

Digital and Online Game-Based Tools in English Language Teaching

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has brought a rapid transformation in how young people interact with information, largely driven by the expansion of internet technologies. Digital environments have become deeply embedded in students' daily lives, shaping how they communicate, learn, and engage with their activities (Hasbi et al., 2025; Putra et al., 2025). Educational technology has therefore evolved to align with these changes, integrating digital tools into pedagogical practices to help today's students in their learning experience (Fajaria et al., 2026; Gomez et al., 2022).

Game-based platforms, in particular, have gained prominence due to their alignment with students' digital habits. Research indicates that technology and games are among the most widely used activities across cultures and age groups, making them a natural fit for modern learning environments, especially in English learning and teaching (Gomez et al., 2022). Furthermore, online educational platforms such as Kahoot! and Quizlet have reached millions of users globally, demonstrating the widespread adoption of digital learning tools (Kahoot! ASA, 2025; Quizlet Inc., 2021).

The increasing exposure of youth to digital media has encouraged teachers to rethink traditional teaching approaches. As a result, integrating digital game-based learning into English language teaching is no longer optional but essential for maintaining relevance and engagement in classroom activities (Gomez et al., 2022).

2. DISCUSSION

Digital and online games offer significant pedagogical benefits in English language teaching and learning, particularly in enhancing students' motivation, engagement, and language acquisition. Studies have consistently shown that game-based learning increases students' participation and enjoyment, which are crucial for effective learning outcomes. For example, the use of *Kahoot!* has been found to significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery and engagement levels (Penton, 2025).

Similarly, research on Blooket demonstrates that gamified environments enhance grammar and vocabulary learning by providing interactive and feedback-driven experiences. Students who are exposed to such tools show higher achievement and motivation compared to traditional methods (Sinaga et al., 2025; Durrotunnafisah, 2024).

Game-based learning also supports cognitive and affective aspects of language acquisition. It promotes active learning, immediate feedback, and repeated exposure to language input, all of which contribute to improved retention and comprehension of students (Novalina & Sari, 2025). Moreover, games reduce anxiety and increase confidence, aligning with key second language acquisition theories (Durrotunnafisah, 2024).

2.1 Integrating Digital Game Platforms into the Classroom

The integration of digital game-based platforms into English language teaching requires more than simply introducing technology into classroom activities. The effectiveness of digital games depends largely on how teachers design, implement, and

evaluate their use within pedagogical contexts. While digital platforms such as Kahoot!, Quizlet, and Blooket offer interactive and engaging learning opportunities, their educational value is maximized only when teachers integrate them strategically with curriculum goals, learning outcomes, and students' needs (Sirait, 2025). Therefore, teachers play a central role not only as instructors but also as facilitators, instructional designers, and evaluators in the implementation of digital game-based learning.

One of the most practical ways teachers can integrate digital game platforms is through lesson preparation and instructional planning. Before introducing a digital game into the classroom, teachers should first identify specific language learning objectives (Hasbi, 2026). For example, if the lesson focuses on vocabulary acquisition, a teacher may design a set of vocabulary review activities using Quizlet's flashcard and matching game features. If the objective is to assess grammar understanding, Blooket may be used to create grammar-based quizzes in an interactive game format. When teachers align digital activities with curriculum objectives, students are more likely to perceive games as meaningful learning experiences rather than purely entertainment-based activities (Durrotunnafisah, 2024). This alignment between instructional goals and digital tools is essential in ensuring that technology serves pedagogical purposes rather than becoming a distraction.

Another important strategy is the use of digital games as warm-up or pre-learning activities. At the beginning of a lesson, teachers can use Kahoot! to activate students' prior knowledge about a topic. For instance, before teaching a unit on descriptive texts, teachers may conduct a short quiz related to adjectives, vocabulary, or sentence structures. Such activities help students recall previously learned material while creating an energetic and participatory classroom atmosphere. Research suggests that game-based warm-up activities improve student attention, participation, and readiness to learn, particularly among younger learners and digital-native students (Wang et al., 2020). In this

context, digital games function as cognitive activation tools that prepare learners for deeper instructional engagement.

Digital platforms can also be effectively implemented during the main instructional phase of classroom teaching. During this stage, teachers can use games to reinforce newly introduced language concepts. For example, after explaining the use of past tense verbs, the teacher may ask students to complete a Blooket challenge that requires identifying correct verb forms in context. Similarly, Quizlet can be used for vocabulary practice through repetition and pronunciation exercises. This approach supports active learning by allowing students to immediately apply what they have learned in an interactive environment. According to studies on gamification in language classrooms, students who actively practice through digital games demonstrate better retention and understanding compared to those who rely solely on traditional worksheets or lectures (Sinaga et al., 2025). Immediate feedback provided by these platforms also allows learners to recognize errors and correct them in real time, which enhances learning effectiveness.

