HARNESSING GAME-BASED TOOLS IN EFL CLASSROOMS: MGMP TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON USING KAHOOT

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Abstract

This study explores how English teachers in an Indonesian MGMP (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran) community perceive and integrate Kahoot in EFL classrooms. Using a descriptive qualitative design, data were collected from six teachers through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. The results show that teachers use Kahoot for various pedagogical purposes, including vocabulary review, grammar reinforcement, and formative assessment. Teachers also employed different integration strategies, using Kahoot as warm-ups, comprehension checks, and review activities. Despite challenges such as limited internet access, lack of devices, and time constraints, teachers observed significant improvements in student motivation, participation, and confidence. The study highlights the role of professional collaboration within MGMP in supporting technology use and the importance of teacher agency in adapting digital tools to meet classroom needs. The findings suggest that teacher-mediated gamification through Kahoot can enhance both engagement and learning outcomes in EFL contexts, particularly when supported by reflective teaching practices and local collaboration.

Keywords: Kahoot, collaborative teaching, digital tools, EFL classroom, game-based learning

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, technology is transforming the way teachers teach and students learn. Many schools and educators are now adopting digital tools to enhance the quality of learning and to promote more interactive, student-centered classrooms (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Selwyn, 2021). One instructional method that has gained popularity is game-based learning (GBL), which uses game elements to increase student motivation, participation, and enjoyment in the learning process (Deterding et al., 2011; Hwang & Wu, 2012; Plass et al., 2015). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, GBL tools have been shown to provide meaningful opportunities for students to practice language in engaging, low-stress environments (Elaish et al., 2019; Zarzycka-Piskorz, 2016).

One of the most widely used tools in this area is *Kahoot*, a free, web-based quiz platform that allows teachers to create and deliver interactive activities. Kahoot has been adopted across a wide range of educational contexts for formative assessment, vocabulary review, grammar drills, and even content delivery (Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2018; Wang, 2015). In EFL classrooms, Kahoot can reduce anxiety, foster motivation, and support collaborative learning (Ismail & Mohammad, 2017; Plump & LaRosa, 2017). It also aligns with communicative language teaching approaches, which

emphasize student engagement, peer interaction, and real-world language use (Hung, 2017; Kıyançiçek & Uzun, 2022).

While many studies have reported the benefits of Kahoot for student engagement and learning outcomes(Licorish et al., 2018; Tetep & Arista, 2022), most of these studies tend to focus on students' perceptions and quantitative data. Few studies have paid attention to how teachers use Kahoot as part of their pedagogical decision-making, including how they select, adapt, and implement the tool in their classrooms. Even fewer studies examine the challenges teachers face, especially in less-resourced educational settings, such as in many regions of Indonesia.

In the Indonesian context, the use of digital technology in education continues to expand, but it remains uneven. Teachers in urban areas may have greater access to devices and stable internet, while those in rural or remote schools often struggle with infrastructure, device availability, and student digital literacy (Budiarto et al., 2024; Kormos & Wisdom, 2021). Despite these challenges, Indonesian teachers regularly participate in professional learning communities such as *Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran* (MGMP), where they collaborate, discuss lesson planning, and share teaching strategies (Agung, 2020; Najri, 2020). MGMP plays a crucial role in enabling grassroots innovation and peer learning among teachers. However, there is little research that explores how such communities support digital innovation or how members of MGMP incorporate game-based tools like Kahoot into their classroom practices.

Moreover, existing literature rarely considers *teacher agency*, how teachers actively make pedagogical choices based on student needs, institutional expectations, and contextual limitations (Ertmer, 2005; Tondeur et al., 2017). Understanding the lived experiences of teachers using Kahoot in local contexts can help fill this gap and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of technology integration that is sensitive to socio-cultural, institutional, and infrastructural realities.

Therefore, this study aims to explore how MGMP English teachers in Indonesia perceive and use Kahoot in their EFL classrooms. It focuses on the pedagogical purposes behind using Kahoot, the strategies employed to integrate it into lessons, and the challenges and benefits encountered by teachers. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study centres the voices of teachers and investigates how digital tools are adapted and negotiated in real-world practice. This study offers a novel contribution by highlighting teacher perspectives within a professional learning community and by contextualizing the use of game-based learning in a developing country setting. The findings are expected to provide practical insights for teachers, policymakers, and education stakeholders who are interested in implementing game-based tools in EFL instruction, especially in resource-limited environments.

METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore how MGMP English teachers perceive and use Kahoot in their teaching practices. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, beliefs, and teaching strategies in their natural setting (Creswell, 2015). The descriptive design was considered suitable to describe the real-life classroom practices without manipulating the teaching process.

2. Participants and Research Context

The participants in this study were six English teachers who are actively involved in the *Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran* (MGMP) community for junior high school level in Deli Serdang, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Although only six participants were involved, this number is considered appropriate for a qualitative study, especially one that seeks to gain in-depth insights from a specific professional context. According to (Creswell, 2015), qualitative research typically involves small samples to allow rich, detailed understanding of participants' experiences. Moreover, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) argue that data saturation in qualitative interviews can often be achieved with as few as six to twelve participants, particularly when participants are relatively homogenous and the study has a focused scope.

The participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) having at least two years of experience teaching English in EFL classrooms, (2) being actively involved in MGMP activities for at least one year, and (3) having used Kahoot in their teaching practices. These criteria ensured that the participants were not only familiar with the tool under investigation but also positioned to reflect on their practices within a collaborative, professional learning community. The MGMP group serves as a platform for teacher development where members regularly meet to discuss pedagogy, share resources, and experiment with new instructional strategies, including digital tools like Kahoot. This setting provided a rich context for understanding how teachers integrate game-based learning within their professional practice and local school realities.

3. Data Collection Techniques

This study used three primary data collection techniques: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. These methods were selected to enable data triangulation and to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how MGMP English teachers integrate Kahoot into their EFL teaching practices.

a. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all six participants to explore their perceptions, beliefs, and experiences related to the use of Kahoot in their classrooms. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted in person at the participants' schools. The interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. Interview questions focused on the teachers' purposes for using Kahoot, how they designed and implemented the tool, and what benefits and challenges they experienced.

b. Observations

Each participant was observed twice while using Kahoot in their actual classroom instruction, resulting in a total of twelve observations. The purpose of the observations was to capture how Kahoot was implemented in practice, how students engaged with the tool, and how it was integrated into the lesson flow. A structured observation checklist and field notes were used to document teacher instructions, student responses, classroom dynamics, and the role Kahoot played during the session.

To minimize bias and maintain natural classroom conditions, the researcher took a non-intrusive role by sitting at the back of the class without interacting with students or influencing the lesson. Teachers were informed that observations were intended to understand classroom practice rather than to evaluate performance.

c. Document Analysis

Document analysis was conducted to complement data from interviews and observations by examining instructional and reflective materials prepared by the teachers. Four types of documents were reviewed:

1. Lesson Plans: Analyzed to examine how Kahoot was planned within lesson structures (e.g., introduction, practice, review) and aligned with learning objectives.
2. Kahoot Quizzes: Reviewed to identify question types, focus skills (e.g., vocabulary, grammar), and the level of cognitive challenge (e.g., recall vs. application).
3. Supporting Teaching Materials (e.g., worksheets, slides): Used to contextualize the function of Kahoot in the broader instructional process.
4. Teacher Reflection Notes and MGMP Activity Logs: Examined to understand teachers' evaluations of their Kahoot usage, lesson adjustments, and collaborative discussions within MGMP meetings.

Each document type served a distinct analytical purpose. Lesson plans revealed planned intentions, quizzes showed how content was operationalized, teaching materials clarified classroom integration, and reflective writings provided insight into

teachers' professional reasoning and learning. The combination of these sources enabled triangulation and strengthened the trustworthiness of the findings.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis following the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) writing the report. Thematic analysis allowed the researcher to identify patterns in teacher practices and perceptions related to Kahoot integration.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study explored the experiences of six MGMP English teachers in using Kahoot as a game-based learning tool in their EFL classrooms. Data were gathered from semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Through thematic analysis, four major themes emerged: (1) pedagogical purposes of using Kahoot, (2) strategies for integration, (3) challenges encountered, and (4) perceived benefits and student engagement. These themes are discussed in detail below.

