DYNAMIZING THEORY-BASED CLASSES IN THE UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMME IN TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING STUDIES: THE USE OF KAHOOT!

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Abstract

Kahoot! has emerged in the last years as a great tool to increase students' participation and motivation as well as enhancing the teaching-learning process and foster cross-curricular competences such as problem-solving and analytical and synthesis skills. This study describes an experience based on Kahoot! implemented in two groups of students from the Translation and Interpreting degree of the University of Granada. The students were enrolled in a general translation course and, for most of them, this course was their first contact with translation. Kahoot! quizzes were used during the first part of the course, which comprises five theoretical topics focused on several aspects of Translation Theory and Linguistics. Five different Kahoot! quizzes formed by ten questions were prepared to cover all the theoretical topics of the course. Therefore, after the presentation of each topic students had to play a Kahoot! to check if they had acquired the different contents exposed during the class. The results of the quizzes were used to evaluate students' academic performance as they accounted for 10% of their final mark.

Keywords: Kahoot, gamification, Translation and Interpreting, ICT, higher education.

1 INTRODUCTION

Theory classes can be challenging for teachers as it is difficult to catch students' attention and to maintain them engaged during the class. Nowadays, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) offer an enormous range of resources and tools that can be integrated in the classroom in order to involve students. In addition, ICT resources allow teachers to foster cross-curricular and specific competences. More specifically, in the case of Translation and Interpreting Studies, the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain (ANECA) defines the cross-curricular and specific competences for this degree. Within the cross-curricular competences are included: problem-solving skills, analytical and synthesis skills, ICT skills, knowledge management skills and decision-making skills, among others [1]. Higher education is complex, diverse and demanding and cross-curricular competences are usually relegated to a secondary position in the current syllabus as the education system is generally focused on content delivery, underscoring creativity and innovation [2]–[4]. Therefore, the integration of ICT in the classroom can be a great ally to develop these competences.

ICT offers a wide range of possibilities concerning learning and motivation, however, it must be considered that it is essential to understand the way in which ICT is implemented as the mere use of devices in class will not lead to substantial changes in the learning process [5]. Therefore, ICT resources should serve as a supporting tool for favoring student-centered learning, helping to develop curiosity, creativity and cooperation and redefining the possibilities of assessment and learning activities [3], [5]. As a consequence, new trends related to teaching strategies and methods constantly appear [6]. This is the case of gamification, which is defined as the use of game design elements in non-game context to solve problems and encourage learning [7], [8]. Gamification has gained popularity recently, as it has been proved to be increase students' motivation and engagement, favoring the teaching-learning process [9]–[15]. Other benefits of gamification include improvements in terms of attention to reference materials, participation, proactivity, collaboration and interaction [16], [17]. Finally, concerning cross-curricular competences, gamification proved to have a positive impact on improving skills related to decision-making, problem-solving and critical thinking [18], [19]

Gamification does not necessarily require the use of technology or multimedia support. However, some authors claim that gamification is mainly based on technology and generally applied on desktop, web or smartphone applications as its most common objective is to increase user experience and engagement. More specifically, rewards system and leaderboards have a positive impact on motivation given that the representation of the progress is innovative, fun and encouraging for

students [20]. Gamification can be introduced in the classroom in numerous ways and there is a high number of resources that allow teachers to gamify their classes. Moreover, Kahoot! has been found to be suitable for multilingual university settings [21], which is the case of Interpreting and Translation Studies. Kahoot! is a free, online resource that allows teachers to implement game mechanics and dynamics through interactive quizzes, which can be based on the course contents. It allows students to track their own progress as it gives instant feedback and teachers can also store the reports concerning students' progress. Therefore, Kahoot! can be used as an evaluation tool as well.

