



## CONCEPTUALIZING THE ROLE OF KAHOOT! IN ENHANCING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN EFL

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### ABSTRACT

This chapter explores how Kahoot! can be used as a tool for formative assessment in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The chapter uses the key ideas of assessment, feedback and self-regulated learning to see how this platform aligns with the principles of effective teaching. The chapter argues that Kahoot! is great for increasing student motivation and giving teachers quick feedback to adjust their lessons. However, the chapter also highlights key challenges. The platform's feedback is often too simple, it cannot evaluate skills such as speaking or writing, and the focus on speed and competition can hinder deep thinking. To help teachers, the chapter presents a model called 'Gamified Formative Assessment' that shows how to use Kahoot!'s strengths while managing its weaknesses. The main conclusion is that Kahoot! is not effective on its own. Its true value depends on how a teacher thoughtfully and strategically uses it as a meaningful part of their overall assessment plan.

**Keywords:** *EFL, Formative assessment, Kahoot, Technology*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly influenced the landscape of education in the 21st century. The integration of digital tools into classrooms has shifted the paradigm from traditional teacher-centered approaches to more learner-centered, interactive, and dynamic learning environments. In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, such technologies have the potential to facilitate not only the development of language skills but also to enhance learner motivation, autonomy, and engagement (Godwin-Jones, 2018; Knapp & Watkins, 2019). One notable innovation in this context is the use of gamified learning platforms such as Kahoot!, which has become increasingly popular among educators for its interactive and game-based features.

Kahoot! is a free, web-based platform that allows teachers to create quizzes, surveys, and discussion prompts that are played in real-time by students using their digital devices. The use of game mechanics such as competition, points,

and leaderboards has been shown to increase classroom engagement and foster a more enjoyable learning atmosphere (Plump & LaRosa, 2017; Lesiana et al., 2023; Jaya et al., 2025). Several studies have reported that students perceive Kahoot! as a fun and motivating tool that helps them review materials, especially vocabulary and grammar, in a more engaging (Lady Pratiwi, 2023; Licorish et al., 2018).

Despite its popularity, the pedagogical use of Kahoot! is often limited to surface-level engagement and test preparation. Many teachers use Kahoot! primarily as a tool for revision or warm-up activities, with little emphasis on the deeper pedagogical purposes it could serve, such as promoting formative assessment or supporting self-regulated learning (SRL) (Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2018). Formative assessment, defined as assessment for learning that occurs during the instructional process, provides ongoing feedback to both teachers and students to inform instruction and support learning

progress (Black & William, 2019; William & Leahy, 2024). It encourages learners to reflect on their performance, recognize their learning gaps, and take active roles in improving their outcomes (Hussain et al., 2023).

Several scholars have explored the potential of digital tools in formative assessment. Ajideh et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of feedback and student self-regulation in the assessment process. In addition, Zimmerman and Schunk (2013) notes that self-regulated learners are those who set learning goals, monitor their progress, and reflect upon the outcomes. While Kahoot! provides instant feedback, its use for reflective practice and metacognitive engagement remains under-explored, especially in the EFL context.

Although Kahoot! is widely implemented in language classrooms for its capacity to increase participation and enjoyment, there is insufficient empirical and pedagogical investigation into how this platform can be effectively leveraged to support formative assessment and self-regulated learning in EFL settings. The predominant focus on motivation and engagement often overshadows the deeper instructional benefits that such gamified tools may offer when used intentionally.

Previous studies have primarily investigated the engagement factor of Kahoot! (Lady Pratiwi, 2023; Licorish et al., 2018), but few have examined its role in enhancing formative assessment strategies, or how it could be aligned with learning goals, feedback loops, and student reflection. There is also a lack of research connecting Kahoot!'s functionality with theoretical models of formative assessment and SRL within EFL classrooms, particularly in non-Western, developing country contexts where access to technology is growing but pedagogical integration remains a challenge.

This study aims to critically explore how Kahoot! can be used not merely as an engagement tool, but as a pedagogical instrument that supports formative assessment and fosters self-regulated learning in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. It seeks to bridge the gap between the technical features of Kahoot! and their pedagogical affordances by examining how teachers can integrate this platform into meaningful learning activities that promote feedback, reflection, and active learning.

Specifically, the objectives of this study are to:

- 1) Analyze the potential of Kahoot! as a tool for formative assessment in EFL classrooms.
- 2) Explore how Kahoot! can support self-regulated learning through feedback mechanisms.
- 3) Identify pedagogical strategies to integrate Kahoot! meaningfully beyond mere entertainment or review purposes.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Formative Assessment in EFL*

Formative assessment is widely recognized as a powerful pedagogical practice that enables teachers to gather ongoing evidence of student learning and to adapt their instruction accordingly. Black and Wiliam (2019) describe formative assessment as an interactive process in which teachers use assessment data to inform teaching, while students receive timely feedback that helps them reflect on and improve their performance. Unlike summative assessment, which typically occurs at the end of a learning period, formative assessment is continuous and integrated into daily instruction, making it particularly relevant for language development, which is

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gradual and cumulative (William & Leahy, 2024; Song et al., 2024).