Another significant application is the use of digital games as formative assessment tools. Assessment is a critical component of language teaching, and digital platforms offer innovative ways to monitor student progress. Teachers can use Kahoot! to conduct quick comprehension checks after a lesson, allowing them to identify which language points students have mastered and which areas require further explanation. Unlike conventional paper-based quizzes, digital assessments provide instant scoring and performance analytics, enabling teachers to make data-driven instructional decisions (Wang et al., 2020). Moreover, because the assessment is presented in a game format, students often experience lower anxiety and higher motivation, which can lead to more accurate demonstrations of their actual language ability.

Digital games also support collaborative and communicative learning, both of which are essential in English language acquisition. Teachers may divide students into small groups and assign team-based game activities where learners

must discuss answers, negotiate meaning, and make decisions together. This process naturally encourages communication in English, whether through asking questions, explaining vocabulary, or defending answers. Collaborative gameplay aligns with social constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that knowledge is built through interaction and shared experiences. Research has shown that collaborative digital learning environments improve not only academic achievement but also communication skills, confidence, and peer relationships (Astawa et al., 2026; Gomez et al., 2022).

In addition, teachers can use digital game platforms to support differentiated instruction. In most English classrooms, students have varying levels of proficiency, motivation, and learning preferences. Digital platforms allow teachers to design activities that accommodate these differences. For example, Quizlet allows students to study vocabulary at their own pace, while Blooket provides multiple game modes that appeal to different learner personalities. Advanced learners may be challenged with more complex language tasks, while beginners can focus on foundational vocabulary or grammar exercises. This flexibility makes digital games particularly useful in inclusive classrooms where teachers must address diverse learning needs (Sirait, 2025).

Another emerging practice is the integration of digital games in blended learning and homework activities. Teachers are no longer limited to classroom instruction; they can assign online game-based activities as homework or independent study tasks. For instance, students may be asked to review vocabulary using Quizlet at home or complete a grammar challenge on Blooket before the next lesson. This extends learning beyond classroom boundaries and encourages autonomous learning habits. The accessibility of these platforms through smartphones, tablets, and computers makes them highly practical for continuous learning. Studies indicate that students who engage in game-based language practice outside classroom hours demonstrate stronger

vocabulary retention and greater learner autonomy (Durrutunnafisah, 2024; Sinaga et al., 2025).

Despite these benefits, teachers may also face challenges when integrating digital games into classroom practice. Technical issues such as unstable internet connections, limited access to devices, or insufficient digital literacy among teachers can affect implementation. Classroom management may also become more complex if students focus excessively on competition rather than learning objectives. Therefore, successful integration requires proper planning, institutional support, and teacher training. Professional development programs focused on educational technology can help teachers develop the skills necessary to effectively use digital game platforms in language instruction (Sirait, 2025).

Integrating digital game platforms into English language classrooms involves a comprehensive pedagogical process that includes planning, instruction, assessment, collaboration, differentiation, and reflection. When implemented thoughtfully, digital games can transform classroom dynamics, increase students' motivation, and improve language outcomes. Rather than replacing traditional teaching methods, these platforms should be viewed as complementary tools that enrich the overall learning experience and prepare students for the demands of education in the digital era (Wang et al., 2020; Gomez et al., 2022).

2.2 Kahoot!

Kahoot! platform is one of the most widely recognized game-based learning platforms used in educational settings worldwide. It allows teachers to create live quizzes, polls, and interactive challenges that students can join using smartphones, tablets, or computers. In English language classrooms, Kahoot! is commonly used for vocabulary review, grammar practice, reading comprehension checks, and formative assessment activities. Teachers typically project questions on a classroom screen while students answer individually or in teams using their devices.

One of the major strengths of Kahoot! lies in its ability to create a highly energetic and interactive classroom atmosphere. The platform incorporates music, countdown timers, leaderboards, and instant feedback, which naturally increase student engagement and motivation. In English learning, teachers can use Kahoot! to review vocabulary items, test grammar structures, or assess reading comprehension after a lesson. For example, after teaching verbs, teachers may create multiple-choice questions that require students to choose the most appropriate verb in a sentence. Research has shown that Kahoot! significantly improves student participation and vocabulary retention in language learning contexts (Penton, 2025; Wang et al., 2020).

Another strength of Kahoot! is its effectiveness as a formative assessment tool. Teachers receive immediate performance data, allowing them to identify areas where students struggle and adjust instruction accordingly. This instant feedback supports both student learning and teacher decision-making.

However, Kahoot! also has some limitations. Because the platform emphasizes speed and competition, some students may focus more on answering quickly than on deeply processing the language content. Lower-proficiency learners may also feel pressured when competing against peers, potentially increasing anxiety rather than reducing it. Also, the multiple-choice format, while effective for review, may not always promote productive language skills such as writing or speaking unless followed by classroom discussion.

