

Kahoot! Does Wonders: English Articles

Saiful Islam Ahmad Sukri, Melor Md. Yunus, Denish Sevakumaran, Rajeswari Chandara Kumaran, Nabira Mansor, Jamaludin Badusah

SMK Sultan Sulaiman, Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia, Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v9-i1/7166> DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v9-i1/7166

Published Online: 30 March 2020

Abstract

Decades ago, the teaching and learning of English heavily hinged upon traditional methods. With the passage of time, a wide array of Web 2.00 tools have been incorporated into English learning but the landscape of English language education in Malaysia has not changed much. Therefore, this study is aimed at examining the use of Kahoot! in improving students' understanding of English articles. In this study, a set of 10 close-ended items questionnaire was utilised and later distributed to 60 Year 6 primary school students from two schools in Banting, Selangor. Findings of the study revealed that Kahoot! motivated and improved the students' understanding of English articles.

Keywords: Kahool, Wonders, Articles.

Introduction

In the past, the teaching and learning of English heavily hinged upon traditional methods. These methods were then deemed as the best means of imparting a great wealth of knowledge and reaching out to diverse groups of learners. Therefore, this has resulted in a great dependence on the aforementioned methods to the extent that teachers do not want to get out of the comfort zone and try out new teaching approaches. Even in today's globalized world, it comes as no surprise if there are groups of educators who are still clinging to the conventional ways to educate their students (Livingstone, 2015). Of course, there is nothing wrong about it but it is to be noted that the world evolves, so do the teaching and learning instructions. Considering the nuances of the English language that every learner is faced with, it is thereby an obligation for the English teachers especially to make use of every possible digital learning tool. Not only does it ease the process of acquiring the target language, but the students could also derive immense excitement (Yunus, Lisa & Ishak, 2012) and genuine linguistic appreciation from the applications of Web 2.0 tools in today's contemporary world.

In the age of information and scientific outbursts, there are many web 2.0 tools that have become increasingly popular in the field of foreign language teaching and one of them is Kahoot!. It is a system where responses could be elicited from the students and their feedback would later be displayed on screen. More interestingly, this tool is able to generate an active learning milieu as it is often associated with gamification in the classrooms

(Malyakkal, 2014). With its stimulating features, it indirectly has the capacity to pique students' interest and make the educational process relevant to the growing needs of the 21st century learners. These groups of learners or best classified as "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001) are characterised by their strong affinity towards Information Communication and Technology (ICT) and thereby, Kahoot! could be deployed to fulfil their needs besides training them to be accountable for their own learning (Krashen, 1987). Even though the potentials of Kahoot! and other web 2.0 tools have been acclaimed by the ICT advocates, it is noteworthy to acknowledge the fact that its full effectiveness has not been painstakingly researched particularly in educational contexts (Livingstone, 2015). With such notion, this study is undertaken to examine the effectiveness of Kahoot! in enhancing pupils' understanding on one of the most important constituents in the knowledge of English grammar; English articles.

English articles, which are comprised of definite, indefinite and zero articles, seem to be easier to master than any other English grammatical aspects. However, the inability to use English articles has been a never ending issue plaguing many English language learners in the local context (Andrew, 2014; Salehuddin, Tan & Maros, 2006; Darus & Subramaniam, 2007). There are a number of contributing factors that could explain the above. Among the identified factor is the interference of the first language when learning English (Maros, Tan & Salehuddin, 2007). In stark contrast to some other languages, the use of articles is given much emphasis in the English language and it is something that ones have to learn, internalize and above all effectively practise using them in authentic contexts. Thus, the integration of Kahoot! into English lesson is basically one of the avenues to inject the element of authenticity which in turn engenders a meaningfully fun and engaging learning process (Dellos, 2015). This paradigm change of learning is sorely needed to shift from a dominating teacher-centred to a meaningful learner-centred approach. Furthermore, when tackling a complicated part of the grammar lesson which would normally be met with blank stares, confused minds and sleepy heads of pathetic English learners, this signifies an immediate clamour for a drastic reform in educational practices. It is undeniable that getting acclimatized to newer things has not necessarily been so promising as its usage should be confined to social communication only (Kumar, 2009). Yet, it is incomparable to what lies at the heart of educational tools; harnessing the absorption of the learning inputs and redesigning educational trends as a whole.