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), formative assessment is essential for tracking students' progression in various language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It supports learners in identifying their linguistic strengths and weaknesses and in making adjustments to their learning strategies. According to Fitriyah and Jannah (2021), formative assessment in EFL promotes learner autonomy and metacognitive awareness, as students are encouraged to engage with language not just for accuracy, but for communicative competence. Teachers can use tools like observation checklists, peer assessments, self-reflection journals, and interactive quizzes to provide meaningful feedback.

Moreover, formative assessment practices can foster a more inclusive and supportive classroom environment. They reduce the anxiety often associated with formal testing and instead create opportunities for low-stakes evaluation and dialogue between teacher and students. When properly implemented, formative assessment becomes an essential part of the learning process itself, guiding both instruction and learner development in a dynamic way. In digital contexts, this approach can be amplified through tools that offer instant feedback and visual data tracking, allowing students to become active agents in their own language learning journey.

***Gamification and Language Learning***

Gamification has emerged as a significant trend in educational technology, characterized by the application of game design elements such as points, badges, levels, and leaderboards into non-game settings to enhance user engagement (Downie & Proulx, 2022; Dicheva & Dichev, 2015). In the realm of education, particularly language learning,

gamification has shown promise in increasing student motivation, promoting sustained participation, and making learning experiences more enjoyable. Kurniawan et al. (2022) argue that gamified learning environments trigger intrinsic motivation by satisfying psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

In EFL classrooms, gamified platforms like Kahoot! are widely used to support vocabulary acquisition, grammar practice, and comprehension checks. Plump and LaRosa (2017) note that Kahoot!'s competitive features such as time-limited questions and real-time rankings create a game-like atmosphere that encourages learners to actively participate. Students are not only motivated by the desire to perform well but also by the fun and social interaction embedded in the platform's design. This playful context can reduce learners' affective filters and encourage more spontaneous use of the target language.

However, while gamification can boost engagement, its effectiveness as a tool for deeper learning and reflection depends on how it is integrated into pedagogy. Overreliance on surface-level competition may shift the focus from learning to winning, thus limiting the platform's formative potential. Therefore, educators must be intentional in designing gamified experiences that align with learning objectives and promote higher-order thinking skills. When structured thoughtfully, gamified tools like Kahoot! can provide opportunities for real-time assessment, collaborative learning, and feedback-informed instruction that supports long-term language development.

***Self-Regulated Learning and Feedback***

Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) refers to learners' proactive engagement in their own educational processes, including goal-setting, strategic planning, self-monitoring, and self-reflection (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2013). Students

who develop SRL skills are more likely to take responsibility for their learning, adapt their approaches based on performance, and persist in the face of challenges. In language learning contexts, SRL is particularly valuable, as mastery of a language requires sustained effort, regular practice, and continuous self-evaluation.

Central to SRL is the concept of feedback. Xu et al. (2023) emphasize that effective feedback supports self-regulation by helping learners compare their actual performance with desired goals, identify gaps, and determine appropriate strategies for improvement. This feedback must be timely, specific, and actionable. In traditional classrooms, feedback often comes too late or lacks clarity. Digital tools, however, offer possibilities for immediate and personalized feedback, which can strengthen learners' metacognitive skills and motivation (Dash, 2022; Hadiani & Rohmah, 2021; Ajani et al., 2024).

When integrated into platforms like Kahoot!, feedback mechanisms can go beyond right-or-wrong answers. Teachers can pause after each question to discuss why an answer is correct, encouraging students to reflect on their reasoning and misconceptions. In this way, Kahoot! becomes more than a quiz game; it turns into a formative tool that supports reflection and autonomy. Students begin to regulate their learning based on instant performance data, leading to a more reflective and strategic approach to language acquisition. Thus, when aligned with SRL principles, Kahoot! can promote both learner engagement and cognitive growth.

### **3. Methodology**

This conceptual study employs a qualitative, theory-informed analytical approach. Rather than collecting new empirical data, this paper synthesizes findings from the literature and pedagogical theory to critically evaluate

the use of Kahoot! in EFL formative assessment. The analysis draws upon established frameworks in formative assessment (Black & William, 2019; William & Leahy, 2024), gamification (Downie & Proulx, 2022), and SRL (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2013), alongside case examples and teacher practices reported in existing studies.

## **4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 The Affordances of Kahoot!**

Kahoot! offers several affordances that align with the core principles of formative assessment. Its most notable feature is the provision of immediate feedback, allowing students to instantly gauge their understanding of a topic. This timely response helps prevent misconceptions from solidifying and enables teachers to intervene appropriately. According to Lady Pratiwi (2023), such real-time feedback can be instrumental in shaping instruction and reinforcing concepts before moving on to more complex material.

