
Game-Based Learning: Elevating Business and Academic Writing Skills for EFL Learners

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Introduction

Effective communication is crucial in today's job market. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2019), a staggering 82% of employers consider it a key skill for career success. The survey also revealed that four out of five employers prioritize strong written communication abilities when evaluating recent graduates. In this competitive landscape, possessing robust writing skills—especially grammatical proficiency—is vital for professional advancement. Poor grammar can lead to misunderstandings, tarnish professional reputations, and ultimately result in lost business opportunities. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, mastering grammar, particularly in business and academic writing contexts, presents unique challenges. These learners often grapple with the intricacies and rules of English grammar, where even slight deviations can significantly alter meaning and prompt miscommunication. Such struggles can diminish their confidence and professionalism in the workplace. Recognizing the substantial challenges EFL learners face, many educators are turning to innovative solutions to enhance their learning experience. Digital games, especially gamification strategies, have gained popularity in language learning over the past few decades, with foundations laid as early as the 1980s (Phillips, 1987). Their effectiveness as educational tools have been supported by numerous studies (Castillo-Cuesta, 2020; Dixon, Dixon, & Jordan, 2022; Li, Peterson, & Wang, 2024; Panagiotidis, Krystalli, & Arvanitis, 2023). Platforms like

Kahoot provide interactive and immersive environments that not only motivate learners but also facilitate the acquisition of grammatical knowledge in engaging and innovative ways. This study aims to delve into the impact of Kahoot on the grammatical development of EFL learners specifically in the realm of business and academic writing. It will compare outcomes between learners who engaged with Kahoot alongside traditional instruction and those who received standard teaching methods devoid of gamification.

The Challenge of Grammar for Business and Academic Writing

Effective grammar is paramount in this field, as it directly influences clarity, professionalism, and overall credibility within professional communication contexts. For non-native English speakers, the journey to mastering grammar can be particularly intimidating due to the intricate complexities and subtleties inherent in English syntax and structure. Common hurdles include grasping the principles of subject-verb agreement, utilizing the correct verb tenses, and constructing complex sentences with precision and accuracy. These grammatical challenges can lead to profound negative ramifications in business communication, manifesting as misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and a damaged professional image that can impede career advancement.

In competitive environments, even seemingly minor grammatical lapses can dramatically undermine an individual's credibility and result in missed opportunities for professional growth and development. Traditional methods of grammar instruction often fall short when it comes to genuinely engaging learners and fostering true mastery of the material. These conventional approaches may excessively rely on rote memorization and repetitive exercises that can alienate students, thereby failing to provide practical, real-world applications of the concepts learned. As a result, many learners struggle to retain

grammatical concepts and apply them effectively in authentic business situations. This illustrates the urgent need for innovative teaching methodologies that can meaningfully engage students while enhancing their grammatical proficiency and confidence.

Gamifying Grammar Practice with Kahoot

Kahoot is an interactive, game-based learning platform that has surged in popularity in various educational arenas. This dynamic tool empowers users to create and participate in engaging quizzes that promote active learning through elements of competition and collaboration. At CamEd Business School, the integration of Kahoot into the English curriculum was designed to enhance grammar instruction for students, thereby fostering a more engaging learning experience. The study encompassed two groups of participants: an experimental group (EG) that utilized Kahoot alongside traditional teaching strategies and a control group (CG) that received standard instruction without the infusion of gamification.

The key features of Kahoot that render it particularly effective for grammar instruction include its ability to

provide immediate feedback, its inherently engaging format characterized by competitive elements, and the capacity to customize content tailored to the specific needs of learners. Students can engage with the material either individually or in teams, making the overall learning experience dynamic, interactive, and enjoyable. This gamified approach serves to significantly increase student motivation and encourages proactive participation, presenting a stark contrast to traditional pedagogical methods that often lack such interactive elements.

The results of this study, analyzed using a mixed between-within subjects ANOVA, compellingly demonstrated the effectiveness of Kahoot in enhancing grammatical knowledge over time. The EG consistently outperformed the CG on subsequent grammar assessments, powerfully illustrating the potential of gamification as a transformative approach to language learning. The integration of game-based learning into the instructional process not only engages students but also actively promotes a deeper understanding of grammatical principles that are essential for effective business and academic writing.