In alignment with the suggestion put forth by Kuh & O' Donnell (2013) whereby the teaching and learning should be imbued with elements of new technologies, this study can be considered as one of the gateways to delve into the effectiveness of Kahoot! in improving the pupils' understanding of English articles. Taking cognizance of the acute deterioration in the English language competence among Malaysians, it is hoped that with the utilization of the said Web 2.0 tool could provide an invaluable insight into the teaching of English grammar in general or English articles in particular and eventually improve the declining standards of English in the country (Sukri & Yunus, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Teaching grammar through orthodox means has invariably resulted in a boring learning atmosphere as it diminishes students' zeal to actively participate in learning (Shabudin et al., 2014). Not surprisingly, it is getting even worse when it is conducted at noon when the students' listening energy is nearly empty. The ramification of the old school method might translate into students' horrendous performance in English at the school level or more alarmingly at the national level. In reference to a report by Cambridge English (2013),

a massive number of primary school students in Malaysia have not attained the most fundamental command of the language even after learning English for six years. There is no wonder why English is regarded as one of the most critical subjects and the issue of low competency in the English language has left many stakeholders puzzled despite a host of measures have been taken to redress it (Yunus & Sukri, 2017).

The emergence of Kahoot! in the landscape of English language education is timely. This is due to the fact that there are possibilities yet to be explored as previously mentioned in fostering students' cognitive development with respect to the comprehension of English articles. In fact, this study is of paramount importance as it could shed some light on the impact of Kahoot! on enhancing students' comprehension of English articles at the elementary level as a plethora of studies have been conducted at the tertiary level (Livingstone & Raturi 2015). Realising the nature of being English teachers in Malaysia who are invariably shouldered with heavy workload which includes administrative tasks, clerical jobs and increasing teaching hours among others (English Language Standards & Quality Council, 2015), the introduction of Kahoot! to English language teaching can be an additional tool to aid and elevate their teaching to a whole new level. Nevertheless, reports on its use have rarely been documented let alone to be researched. In other words, there is a dearth of literature on the effectiveness of Kahoot! in teaching English grammar in the Malaysian ESL context. With a view to tackling students' lamentable English proficiency and enriching the body of knowledge on the recently introduced ICT tool, this propped the researchers to conduct a study on the use of Kahoot! in learning English articles from the viewpoints of 12-year-old students.

Research Objectives

The study aims to examine the effectiveness of Kahoot! in enhancing students' understanding of English articles and their motivation for learning English articles.

Research Questions

In order to facilitate the investigation, two research questions were formulated as follows:

- 1) How effective is Kahoot! in enhancing students' understanding of English articles?
- 2) How effective is Kahoot! in enhancing students' motivation to learn English articles?

Literature Review

The current education landscape focuses heavily on the 21st century teaching and learning. The prevalence of 21st century teaching and learning also brings about 21st century skills which students ought to have in order to be independent thinkers, problem solvers and decision makers (Silva, 2009). Due to the rapid advancement of information technology, ways of learning have to be changed to suit the uncertain and rapidly changing world. Moreover, students of this generation interact with technological tools on a daily basis which have become part of their lives (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2015).

The teaching and learning process should not focus on equipping their students with the knowledge on the technology as technology constantly changes but they should be taught to be creative and innovative in utilising these technologies (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2015). The Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) (2015) also stated that the educational practices of the traditional classroom are no longer effective and teachers need to develop new instructional strategies and pedagogical approaches aided by technologies. ICT is

highlighted as an effective language learning tool as it promotes access and exposure to authentic language materials, communication opportunities, instant and individualised feedback and also classroom integration (Rokenes & Krumsvik, 2016).