Another key affordance is increased learner participation. The competitive nature of Kahoot! engages students in a way that traditional assessment methods often fail to do. Features such as points, timers, and leaderboards create a fun and stimulating environment, encouraging even reluctant learners to take part. In EFL contexts, where students may be hesitant to participate due to language anxiety, such gamified engagement can foster a safer and more inviting learning atmosphere.

Moreover, Kahoot!'s team mode supports collaborative learning. Students working together in small groups must communicate, negotiate answers, and justify their reasoning all of which promote deeper cognitive processing. This collaborative element not only reinforces linguistic skills such as vocabulary and grammar but also fosters peer learning, which can be especially effective for language acquisition. Teachers can use this data to track both individual and group performance, identifying patterns and areas needing reinforcement.

#### ***4.2 Pedagogical Considerations***

To fully harness Kahoot! as a formative assessment tool, it must be embedded within a thoughtful pedagogical framework. Simply using Kahoot! for review games or quizzes, while engaging, does not necessarily promote deeper learning. Instead, teachers should frame each Kahoot! activity within clear learning objectives, ensuring that every question serves a specific pedagogical purpose. This approach ensures that assessment is not just an endpoint but a part of an ongoing learning process (Yakavets et al., 2023; Ardliana et al., 2021).

A critical component of effective formative assessment is the quality of feedback and the opportunity for reflective thinking. After each Kahoot! session, teachers can engage students in feedback dialogues that explore not only the correct answers but also the reasoning behind incorrect responses. For example, if a significant number of students choose the wrong answer, the teacher can prompt a class discussion to unpack the misunderstanding. This reflective dialogue helps transform feedback from being merely corrective to being instructive.

Additionally, teachers should design Kahoot! questions that go beyond recall-level knowledge. Rather than asking “What is the past tense of ‘go’?”, they might pose a contextualized scenario requiring students to choose the correct verb form in use. Such question design encourages higher-order thinking and application of knowledge, aligning with Bloom’s taxonomy. This shift from surface-level to deeper questioning can enhance the learning value of the tool significantly.

#### ***4.3 Limitations and Mitigation***

Despite its strengths, Kahoot! has certain limitations that need to be acknowledged and addressed. One major concern is that the platform may inadvertently promote superficial learning strategies. Since responses are time-limited, students may prioritize speed over accuracy, resorting to guessing rather than thoughtful analysis. This

issue becomes more pronounced when students are rewarded more for being fast than being correct, which can undermine the goals of formative assessment (William & Leahy, 2024).

Another limitation is the platform’s limited ability to assess productive language skills such as speaking and writing. Kahoot! primarily tests receptive skills like reading and listening, as most of its questions are in multiple-choice format. Consequently, it provides an incomplete picture of learners’ communicative competence, particularly in EFL contexts where speaking fluency and written expression are critical outcomes. To address this gap, Kahoot! should be used in conjunction with other performance-based tasks that assess productive skills.

Teachers can mitigate these issues by adjusting their instructional strategies. For instance, they can allow longer response times for complex questions to promote thoughtful answering, or use Kahoot! as a prelude to more in-depth assignments such as group discussions, short essays, or presentations. Additionally, teachers can encourage metacognitive reflection by having students review their performance after the game, analyze their mistakes, and set goals for future learning—thus supporting the development of self-regulated learning skills.

#### ***4.4 Teacher Roles and Institutional Implications***

The effectiveness of tools like Kahoot! depends not merely on their features but on how teachers implement them. Educators must see themselves not as passive users of technology but as active designers of learning experiences. This requires a shift from using digital tools for entertainment or engagement alone, to using them strategically within pedagogical frameworks that support learning goals and assessment principles. Teachers should be intentional in selecting which features of Kahoot! to use, and how to embed them within lesson plans.

Professional development and teacher training play a vital role in this process. Pre-service and in-service programs must

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emphasize not only digital literacy but also assessment literacy and instructional design. Teachers need to understand how to align technology with learning objectives, how to construct effective questions, and how to facilitate feedback-rich classroom discussions. As Fitria (2024) suggest, teachers must be equipped to guide students in interpreting feedback and developing self-regulatory learning behaviors.

From an institutional standpoint, schools and educational policymakers should support the integration of gamified formative assessment tools by providing access, time, and training for teachers. Furthermore, curriculum designers should consider how tools like Kahoot! can be formally incorporated into assessment frameworks, ensuring coherence with broader educational standards. Such systemic support will enable teachers to move beyond surface-level implementation and towards pedagogically grounded, learner-centered use of technology.

**5. CONCLUSIONS**

Kahoot! holds promising potential as a formative assessment tool in EFL education, especially when grounded in theoretical frameworks of assessment and self-regulated learning. However, its effectiveness is not guaranteed by features alone. Its success depends on how intentionally teachers design learning experiences around it. When used reflectively and in conjunction with feedback strategies, Kahoot! can foster learner motivation, participation, and metacognitive awareness.

For future research, longitudinal and mixed-method studies are needed to explore how Kahoot! impacts long-term language development and learner autonomy. Educational institutions should also support equitable access and provide training for teachers to integrate gamified assessment tools effectively.

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