

Gamification of Kahoot! Boosts Students' Motivation in ESL Classroom

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This paper analyzed the effectiveness of using Students Response System namely Kahoot! to activate students' motivation and engagement in learning English as a Second Language (ESL) at a college. A survey method was used in this study with the purpose to find out and investigate the students' perspective on using Kahoot! in English class. The sample consisted 30 college students who are undergoing diploma level of study. Questionnaire were distributed to the students and informal interview was done to find out what their perceptions of using this approach in English as a Second Language (ESL) class. The findings indicated that Kahoot! was effective to boost students' motivation and engagement in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom.

Keywords: Kahoot!, motivation, ESL, Students Response System.

1. Introduction

Game-based learning is believed as a best practice in education. Research and empirical data support game learning as an effective tool for educators to use in the classroom because it engages students in problem solving, critical thinking and review of content knowledge. Furthermore, students feel that learning through games especially the language learning class make them more interesting to enjoy and participate the content of delivery.

Today's students speak digitally; they are all "native speakers" of the digital language of computers (Xiao, 2013). If we educators do not take up the challenge to be compatible with our students' ability, we will be left behind. The circumstances will become more worst when the role of educator can as information transmitters will be no more significant since students can find everything they required without any guidance outside of their classrooms (Jusoh, 2009).

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of using Students Response System namely Kahoot! to activate students' motivation and engagement in learning English as a Second Language (ESL) at a college.

1.1 Conceptual Framework

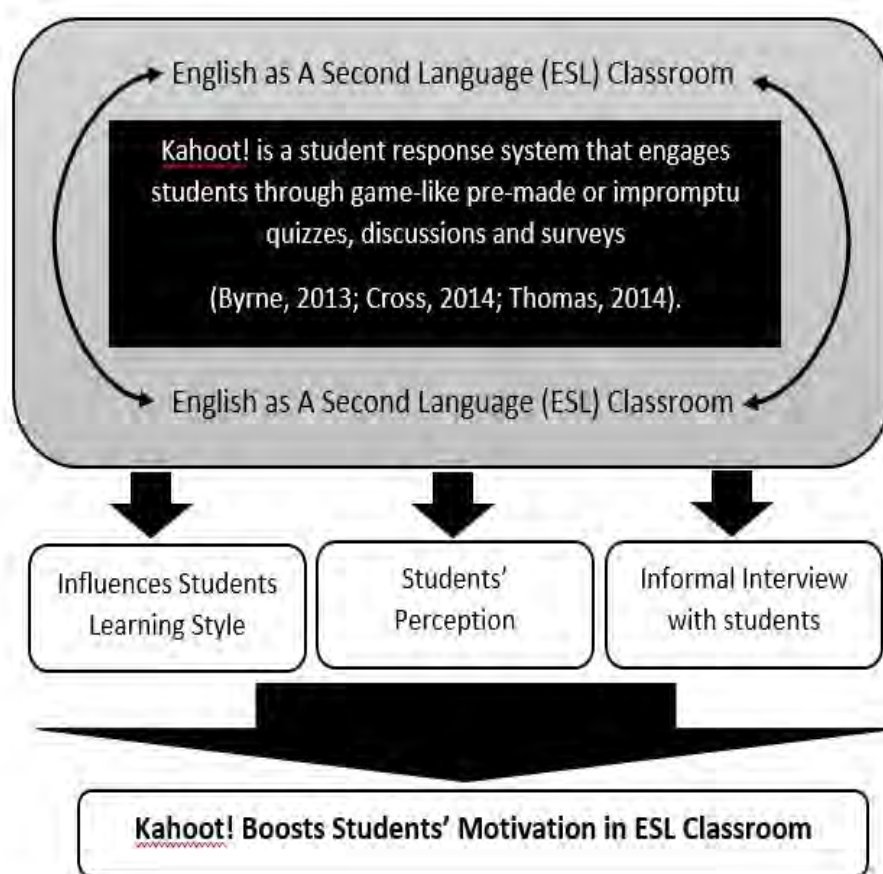


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study with the concept that is based on Byrne, 2013; Cross, 2014; Thomas, 2014.

"...Kahoot!! is a student response system that engages students through game-like pre-made or impromptu quizzes, discussions and surveys (Byrne, 2013; Cross, 2014; Thomas, 2014)."