Pedagogical Purposes of Using Kahoot

The participants generally agreed that Kahoot served as more than just a tool for testing students' knowledge. Teachers used Kahoot for a variety of pedagogical purposes, such as formative assessment, language review, motivation-building, and as an engaging transition between instructional stages. Participant 3 explained:

> *"Kahoot helps me check students' understanding in a fun way. I don't need to wait until the end of the lesson to know whether they are following or not."*

Participants 1 and 4 used Kahoot primarily for vocabulary and grammar reinforcement before exams, while Participant 6 emphasized the motivational role Kahoot played in increasing student focus, especially during grammar lessons.

Strategies for Integrating Kahoot into EFL Lessons

Teachers in this study employed diverse strategies to integrate Kahoot into their EFL classrooms, tailoring its use to different stages of instruction. The analysis revealed that Kahoot was typically used as a warm-up activity, a mid-lesson comprehension check, or a post-lesson review, depending on the pedagogical goals.

Several teachers used Kahoot as a warm-up to activate students' prior knowledge and increase engagement from the beginning of the lesson. Participant 2 shared:

"I use Kahoot to warm them up, it helps students switch into English mode and get excited before we start the real lesson."

This was reflected in one observed lesson where the teacher began by saying, *"Let's warm up with five questions using yesterday's words,"* prompting students to eagerly open their devices and exchange answers in low whispers. The quiz contained simple vocabulary items, such as:

"What is the opposite of 'generous'?"
A. selfish   B. kind   C. helpful   D. polite

During gameplay, students collaborated actively, particularly in group-based modes. Observers noted that in several classrooms, students discussed answers aloud in Bahasa Indonesia, then translated and submitted them in English. This behavior indicated both cognitive engagement and emerging communicative competence. Participant 5 emphasized the rationale behind this approach:

"Sometimes I let them play in groups, especially when I know some students are shy or slow to respond. That way, they help each other and enjoy it more."

Kahoot was also used mid-lesson as a formative assessment tool. Participant 3 explained:

"It's helpful to know if they really understood the grammar I just taught. Kahoot gives me a quick way to check that."

This strategy was supported by observations where teachers paused after low-scoring questions to clarify explanations. A quiz item used in this phase was:

"What is the past form of 'run'?"
A. ran   B. runned   C. running   D. runs

Lesson plans mirrored these practices. One included the note: *"Use Kahoot for 10 minutes after grammar explanation as group quiz, focus: simple past tense."* Another stated a specific learning objective: *"Students will be able to differentiate regular and irregular verbs through quiz activity."*

Post-lesson use of Kahoot was also common. Teachers used it to review material and close lessons on an interactive note. Participant 1 commented:

"After explaining and practicing, I use Kahoot to review what we've just learned. It keeps the students focused until the end."

In the reviewed lesson plans, statements such as *"Kahoot to review vocabulary: adjectives describing people"* were frequently found. One quiz item read:

"What does 'generous' mean?"
A. Kind and giving   B. Angry and loud   C. Rich and selfish   D. Small and weak

These findings illustrate how Kahoot was embedded within instructional design, serving as both a content review tool and a means to enhance classroom dynamics.

Challenges Faced by Teachers

Despite their enthusiasm, all participants reported facing various challenges when implementing Kahoot in the classroom. The most frequently cited issues were limited internet access, inadequate student devices, and lack of familiarity with the tool's features. These barriers were not only mentioned in interviews but also witnessed during observations. In one rural school, only five of twenty students had access to smartphones. The teacher adjusted by creating mixed-ability groups and instructing them: *"Okay, Team 1, you will share one phone, discuss together before answering."*

Participant 2 voiced concerns about quiz preparation:

"It's hard to make good questions. Sometimes I just take from Google. But to make it match my class, it takes time."

Lesson plans further revealed how teachers anticipated and managed these limitations. One document included a handwritten note: *"Back-up: if internet down, switch to printed quiz with same questions."* MGMP meeting logs documented similar experiences, with one teacher noting: *"Need more training to use Kahoot creatively, most of us just use the default templates."* Technical constraints often shaped how teachers designed activities and determined whether Kahoot could be used regularly.