Numerous studies have proved the efficacy of Kahoot! in Higher Education. For instance, a recent study carried out by [22] implemented Kahoot! as a part of a gamified subject which was thought to be frightening, stereotyped, arid and complex which led to students being intimidated, discouraged and disinterested. Their results showed that this gamified experience enriched students' learning, attraction, motivation, participation, proactivity and learning experience. Similarly, [23] introduced Kahoot! in a laboratory course and their findings revealed a positive impact on students' participation, motivation and fun as well as being more involved with the topics covered. On its part, [24] measured the long-term learning effect of Kahoot! quizzes in exams and the findings were that students who have participated in more quizzes tended to reach higher exam marks. In line with this research, [25] conducted a research to explore the benefits and challenges perceived by undergraduate students concerning the use of Kahoot! in a course. Students indicated that Kahoot! enabled them to relate to lectures and lecture notes, recall important points in an enjoyable way and discover useful knowledge and information about the course. In addition, the authors pointed out that it is essential for the Kahoot! to meet the course content and process goals as one of the main challenges identified by students was having too much information to complete in a single quiz [25], [26].

Concerning students' attitudes, opinions and perceptions of Kahoot! research conducted indicate a general positive value of the use of Kahoot! with special emphasis on students' perception of the subject matter, motivation, satisfaction and enhancement of the learning process as well as enjoying the competitive environment [27]–[32]. But not only students' have positive opinions concerning Kahoot!, teachers remark its positive impact in terms of their relationships with students and the increase of students' participation, involvement, interest and motivation as well as the pedagogical opportunities that it provides [26], [33].

In fact, one of the main benefits of Kahoot! is that allow teachers to assess students' academic performance thanks to its scoring system. Several studies have proved the efficacy of Kahoot! in terms of students' assessment. In the gamification experience described by [22], test based on Kahoot! were used to evaluate students' performance and their findings show that there were a higher rate of class attendance and that students' perceptions were positive, as they thought of the evaluation as a game. In their research, [25] also used Kahoot! as a formative assessment during a 14 weeks course featuring six different Kahoot! quizzes conducted after the delivery of the lessons and they reported that students' put more effort into revising lessons, improving their retention power. The findings described by [24] showed that students who participated in Kahoot! quizzes reached higher in the exam and they also report a positive effect on students' perception of learning. These results are in line who those of [31], who conducted a research to determine the positive impact of gamified assessment rather than conventional assessment using experimental and control groups. The authors remark the positive impact on academic achievement of the experimental groups and the benefits of Kahoot! for long courses as students' interest increased due to their desire of performing well in Kahoot! quizzes.

The objective of this work is to describe an experience based on Kahoot! implemented in two groups of students from the Translation and Interpreting degree of the University of Granada. Kahoot! quizzes were used in a French general translation course and, thus, for most students this course is their first contact with translation. Kahoot! quizzes were used in the theoretical part of the course, as the theory topics tend to be challenging and, sometimes, is difficult to attract students' attention. Five different quizzes were used for each topic and the results were used to asses students' performance.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Participants and context

57 undergraduate students participated on this experience, which took place during 2018-2019 academic course. It is worth mentioning that 21 of the students were exchange students from French−speaking countries and, therefore, their mother tongue was French. The students were

enrolled in two different groups−Group A and Group B−of the course General Translation B-A French, which takes place in the fourth semester of the Translation and Interpreting degree of the University of Granada. The working language of the course is Spanish, although, due to the nature of the course, French is also used. As mentioned above, this subject it is thought to be an introductory course to general translation. The course curriculum is divided in two parts. The first part of the course−delivered in Spanish−comprises five theoretical topics focused on several aspects of Translation Theory and Linguistics. The second part of the course is devoted to practical group activities that simulate real French to Spanish translation projects.

2.2 Kahoot! Quizzes

Kahoot! quizzes were used to complement the theoretical part of the course. After the teacher's presentation of each of the 5 theoretical topics covered during the course students had to play a Kahoot! to check whether they have acquired or not the different contents exposed during the class. Consequently, Kahoot! quizzes were played during the last 15-20 minutes of each course session, which lasted 2 hours. Students played the Kahoot! using their own mobile devices. Each Kahoot! comprised 10 questions−in Spanish−simulating a real test exam. The results of the 5 quizzes accounted for the 10% of students' final mark. Hereunder are a summary of the topics covered during the course and some examples of the questions included in the quizzes.