The MOE (2013) has spent more than RM 6 billion on equipping schools with Information and Communication Technology (ICT). However, the finding on the usage of ICT by educators in schools continues to lag expectations. The MOE (2013) hopes that the usage of ICT can be improved in order to enhance the teaching and learning process by making it more engaging and interactive. The usage of ICT in Malaysian schools will be a basis for a virtual learning environment to take place where students can share learning resources, teachers can conduct interactive lessons and both teachers and students can communicate virtually. Moreover, teachers should also optimise the usage of ICT in order to promote self-paced learning in which students can learn wherever they are whilst teachers can act as facilitators rather than being direct content providers (MOE, 2012a).

In a traditional language classroom, the teaching of grammar is considered the heart and soul of second language learning as learning grammar rules is seen vital in order to be an effective learner. However, lately many scholars have begun to question the importance of learning grammar rules when language learners could not apply these rules in communication which is a crucial language skill (Eisenstein-Ebsworth & Schweers, 1997).

Due to the rapid influence of ICT in English teaching and learning, the interest in grammar teaching has also revived with many advocating the importance and benefits of grammar instructions on students' language learning. Scholars proposed three different types of grammar teaching which are grammar teaching in discourse context, lexico grammatical approaches and corpus or data-driven teaching (Liu & Jiang, 2009).

In the Standard Curriculum for Primary School (KSSR), the grammar component is only introduced in the Year 3 curriculum as pupils are given opportunity to develop grammar awareness in their first language. Their understanding of grammar in the first language will be exploited to ace English grammar from Year 3 onwards (MOE, 2012b). In the KSSR curriculum, it emphasises that the learning of grammar should occur in a meaningful context which allows pupils to learn grammar through fun-filled activities. The KSSR curriculum also encourages the usage of salient, new technologies in order to enhance the learning of grammar components.

As the KSSR curriculum proposes the teaching and learning of grammar to occur in a fun and a meaningful manner, the incorporation of game-based learning to learn grammar components will help to achieve these objectives. Game-based learning is defined as learning by active play through games (Whitton, 2012). Meanwhile in the current context, game-based learning can also be defined as any digital games that can be used in learning context to create active engagement. (De Grove, Bourgonjon & Looy, 2012). The use of digital games in teaching grammar can have a positive impact on learning especially in increasing students' motivation and interest, offers multiple representations of information, students can be in control of their own learning besides encouraging collaboration among students (Bourgonjon et al., 2013). Game based learning is also beneficial in providing differentiated instructions as it is able to accommodate different learning styles and abilities and also improve the mastery of certain skills (De Grove et al. 2012). Digital games are designed to integrate content material with game play in which the brain will process the information from short- to long-term memory (Icard, 2015).

One of the digital games that is currently gaining popularity and being widely used in the education domain is Kahoot!. Kahoot! is a student response system which engages

students through games in the form of impromptu quizzes, discussions and surveys (Dellos, 2015). The incorporation of Kahoot! in learning grammar is deemed effective as students are found eager and excited to learn through online games (Zarzycka-Piskorz, 2016). Zarzycka-Piskorz (2016) further elaborated that the use of Kahoot! is more effective than traditional grammar teaching which focuses on numerous monotonous exercises, such as filling in the gaps, completing sentences with appropriate form of grammar items and choosing the correct opinion.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a survey research design to best understand how Kahoot! could improve students' understanding and motivation to learn English articles.

Research Respondents

The researchers carried out the study in two primary schools in Banting, Selangor involving 60 Year 6 students aged 12; 36 were Malays, 19 Indians, 2 Chinese and 3 aborigines. These students were chosen as they have been exposed to the learning of English articles since Year 1 (7 years old) and the grammar section since Year 3 (9 years old). Thus, they were the most apt choice of respondents to participate in this study. Their English proficiency level ranged from average to good. The respondents were chosen based on convenience sampling method because they studied at the schools that the researchers taught, thus conducting the study was much easier and less hassle. This is in line with Sabbah's (2015) where the selection of respondents is based on its accessibility to the researcher.

