventional manner. Some students appeared passive during class discussions, and interaction was minimal. In addition, students also showed confusion in discussing Parts of Speech, as indicated by questions about the difference between nouns and verbs. Meanwhile, regarding Motivation and Learning Engagement when using Kahoot, the observations showed significant changes when Kahoot was introduced. Students appeared enthusiastic, responded quickly, and maintained their focus on the screen during the game. Almost all students were actively involved in answering questions, demonstrating a high level of participation. In addition, students also demonstrated a competitive spirit, which was evident in their reactions to scores and rankings. Furthermore, from an affective perspective, observations revealed that students frequently exhibit positive emotional expressions, such as smiling and laughing, thereby making the classroom atmosphere more lively. Students also showed emotional reactions, especially when the leaderboard appeared, indicating both tension and enthusiasm. However, there are no signs of excessive stress; the tension that arises is positive and related to the challenges of the game.

Furthermore, the results of observations on Kahoot's contribution to understanding parts of speech also showed that students read questions more carefully before answering and often discuss their answers briefly with friends. Students reacted to the right/wrong feedback that appeared after answering questions and showed an increase in the accuracy of their answers on subsequent questions. In terms of social interaction, it was shown that students often discussed with friends, helped each other understand questions, and corrected answers together. The class seemed more lively and interactive compared to regular grammar lessons, and there was two-way communication between students during the Kahoot game. Overall, the results of the observation checklist show that student behavior during learning using Kahoot is consistent with the perceptions and experiences expressed in the interviews. This consistency between the observation and interview data indicates that the research findings have strong credibility.

Conclusion

Based on the study's results, it can be concluded that before using Kahoot, students tended to have negative perceptions of grammar learning, particularly in Parts of Speech. Grammar was seen as boring, difficult, and emphasizing memorization of rules without meaningful context. These initial perceptions indicate the need for a more innovative and interactive learning approach to help students understand basic grammar concepts more effectively. After Kahoot was implemented in the learning process, there was a significant change in student motivation and engagement. Students showed increased enthusiasm, focus, and active participation during the learning process. The game elements in Kahoot, such as points, rankings, time limits, and competition, proved effective in encouraging students to be more cognitively and behaviorally engaged in answering grammar questions. In addition, the use of Kahoot also provides a positive affective experience for students. Students find grammar learning more enjoyable, challenging, and less boring. Although there is a feeling of nervousness due to time constraints, this condition is perceived as a fun challenge and does not cause negative stress. This affective experience contributes to the creation of a more lively and conducive learning atmosphere.

In terms of social interaction, the use of Kahoot has a positive impact on classroom dynamics. Students discuss, collaborate, and communicate more frequently with their peers during lessons. Classes become more interactive and are no longer dominated by lecturers' explanations. The competition created through Kahoot is healthy and encourages collaboration among students in understanding grammar material. This study concluded that Kahoot is an effective gamification medium for increasing motivation, engagement, affective experiences, understanding of parts of speech, and social interaction among students in grammar learning in an EFL context. These findings suggest that English teachers deliberately use Kahoot to enhance grammar training, particularly for foundational subjects such as Parts of Speech. By offering sufficient infrastructure and opportunities for lecturers' professional growth, educational institutions are encouraged to support the integration of digital learning resources. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of gamification in EFL grammar learning, future research may expand on this study by examining other grammatical themes, employing mixed-methods approaches, or investigating various educational contexts.

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