The first topic was *Introduction to translation and translation competence* and included questions such as:

- Which is the main function of a translation?
    - Phatic
    - Communicative (correct answer)
    - Commercial
    - Stylistic
- The main objective of the translation competence is…
    - Developing each of the translation subcompetences
    - Translators training in the target language
    - Promote international mobility
    - Distinguish the professional from the non-professional (correct answer)

The second topic, *Contrastive Linguistics*, was devoted to the linguistic differences between Spanish and French that must be taken into account by translators and included questions like:

- Concerning punctuation…
    - In ES and FR there is a space included before and after the punctuation mark
    - In ES and FR a space is never included before and after the punctuation mark
    - In ES a space is never included before the punctuation mar (correct answer)
    - In FR there is always and space before and after the punctuation mark

The third topic covered the different *Translation Strategies* that can be applied to translations, among the questions, students were presented several examples of translation strategies and they had to identify the strategy employed. The fourth topic was *Analysis and Text Typologies* and included, among others, the following question:

- The *thesis* is a feature of…
    - Narrative writing
    - Expository writing
    - Persuasive writing (correct answer)
    - Descriptive writing

Finally, the main aim of the last topic, *Translation Project*, was to familiarize students with translation working dynamics and included questions related to how to manage delivery times, deal with clients, translations rates and the different taxes to which translations are subjected, among others. For instance, one of the questions was:

- An invoice does not include…
    - The final price and taxes
    - Information about payment methods
    - Information about the translator
    - Information about the target audience (correct answer)

3 RESULTS

Concerning students' performance with regard to Kahoot! quizzes Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 show Group A and Group B results expressed in percentage of correct answers. On the one hand, as far as Group A is concerned (see Fig.1) all the students' who participated in the Kahoot! quizzes passed on average the 5 quizzes as they got more than 50% of answers right. Group A students performed better in Quiz 5, corresponding to the topic *Translation Project*, as, on average, they got more than 63% answers right. On the contrary, the most challenging topic for students was *Introduction to Translation and Translation Competence* (Quiz 1), however, they got still good marks as more than 56% of the answers were correct.

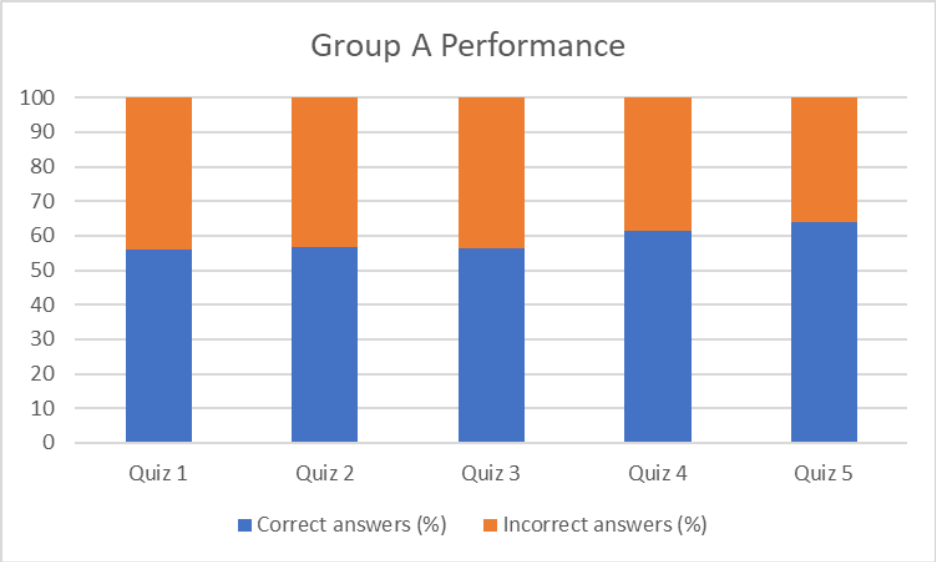

Figure 1. Group A performance.

On the other hand, with regard to Group B, as in the case of Group A, all the students who participated in Kahoot! quizzes passed on average the 5 quizzes (see Fig. 2). In fact, students got more than 70% correct answers in Quiz 3, which corresponded to the topic *Translation Strategies*. On the contrary, the lowest performance is found in Quiz 4−*Analysis and Text Typologies*−, however, even if it is the lowest average mark, correct answers represent more than 59%.