Research Instrument

The research questionnaire items were adapted from Wang & Lieberoth (2016) study. In this mini research, the researchers constructed a questionnaire with ten close-ended items with a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree to Strongly Agree. In doing so, this assures the absence of a neutral response option. In particular, there are 2 main sections eliciting data on how Kahoot can improve students' understanding of English articles (Section A) and motivate them to learn English articles (Section B).

Data Collection Procedures

This mini research was conducted over the period of 2 weeks with an interaction time between 1-2 hours per day. The interaction time was rather restricted since the researchers followed the duration allocated in Malaysian schools in teaching and learning of the English language in which the contact hours are 5 hours per week (30 minutes per period). The researchers conducted the study by teaching English articles in the traditional 'chalk and talk' method for 2 hours. Then, in the following sessions, the researchers introduced Kahoot! by playing games based on the English articles learnt. The questions were projected on the screen while the students answered the questions in their respective computers. They needed to click on the correct colour and shapes based on the questions shown. At the end of Week 2, each of the respondents was given a questionnaire with the purpose of investigating how Kahoot! improves their understanding and motivation to learn English articles. The responses from the respondents were then collected and the data were analysed descriptively using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 23.

Findings and Discussion

Kahoot! : A Tool to Improve Students' Understanding of English Articles

The table below presents findings on how Kahoot improved students' understanding of English articles.

No.	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	<i>Kahoot!</i> keeps my concentration during the class.	-	17	25	18
2.	<i>Kahoot!</i> is an enjoyable game.	1	12	27	20
3.	<i>Kahoot!</i> helps me to learn English articles.	-	3	42	15
4.	<i>Kahoot!</i> assists me in knowing the English articles.	-	2	32	26
5.	<i>Kahoot!</i> improves my knowledge on English articles.	-	-	29	31
6.	<i>Kahoot!</i> helps me to understand ideas of English articles.	-	2	23	35

Based on the above table, most of the respondents rated in the strongly agree or agree categories. Therefore, there was a general agreement that Kahoot! does help students' understanding of English articles. The gathered data were analysed based on the comparison between items in the strongly agree category. The results revealed that 35 respondents strongly agreed to the item on '*Kahoot! helps me to understand ideas of English articles*'. Undoubtedly, the tool has its own features that are captivating and engaging with students' interest. This is consistent with the findings of Alfafeh (2015) where the use of technology tools could make students learn better.

Besides, it is also interesting to note that 42 of them agreed to item 3 on "*Kahoot! helps me to learn English articles*", thus, showing that that most of them subscribed to the positive impacts of Kahoot! on learning English articles. In addition, item 5 "*Kahoot! improves my knowledge on English articles*" was strongly agreed by 31 respondents. From the data, 31 respondents strongly agreed on the item '*Kahoot! improves my knowledge on English articles*'. This is commensurate with their scores in the Kahoot! scoreboard and none of them disagreed to this item. Moreover, the majority of them participated actively in answering the questions posted on Kahoot! and it is clear that they derived immense excitement from Kahoot!.

Kahoot! in Motivating Students to learn English Articles

The following table displays how Kahoot motivated students to learn English articles.

Table 2:

Students' Opinion in Integrating Kahoot! To Understand English Articles

No.	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7.	<i>Kahoot!</i> enhances my motivation to learn English articles.	1	4	28	17
8.	The use of colours in <i>Kahoot!</i> makes learning easy and interesting	-	-	26	34
9.	<i>Kahoot!</i> helps me in trying harder to answer the questions .	2	2	27	29
10.	<i>Kahoot!</i> makes me want to learn more in class.	-	-	32	28

The data illustrated that most of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed to the items in the second section of the questionnaire. Noticeably, 34 respondents strongly agreed to Item 8 where the respondents felt that '*the use of colours in Kahoot! makes learning easy and interesting*'. This is not startling as the game-based learning platform does have a captivating layout where it can trigger students' interest as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Layout of the Kahoot! Games
Source: Kahoot!