Perceived Benefits and Student Engagement

Despite the constraints, teachers unanimously agreed that Kahoot significantly enhanced student engagement and classroom participation. Participant 1 shared:

"Students who usually stay quiet became excited and wanted to answer. It gives them a chance to compete in a healthy way."

This was supported by observations. In one classroom, a typically disengaged student was seen smiling and fist-pumping after selecting the correct answer. The teacher responded with praise: *"Wow, even you're shouting now! That's great!"* which elicited laughter and applause from classmates.

The impact on learning confidence was also evident in the documents. One teacher wrote in the lesson plan: *"Use Kahoot before test to boost confidence, students relax more in quiz format."* Another entry in MGMP records noted: *"Kids asked, 'Bu, will we do Kahoot again next week?'"* suggesting that students associated the activity with positive learning experiences.

Teachers observed that even students with low English proficiency showed more willingness to participate when Kahoot was used. The playful and competitive nature of the game helped reduce anxiety and fostered peer support. In summary, these benefits highlight the pedagogical potential of Kahoot not only as an assessment tool but as a strategy for creating more dynamic, inclusive, and emotionally supportive language learning environments.

*Table 1. **Summary of themes based on participant responses***

Participant	Pedagogical Purpose of Kahoot	Integration Strategy	Challenges Faced	Observed Impact on Students
P1	Vocabulary review before tests	Post-lesson activity	Limited devices	Increased confidence and participation
P2	Grammar reinforcement	Warm-up and group play	Lack of time to design quizzes	High enthusiasm and student collaboration
P3	Formative assessment	Mid-lesson comprehension check	Internet instability	Students engaged, learning adjusted in real time
P4	Pre-exam review and motivation	Used in pairs to manage excitement	Disruptive excitement	Lively atmosphere, peer support
P5	Support during project work	Integrated in project-based learning	Poor internet, fallback to paper	Passive students became more responsive
P6	Attention and focus in grammar	Post-grammar review quiz	Students unfamiliar with technology	Better focus and material retention

This study aimed to explore how MGMP English teachers perceive and use Kahoot in EFL classrooms. The findings revealed that teachers used Kahoot for a range of pedagogical purposes, applied flexible strategies for integration, encountered practical challenges, and observed increased student engagement. These findings reflect both individual teacher agency and the influence of collaborative professional communities such as MGMP.

Pedagogical Purposes and Integration Strategies

The study found that Kahoot was not merely used for testing but also to enhance student motivation, reinforce specific language skills (e.g., grammar, vocabulary), and increase participation. These findings align with Altawalbeh (2023), who found that

Kahoot significantly reinforced grammar and writing skills in EFL classrooms by offering engaging and formative review opportunities. Similarly, Anggraini (2023) demonstrated that game-based tools like Kahoot helped improve vocabulary mastery, especially when aligned with learning objectives.

Teachers in this study integrated Kahoot flexibly, using it as a warm-up, mid-lesson comprehension check, or post-lesson review. This echo (Wang & Tahir, 2020) review, which highlights that digital game-based learning tools are most effective when used across different stages of instruction to maintain engagement and assess progress dynamically. Moreover, the use of Kahoot to promote student-centred learning aligns with constructivist principles and supports the communicative approach in EFL pedagogy (Karim, 2024)

Challenges in Implementation

Despite the benefits, the teachers reported several challenges, particularly related to technology infrastructure and teacher readiness. These included unstable internet connections, limited access to digital devices, and time constraints in quiz preparation. These findings mirror those of Sari (2021), who noted that device availability and internet access remain barriers in vocational and rural EFL contexts, despite increased adoption of gamified platforms. Similarly, Hilmun et al. (2020) reported that many Indonesian EFL teachers still lack training and support in designing meaningful game-based learning activities.

Some participants in this study also expressed difficulty in developing Kahoot quizzes that matched their lesson goals. This reflects Choi's (2023) enduring point that pedagogical confidence and perceived ease-of-use strongly influence how teachers use technology. Without sufficient guidance, teachers may default to copying existing content rather than designing purpose-driven materials.