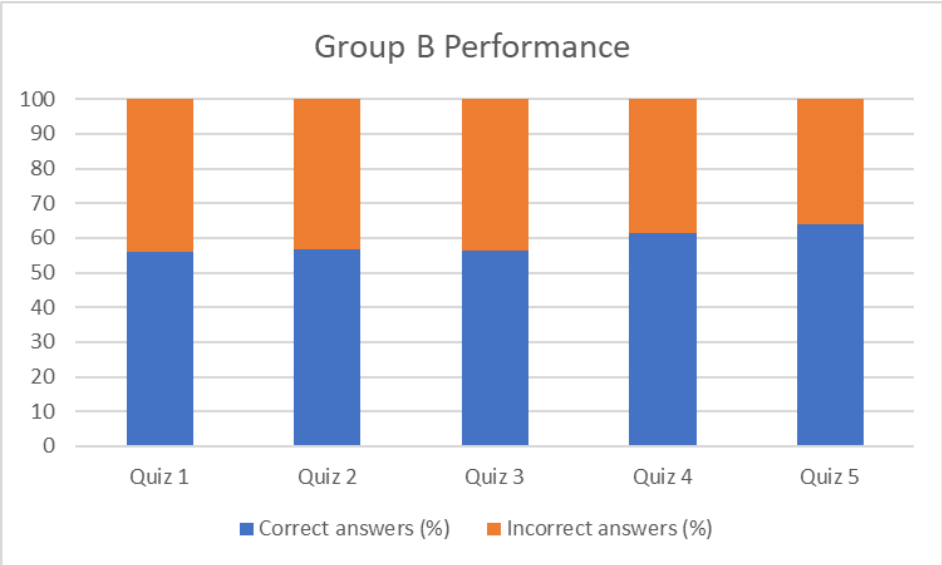

Figure 2. Group B performance.

Finally, Table 1 shows the overall scores of both groups expressed as a percentage. As mentioned above, both groups show a good performance as, on average, students got more that 50% of the answers right for the 5 quizzes involved. However, it can be observed that Group B performed slightly

better as its percentage of correct answers is higher. It is also remarkable the fact that the most challenging topic for Group B students (Quiz 4) is the second topic in which Group A students performed their best.

Table 1. Overall performance.

	Group A		Group B	
	Correct answers (%)	Incorrect answers (%)	Correct answers (%)	Incorrect answers (%)
Quiz 1	56,15	43,85	63,14	38,86
Quiz 2	56,57	43,43	67,74	32,26
Quiz 3	56,36	43,64	74,13	25,87
Quiz 4	61,25	38,75	59,85	40,15
Quiz 5	63,93	36,07	69,57	30,43

4 CONCLUSIONS

The inclusion of gamification elements in theory-based classes can be of great help for teachers to engage and motivate students. Nowadays, there are plenty of resources that can be used in the classroom thanks to the development of ICT technologies. In addition, given that undergraduate students normally bring their own devices to the classroom, the cost and logistics are highly reduced. Moreover, using this kind of resources may be useful not only to promote learning but to foster the acquisition of cross-curricular and specific competences.

The findings of this work show that Kahoot! is a great tool to dynamize theory-based classes as it serves both the aims of students and teachers. Kahoot! is seen by students as motivating and attractive, as stated in the literature review, and this helps teachers to evaluate students' knowledge and academic performance in a fun and entertaining way. More specifically, all the students of this research performed fairly well in the quizzes. It is noteworthy that more than a third of the participants students were exchange students, which was an added difficulty, as their mother tongue was not Spanish and both, lessons and quizzes were delivered in Spanish. In addition, for most students, the course in which Kahoot! was implemented posed a great challenge as they were not previously familiar with the topics covered. In this sense, Kahoot! was a great ally when it comes to explain theory concepts that can be seen as complex, boring or unattractive by the students. However, there are some aspects that had to be taken into account when developing Kahoot! quizzes such as time constraints and the space limitations for questions and answers, which means that teachers have to carefully thought and synthetize the questions so that students can provide successful answers.

This work may be potentially helpful for both researchers and educators in the context of implementing ICT technologies and gamification in Higher Education. Nevertheless, some limitations are found such as the limited topics covered and the duration of the experience. Therefore, future research could include long-term experiences not only limited to Kahoot! but also including other kind of ICT and gamification resources. In addition, questionnaires and interviews may be conducted in order to explore students' attitudes and opinions.

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