Moreover, 29 of respondents strongly agreed to item 9 where '*Kahoot! helps me in trying harder to answer questions*'. Based on the data, it can be concluded Kahoot! leads to a

healthy competition among the respondents on one hand and promotes instant feedback as argued by Rokenes and Krumsvik (2016). This is because they were all eager to know whether they answered the questions correctly and at the same excited to know the winner of the game who could answer the questions fastest yet very accurately. In contrast, 5 respondents disagreed to item 7 '*Kahoot! enhances my motivation to learn English articles*'. This is because some of them might have low self-esteem and did not favour a competitive game. They probably preferred the conventional method of learning the English language. Most importantly, in light of the findings obtained, it can be deduced with certainty that Kahoot! is successful to motivate students and keep them intrigued to the lesson taught as advocated by Bourgonjon et al., 2013).

Implications and Conclusion

In conclusion, the study has testified that with a great degree of certainty, the usage of Kahoot! does indeed improve students' understanding of English articles and also increase their motivation. More significantly, Kahoot! stimulates better perceptions and expectations of learners towards future English classrooms. Additionally, it could cultivate a healthy competition, enjoyable learning ambience and make the students communicate actively. Kahoot! is also an effective medium to be used as an assessment tool where all the results, scores and percentages of the questions can be recorded online and downloaded instantaneously. All students, irrespective of their academic performance, can greatly benefit from this game-based learning. Interestingly, the games created in the Kahoot! can be stored online where teacher can reuse the games for other classes. Thus, Kahoot! can be seen as a valuable and very resourceful teaching aid. It is recommended that further research be done in depth through the integration of Kahoot! for other English grammatical items. Besides, in tandem with the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 which encourages students to be more innovative, it is recommended that future research could engage students to create their own Kahoot! games based on the topics they have learnt and later conduct a competition in the classroom (Liebowitz & Frank, 2011). This is one of the ways for the students to facilitate their own learning and cultivate leadership skills in themselves. In the long run, this will make them more productive and prepared for an increasingly complex environment in the 21st century.

Corresponding Author

Saiful Islam Ahmad Sukri
SMK Sultan Sulaiman,
Jalan Sultan Mahmud,
20400, Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu.
E-mail: neeraz87@yahoo.com

References

- Bourgonjon, J., De Grove, F., De Smet, C., Van Looy, J., Soetaert, R., & Valcke, M. (2013). Acceptance of game-based learning by secondary school teachers. *Computers & Education*, 67, 21-35.
- Cambridge English. (2013). Results Report: Cambridge baseline 2013. In Z. M. Don (Ed.), *English language education reform in Malaysia: The roadmap 2015-2025* (pp. 188). Ministry of Education Malaysia.