Students' perceptions of the use of this gamification in ESL Classroom can be determined. This conceptual framework also explains students' motivations contributing to students' learning English. This study is an attempt to investigate students' perception on the using gamification method such as Kahoot!! Most specifically, this study tries to answer the following research question: What are students' perceptions on the gamification of Kahoot! in ESL Classroom?

2. Literature Review

Gamification is understood as "the use of game-based mechanisms, aesthetics and game thinking to engage people, motivate action, promote learning and solve problems (Kapp, 2012). One of the objectives of gamification is to influence the behaviour of people, through the experiences and feelings that are built through games, encouraging commitment and loyalty of users, customers and workers (Ramírez, 2014) and using "motivation for the achievement of specific objectives" (Teixes, 2015: 18).

It has also been argued that game-based situated learning environments promote student motivation and engagement. Unfortunately, very few researchers began to move the discussion of complex problem solving beyond descriptive research (Eseryel, Law, Ifenthaler & Gee 2012).

It is undeniable that quiz game applications based on students' response tools such as Kahoot! is considered as one of the relevant sources to build complementary education material that attract twenty first century students. As general, this tool allows building online quiz games, which can be used in the education area especially in ESL class.

Students do not need a Kahoot!! account to access the quiz and can access the quiz through any device with a web browser, such as an iPad, Android device, or Chromebook (Byrne, 2013). It is an advantage since there are many students and almost all tertiary students have a smartphone to access into this game. However, teachers do need an account to create quizzes (Thomas, 2014).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

In this study, thirty students (30) were chosen as the sample for the research. The selection of these students was based on the convenient sampling as they were chosen based on the fact that they are studying in the researcher's workplace that is Kolej Prodesional MARA, where the study was conducted.

3.2 Research Instrument

Table 1. Overview of the Questionnaire Items

Section	No	Topic	The approach for data gathering was
A (Questions 1–2)	2	Students' background	
B (Questions 1–12)	12	Students' general perceptions on Kahoot!!	

adapted from a method developed by Goodnough and Woods (2002) through this questionnaire items for a study of "Students and Teacher Perceptions of Mind Mapping". The questionnaire was used for the research due to the purpose of the survey, i.e. to find out students' perception of using game-based such Kahoot!! in ESL Classroom. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to 30 students after they had English lessons which using Kahoot!! as one of the learning style. This was to find out students' perception of Kahoot!!. The responses would enable the researcher to answer research question of the study.

According to Najib (1999, as cited in Mumtaz and Mahadir, 2007), there reasons why questionnaires are popular instrument for data collection. This is because questionnaires have some advantages over other data collection methods. This questionnaire is divided into two sections. The first section is on demographic factor, whereby the students are asked to write their SPM Grade for English.

For the second section, the students were asked to indicate either "yes" or "no" for their answer. The researcher used the close-ended type of questions because it is easy for low proficiency students to understand them. There are a total of 10 questions in this section and all are related to the students' perception towards Kahoot!!. The analysis was done using quantitative method. Percentages and means were used to analyse the data and identify students' perception towards Kahoot!!.

4. Findings And Discussion

Table 2. Students' General Perceptions of Kahoot!

No.	Items	Yes (%)	No (%)
1.	Have you ever played any language games?	86.6	13.4
2.	Was Kahoot!! funny?	97	3
3.	Did you learn something from Kahoot!!!?	97	3
4.	Would you recommend Kahoot!!!?	100	0
5.	Does Kahoot!! motivate you to learn English?	100	0
6.	Kahoot!! motivates me very much because I can win	90	10
7.	Kahoot!! motivates me very much because I can master my knowledge	87	13
8.	Kahoot!! motivates me very much because I can do with others	37	63
9.	Kahoot!! motivates me very much because I can know the purpose	93	7
10.	I feel positive with Kahoot!!	80	
11.	I feel neutral with Kahoot!!	16.6	
12.	I feel negative with Kahoot!!	3.3	

Table 2 showed the results for the students' general perceptions of using gamification of Kahoot!!.

It was interesting to know that to what extent, the students were familiar with any language games so that the items revealed the score that almost 90% of students have played the language games before. The majority of the students have the experiences on playing this games but Kahoot!! for them is the first time. Some of them have mentioned in informal interview as well, what language games that they have been involved. While also some of them found that they have been through certain language games via offline.