English learning exposure:

- Vocabulary recognition and recall
- Grammar identification and sentence correction
- Reading comprehension through contextual questions
- Listening comprehension when audio elements are used
- Speaking development through post-game discussions

Strengths:

- Highly engaging and motivational
- Easy to use in live classroom settings
- Excellent for formative assessment
- Provides immediate feedback and learning analytics
- Encourages classroom interaction and participation

Weaknesses:

- Can overemphasize speed rather than understanding
- Competitive environment may intimidate some learners
- Limited support for extended writing practice
- Requires stable internet connection and devices

2.3 Quizlet

Quizlet is a digital learning platform that focuses primarily on vocabulary learning, memorization, and concept reinforcement. It offers a variety of study modes, including flashcards, matching games, spelling activities, and collaborative learning tools. In English language teaching, Quizlet is commonly used to teach vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, and word usage.

Teachers can create customized vocabulary sets based on lesson objectives. For example, in a lesson about environmental issues, teachers may upload words such as *pollution*, *recycle*, and *sustainable* into Quizlet, along with their definitions and example sentences. Students can then practice these words independently or collaboratively through different game modes.

One of Quizlet's greatest strengths is its support for repeated exposure and spaced repetition, both of which are critical in vocabulary acquisition. The platform also includes text-to-speech functions, allowing students to hear correct pronunciation. This makes Quizlet especially useful for learners who need additional support in pronunciation and listening discrimination. Studies suggest that repeated digital exposure significantly improves vocabulary retention and learner autonomy (Quizlet Inc., 2021).

Another major advantage is the flexibility. Unlike other live-classroom platforms, Quizlet can be used both inside and outside the classroom. Students can access learning materials anytime using mobile devices, which supports independent learning habits.

Despite its strengths, Quizlet also has limitations. Because much of the learning process is self-paced and repetitive, some students may lose interest if the teacher does not vary the activities. Additionally, Quizlet focuses heavily on vocabulary and memorization, which may limit opportunities for spontaneous communication or authentic language production.

English learning exposure:

- Vocabulary acquisition and retention
- Pronunciation practice through audio support
- Spelling and word recognition
- Reading and meaning association
- Writing accuracy through spelling exercises

Strengths:

- Excellent for vocabulary learning and retention
- Supports independent and flexible learning
- Includes pronunciation and audio support
- Accessible across multiple devices
- Encourages learner autonomy

Weaknesses:

- Can become repetitive for some learners
- Less interactive than live competition-based games
- Limited communicative speaking activities
- Focuses more on memorization than contextual language use

2.4 Blooket

Blooket is a relatively newer educational platform that combines quiz-based learning with multiple game mechanics. Unlike Kahoot!, which typically uses a single live quiz format,

Blooket offers multiple game modes such as racing, strategy, collection, and team competitions. This variety makes it particularly attractive to younger learners and students who enjoy video game environments.

In English language classrooms, Blooket can be used for grammar drills, vocabulary reinforcement, reading comprehension, and even sentence-building exercises. For example, after teaching past tense verbs, teachers may design a Blooket game where students must identify correct verb forms to progress in the game. This integration of academic content with gameplay creates a strong motivational effect.

One of Blooket's greatest strengths is its ability to sustain engagement over longer periods. The platform's variety of game modes prevents learning activities from becoming monotonous. Additionally, Blooket encourages repeated exposure to language content through competition and game progression. Research indicates that Blooket significantly improves students' motivation and vocabulary achievement in English classrooms (Sinaga et al., 2025; Durrotunnafisah, 2024).

Another advantage is its adaptability for both live and asynchronous learning. Teachers can assign Blooket activities as homework, allowing students to practice independently outside classroom hours.

However, Blooket also presents some challenges. Because the game elements are highly entertaining, students may sometimes focus more on winning than on the learning content. Teachers must therefore carefully monitor classroom implementation to ensure educational objectives remain central. In addition, some advanced features may require premium access, which could limit usage in certain educational contexts.

English learning exposure:

- Grammar practice through contextual questions
- Vocabulary reinforcement through repetition
- Reading comprehension in game scenarios
- Sentence structure recognition

- Collaborative discussion during team gameplay

Strengths:

- Highly engaging with multiple game modes
- Strong motivational impact
- Suitable for live classes and homework
- Supports repetition and reinforcement
- Appeals strongly to digital-native learners

Weaknesses:

- Students may focus more on gameplay than learning
- Requires teacher monitoring and classroom management
- Some features may require paid access
- Can become overly competitive in some classroom settings

3. RECOMMENDATION

Digital and online game-based tools have transformed English language teaching and learning into more engaging, interactive, and effective. Platforms such as Kahoot!, Quizlet, and Blooket demonstrate that gamification can significantly enhance students' motivation, participation, and language proficiency (Penton, 2025; Sinaga et al., 2025).

However, the effectiveness of these tools depends largely on how teachers integrate them into the curriculum. Teachers should adopt a balanced approach that combines digital games with traditional teaching methods to maximize learning outcomes (Sirait, 2025; Wang et al., 2020).

Recommendations:

- Teachers should align game activities with clear learning objectives.
- Schools should provide training for educators on digital pedagogy.
- Future research should explore the long-term impacts of DGBL on language proficiency.

Ultimately, digital game-based teaching and learning represents a powerful and necessary innovation in modern English education, particularly in an increasingly digital world.

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