- Darus, S., & Subramaniam, K. (2009.) Error analysis of the written English essays of secondary school students in Malaysia: A case study. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(3), 483- 495.
- De Grove, F., Bourgonjon, J., & Van Looy, J. (2012). Digital games in the classroom? A contextual approach to teachers' adoption intention of digital games in formal education. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(6), 2023-2033.
- Dellos, R. (2015). Kahoot! A digital game resource for learning. *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, 12(4), 49-52.
- Eisenstein-Ebsworth, M., & Schweers, C. W. (1997). What researchers say and practitioners do: Perspectives on conscious grammar instruction in the ESL classroom. *Applied Language Learning*, 8, 237-260.
- English Language Standards & Quality Council. (2015). English Language Education Reform in Malaysia: The Roadmap 2015-2020. Ministry of Education Malaysia. <http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital>
- Icard, B. (2014). Educational technology best practices. *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, 11(3), 37-41.
- International Journal of Science Commerce and Humanities*, 2(5), 154-160.
- Krashen, S. D. (1987). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. London: Prentice-Hall.
- Kuh, G. D., & O' Donnell, K. (2013). *Ensuring quality and taking high-impact practices to scale*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Kuhlthau, C. C., Maniotes, L. K., & Caspari, A. K. (2015). *Guided inquiry: Learning in the 21st century*. ABC-CLIO.
- Kumar, S. (2009). Undergraduate perceptions of the usefulness of Web 2.0 in higher education: [Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf](#)
- Liebowitz, J., & Frank, M. (2011). *Knowledge management and e-learning*. USA: Auerbach Publications.
- Liu, D., & Jiang, P. (2009). Using a corpus-based lexico grammatical approach to grammar instruction in EFL and ESL contexts. *The Modern Language Journal*, 93(1), 61-78.
- Livingstone, K. A. (2015). The impact of Web 2.0 in education and its potential for language learning and teaching. *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, 12(4), 3-16.
- Livingstone, K. A., & Raturi, S. (2015). Exploring the potential of implementing E-Learning practices at the University of Guyana. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 16(3).
- Malyakkal, P. E. (2014). Gamification in the classroom. *International Journal of Innovative*
- Maros, M., Tan, K. H., & Salehuddin, K. (2007). Interference in learning English: Grammatical errors in English essay writing among rural Malay secondary school students in Malaysia. *e-BANGI: Jurnal Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan*, 2(2), 1-15.
- Ministry of Education. (2012a). *Preliminary report: Malaysia education blueprint 2013-2025*. Putrajaya: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education. (2012b). *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (KSSR) Tahun 3*. Putrajaya: Curriculum Development Centre.
- Ministry of Education. (2015). *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah: Dokumen standard kurikulum dan pentaksiran*. Putrajaya: Curriculum Development Centre.
- Prensky, M. (2001). Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants. Retrieved from

- Research in Computer Science & Technology*, 2(5), 52-55.
- Røkenes, F. M., & Krumsvik, R. J. (2016). Prepared to teach ESL with ICT? A study of digital competence in Norwegian teacher education. *Computers & Education*, 97, 1-20.
- Sabbah, S. S. (2015). The Effect of College Students' Self-Generated Computerized Mind Mapping on Their Reading Achievement. *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology*, 11(3), 4-36.
- Salehuddin, K., Tan, K. H., & Maros, M. (2006). Definiteness and indefiniteness: A contrastive analysis of the use of determiners between the Malay language and English. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 6(1), 21-30.
- Shabudin, M., Aisyah, A., Darus, S., & Mimiko, N. (2014). Development of teaching materials and utilization of Web 2.0 in Japanese language teaching and learning. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 118, 433-441.
- Silva, E. (2009). Measuring skills for 21st-century learning. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 90(9), 630-634.
- Sukri, S. I. A., & Yunus, M. M. (2018c). Reengineering the English teacher education reform: Pro-ELT. *International Journal of Engineering & Technology*, 7(3.25), 205-213. doi: 10.14419/ijet.v7i3.25.17548
- Survey development. *Proceedings of 8th European Conference on E-learning*, 308- 314.
- Wang, A. I., & Lieberoth, A. (2016). The effect of points and audio on concentration, engagement, enjoyment, learning, motivation, and classroom dynamics using Kahoot!. The 10th European Conference of Game Based Learning.
- Whitton, N. (2012). The place of game-based learning in an age of austerity. *Electronic-Journal of eLearning*, 10(2), 249-256.
- Yunus, M. M., & Sukri, S. I. A. (2017). The use of English in teaching Mathematics and Science: The PPSMI policy vis-à-vis the DLP. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 8(1), 133- 142.
- Yunus, M. M., Lisa, K. S. L., & Ishak, N. M. (2012). Benefits of using Web 2.0 technologies for language learning: Gifted students' perception. Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Arts and Culture (ICAC'12). *Advances in Environment, Computational Chemistry and Bioscience*, 385-390.
- Zarzycka-Piskorz, E. (2016). Kahoot! It or not? Can games be motivating in learning grammar? *Teaching English with Technology*, 16(3), 17-36.