These technical challenges are closely tied to the local school context, particularly in rural areas where internet access and digital infrastructure remain limited. In this study, teachers from smaller or less-resourced schools often relied on one or two student-owned devices per classroom and had to prepare printed backup quizzes when the connection failed. These conditions reflect broader digital inequalities that affect how educational technology is implemented across different regions in Indonesia.

This situation highlights the importance of considering local realities in policy planning. While tools like Kahoot offer many advantages, their effective use depends on basic infrastructure, teacher training, and access to devices. For instance, district education offices could consider providing *shared school tablets,* partnering with local internet providers for *affordable school Wi-Fi packages,* or including *game-based teaching strategies* in routine MGMP workshops. Additionally, teacher incentives or small digital innovation grants could encourage experimentation and knowledge-sharing between schools in different locations.

These context-sensitive approaches can help ensure that efforts to integrate educational technology like Kahoot are not only innovative but also inclusive, offering equal opportunities for teachers and students regardless of their school's geographic or economic conditions.

Student Engagement and Affective Impact

Across all six participants, the use of Kahoot was consistently associated with enhanced student participation and motivation. This study confirms previous findings by (Chan & Lo, 2024), who demonstrated that gamified tools increased focus and active participation in Southeast Asian EFL settings, especially among low-achieving students. Teachers observed that shy or passive learners became more willing to answer and compete in a relaxed, non-threatening environment.

Observational and document data further supported this claim. Teachers reported that Kahoot reduced learner anxiety and helped build classroom rapport, findings consistent with Kahoot's internal research showing improved motivation and retention when gamification is embedded in formative activities.

Additionally, the collaborative aspect of Kahoot, especially in group-play formats, supports the sociocultural learning theory that emphasizes peer interaction in knowledge construction. This is particularly relevant in Indonesian classrooms where student confidence in English can vary widely. Teachers in this study noted that students often discussed questions in their native language before submitting answers in English, thereby encouraging meaningful language use and peer learning.

Synthesis and Contribution

This study contributes to current discussions on technology-supported pedagogy by providing teacher-centered insights into Kahoot's implementation within a professional learning community. While most research in this area has focused on student perceptions or quantitative outcomes, this study adds depth by highlighting teachers' strategies, challenges, and adaptations.

Furthermore, the findings reinforce the value of peer collaboration through MGMP, which plays a crucial role in fostering innovation and reflective practice among Indonesian teachers. This supports previous work by Supriyanto (2024) and Kamanasa (2024), who emphasized the importance of such communities in promoting sustainable professional development and instructional improvement.

CONCLUSION

This study offers a specific contribution by exploring how EFL teachers in Indonesia's MGMP community use Kahoot in ways that go beyond simple testing. While many previous studies focus on students or general classroom results, this

research highlights teachers' own strategies, challenges, and decisions. It introduces the idea that gamified learning works best when teachers adjust the tool to match their students' needs and classroom context. This teacher-focused perspective helps fill a gap in the literature, especially in developing country settings where digital tools are not always easy to apply.

This study gives new insights into how English teachers in the MGMP community use Kahoot in their teaching. The main contribution of this research is showing that Kahoot is not just a digital quiz tool, but can be used as a helpful strategy to support student learning, increase participation, and reduce anxiety in the classroom.

There are several important implications. For teachers, this study encourages them to think carefully about how they use digital tools like Kahoot, and to adjust it based on their students' needs. For schools and policymakers, this study shows the value of giving more support to teachers, such as training, access to better internet, and working together through teacher groups like MGMP.

This study also introduces the idea of *teacher-mediated gamification*, which refers to the active role of teachers in selecting, modifying, and guiding the use of game-based learning tools like Kahoot. Rather than relying on the tool alone, teachers adapt it to suit their students, learning goals, and teaching environment. For example, in this study, teachers created group-based quizzes when devices were limited, adjusted question formats for different proficiency levels, and used Kahoot to build confidence in shy learners. These practices show that successful gamification depends not only on the technology itself, but also on how teachers plan, deliver, and reflect on its use in real classroom situations.

For future research, it would be helpful to explore how students feel about using Kahoot, to study its long-term effects on learning, and to compare how it works in other regions or school levels.

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