As to trigger the opinion of students' feedback on Kahoot!! gamification, there are almost all (97%) students said yes that Kahoot!! is fun while only small score said no for that. While the vast majority also as previous item of the questionnaire that agreed this game had been given something to learn. It showed that, majority students said yes that they learnt something from this game. What is more is all students or 100% of them recommended Kahoot!! as one of many ways of interesting learning style.

The researcher also indicated certain questions in the items to find out their intrinsic motivation towards the games in their ESL classroom. All students agreed that Kahoot!! motivated them to learn English. To clarify and to figure out to what extent that these students feel motivated in Kahoot!! way of learning, the researcher decided to test that component of the item with reward, master, teamwork and purpose.

Reward that is desire to win dominated that games itself about winning and losing. Almost all of the students were strongly engaged with the game because of the reward that is champion at the end of the competition. It indicated that students quite motivated by the prospect of winning.

The results were reversed in the case of mastery that is master in students' knowledge. More than half of the students were very interested in developing competence. This indicated that Kahoot!! helped them understanding more about the lesson.

Meanwhile, teamwork looked much lower than the rest of the reasons of motivation. Only small scored of them who liked the idea of playing with others. This result might have related to the nature of Kahoot!! itself that focus on individually concept. The clear and known purpose of the game which is not only winning but also revising, checking, and consolidating knowledge was also appreciated by about all of students.

The majority of those who evaluate the game got the positive feeling that is 80% of students. A tiny proportion which 3.3% felt that Kahoot!! was negative. While the rest scored 16.6% that felt neutral. While the game system evaluated fun, the learning outcome, and feelings, the post-gaming questionnaire addressed the key question of the research, evaluating how motivating the Kahoot!! game could be.

The very significant finding from this study was the mastery that master in their knowledge. It showed the effectiveness of using Kahoot!! as one of the teaching methods or a tool. This also indicated that even though the way may be a bit complicated and novice, the students seem to be open and eager to learn through the use of an online game. The high level of this type of learning recommendation suggests as well that innovative approach by using technology in education is better than common chalk and talk traditional teaching and the subsequent practice involving numerous and monotonous exercises, such as filling the gaps, completing sentences with appropriate verb forms, matching forms, or choosing the correct option in multiple choice exercises.

This demonstrates that Kahoot!! game in ESL classroom able to result in good output in which students try their level best to get correct answers in order to win the game and become champion. On the other hand, it is stated there by the participants that the only interesting activity being done on that in that ESL lesson was playing the game. In spite of it was quite short lesson and few other activities were arranged too, yet the online game only seems to be very interesting and mind blowing for the students.

The effective online game class such as Kahoot!! luckily, can be arranged and built by the intrinsic motivation and inborn inspiration driven. This proves in that students in this new era focused more towards ICT tools based education rather than chalk and talk method. They too give much preeminence to game base learning styles. At last, numerous students were hoping to have more games in their future language classrooms. This shows in that they want a fun and enjoyable environment to study rather than brick and mortar education. Despite the fact that they were making a lot of sounds and clamors throughout the games, yet the score that related them in motivation and inspiration is a result and outcome showing in that they are learning at the same time.

Generally, the result of this study can be concluded by a common view on gamification by Kevin Werbach, who expresses that

"...gamification can motivate people to undertake activities that they otherwise wouldn't do. If that means hitting the gym regularly or having a more enjoyable engagement with a brand, it's a good thing".
(Werbach, 2014, loc. 959)

In conversation or informal interview with students as participants, it was discovered that individual reflection was empowered on the grounds that there is an objective to be accomplished (being the game winner). Below are some responds idea by students through conversation with the researcher;

"I have problems if the language class is too slow and dull. It falls me asleep and lose focus. Even though I have no problem understanding the lesson. Game-based lesson such as Kahoot!! with immediate feedback explanation are an amazing way to get my attention and make learning easy and enjoyable..."

Meanwhile students also have proposed that other teachers/lecturers to use Kahoot!! in their lesson too.

"I would like to suggest that the other subjects also can have more interactive lessons as the one we had in English lesson using Kahoot!..."

5. Conclusion

The fact that to face by all language teachers is gamification might be present in ESL classrooms. The reward and feedback need to be gratitude and accomplished in no-waiting time. It would affect motivation when it comes very hard sometimes due to delayed and lateness. Gamification can add motivation to learning activities and as such should not be underestimated. Indeed, there have already been gamified classes in educational institutions and this trend is very likely to develop.

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