Measurable Gains in Grammar Competency

The findings of this study reveal that the use of Kahoot significantly enhanced the grammatical knowledge of EFL learners, as evidenced by their performance on grammar tests conducted during the research. Students in the EG consistently recorded higher scores than their counterparts in the CG across a range of assessments given to them after the initial pretest. To be more precise, while the CG exhibited only marginal improvements as is evident in their mean scores (T1 = 10.90, T2 = 12.18, T3 = 13.34, T4 = 15.25), the EG demonstrated substantial gains (T1 = 10.77, T2 = 12.32, T3 = 13.87, T4 = 15.97), particularly notable in Tests 3 and 4, where the mean differences reached statistically significant levels ($p < .05$). as displayed in Table 1:

Table 1. Results of Descriptive Statistics

Tests	Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	t	Sig.
Grammar Test 1	EG	10.77	1.43	35	-.36	.71
	CG	10.90	1.57	32		
	Total	10.83	1.49	67		
Grammar Test 2	EG	12.32	1.32	35	.4.1	.67
	CG	12.18	1.44	32		
	Total	12.26	1.37	67		
Grammar Test 3	EG	13.87	1.37	35	1.52	.13
	CG	13.34	1.45	32		
	Total	13.61	1.42	67		

Grammar Test 4	EG	15.97	1.52	35	2.00	.04
	CG	15.25	1.41	32		
	Total	15.62	1.50	67		

Specific grammatical areas where students exhibited pronounced improvement included subject-verb agreement, the proper use of relative clauses, and the formation of conditional sentences.

These advancements in grammar competency can be directly attributed to the interactive features that Kahoot provides, which effectively transformed traditional grammar exercises into captivating and dynamic activities. The immediate feedback mechanism inherent in Kahoot allowed students to promptly identify and rectify their mistakes, thereby reinforcing their grasp of grammatical rules. Furthermore, the competitive atmosphere fostered by Kahoot ignited a drive within learners to participate actively and strive for continuous improvement, ultimately contributing to their overall progress. These enhancements in grammar competency are pivotal for students' success in business environments. Improved grammar skills not only yield clearer and more effective writing but also enhance professionalism and credibility—two critical attributes in any business communication scenario.

Practical Implications for Business Communication

The significant improvements gleaned from this study carry direct implications for business communication. Enhanced grammar skills culminate in clearer and more effective writing, an indispensable requirement in professional contexts. By integrating gamified learning tools, such as Kahoot, into training and development programs, organizations can cultivate a more engaging and effective learning environment for their employees. This innovative approach not only nurtures individual capabilities but also enhances teamwork and peer interaction, critical components for developing strong communication skills within teams. Furthermore, embracing gamification facilitates a cultural shift within organizations that reduces anxiety surrounding grammar learning, rendering the experience more enjoyable and far less intimidating. This transformation can lead to heightened employee satisfaction and retention, in addition to bolstering overall team dynamics. The adoption of gamified learning tools not only enriches the

educational experience for employees but also sets the stage for a thriving and productive workplace culture.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study underscores the remarkable benefits of utilizing Kahoot as a pivotal tool for enhancing grammar proficiency among EFL learners in the domain of business and academic writing. The gamified approach promotes an engaging learning environment that enhances student motivation, encourages active participation, and facilitates a more profound understanding of complex grammatical concepts. By integrating innovative tools like Kahoot into educational frameworks, we not only address the pressing need for improved grammar skills among EFL learners but also equip them with the essential communication competencies that employers are actively seeking. The ability to convey ideas clearly and professionally is paramount in today's competitive job market, where even minor grammatical errors can jeopardize career opportunities. This study provides compelling evidence that gamification can transform the learning experience, making grammar instruction not only more effective but also more enjoyable for students. For both businesses and educators, these findings present a compelling case for incorporating gamification into training methodologies. By adopting such innovative strategies, organizations can significantly improve language skills, enhance team dynamics, and ultimately elevate communication effectiveness within the workplace. As we move forward, it is crucial to recognize that enhancing strong communication skills through engaging and interactive methods will not only benefit individual learners but also contribute to the overall success of organizations in an increasingly globalized economy. Future research could explore the broader application of gamification tools in various business training programs, further assessing their influence on learner engagement and the retention of essential skills. Ultimately, by prioritizing effective communication through innovative educational practices, we can better prepare EFL learners for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in their professional journeys.