

EFL STUDENTS' KAHOOT! EXPERIENCE: PERSPECTIVES FROM INDONESIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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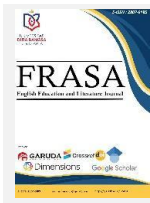
Abstract

The use of technology into English language learning is becoming more and more vital for keeping students interested and motivated. Kahoot! is a gamified learning platform that provides dynamic and enjoyable learning experiences across a range of technical instruments. Nonetheless, studies examining students' firsthand experiences with Kahoot! in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms in Indonesia are still scarce. This study seeks to investigate the experiences of intermediate-level EFL students utilising Kahoot! as a tool for English language acquisition and to ascertain how its characteristics enhance motivation, engagement, and comprehension of the educational content. A descriptive qualitative methodology was utilised, gathering data via questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with 21 Grade 11 students from a senior high school governed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Cirebon Regency. The results show that Kahoot! makes the classroom more fun and interactive, helps students stay focused, and helps them understand better. Also, gamification features like competition, awards, and rapid feedback really encourage kids to become involved. These findings indicate that Kahoot! can function as an efficacious technology-driven pedagogical approach that fosters student-centered education and encourages constructive learning dispositions within the Indonesian EFL setting.

Keywords: Kahoot!, experience, Motivation, Game based learning, EFL.

INTRODUCTION

In modern education, especially to improve student engagement and learning outcomes, it is very important to use technology in language courses. Teachers are now expected to not only know how to teach, but also be tech-savvy enough to design learning experiences that are dynamic, engaging, and relevant (Utami et al., 2023). Because technology



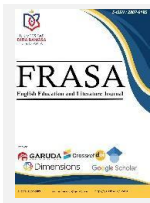
is changing so quickly, teachers can use a variety of digital tools to make the classroom a more fun and cooperative place to learn. (Srivani et al., 2022). However, despite the integration of technology, learning is still often perceived as monotonous by many students, particularly in traditional classroom settings (Abdulloh et al., 2024). One of the main reasons is the lack of engaging learning media that attract students' interest and encourage active participation. When students feel disengaged, classroom interaction decreases, and learning outcomes may not be optimal.

The characteristics of today's learners, commonly referred to as Generation Z, further highlight the need for interactive and technology-integrated pedagogies (Nasyifa & Armin, 2025). As digital natives, these learners are accustomed to instant feedback, multimedia interaction, and dynamic learning environments, making traditional teacher-centered approaches less effective in maintaining their attention and engagement.

Gamification, or using game aspects in non-gaming situations, has gotten a lot of attention in schools in the past several years. Gamified learning practices are thought to encourage involvement, boost motivation, and make it easier to solve problems (Al-Azawi et al., 2016). Studies have also shown that learning through games can make the classroom more interesting and fun, which motivates students to work together and keep going (Hamari et al., 2014; Tan et al., 2018). Motivational variables are crucial drivers of learners' success in second language acquisition and the enhancement of different language abilities, including speaking, reading, writing, and listening (Bipasha, 2025). Therefore, integrating motivational elements into instructional design becomes a central concern in language education. Kahoot! is one of the most popular gamified applications. It lets professors create interactive quizzes, conversations, and polls that students can take on their own devices (A. I. Wang & Tahir, 2020). Its competitive and rewarding parts make students want to learn more and give them a sense of accomplishment.

Even though more and more studies are showing how gamification might help students (Orhan Göksün & Gürsoy, 2019; Tan et al., 2018), there aren't many that look at how students really perceive it, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings in Indonesia. The effectiveness of Kahoot! has been looked at in most previous studies. objectively, focusing on academic achievement and motivation outcomes, and not paying as much attention to how students feel about and see gamified learning. From a pedagogical standpoint, understanding students' perceptions of educational tools is essential for effective language instruction (Alqawwiyy & Salmiah, 2025), as learners' attitudes and experiences influence how meaningfully they engage with instructional strategies.

So, the goal of this study is to find out what intermediate-level Indonesian EFL students think about utilising Kahoot! to make them more interested and motivated to learn English. This study aims to help make language learning using technology more fun and successful by looking into how students think and feel about it and how they use it. The study takes place in one of the high schools run by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Cirebon Regency. It gives us useful information about how to use gamified media in the EFL classroom.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Using Technology to Learn a Language

People have known for a long time that technology can change the way people learn. When used in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, it fosters interactive, student-centered methods and makes it easier to get feedback right away (Higgins et al., 2012). Digital tools give students access to real materials, let them work together on projects, and let them practice their language skills in more meaningful situations. But for integration to work, teachers need to be good with technology and be able to adjust their teaching style.

Gamification in Education

Gamification is the introduction of game-like features in non-game settings to keep users interested (Al-Azawi et al., 2016). These features can include competition, points, awards, and tracking progress. It has been shown to make students more motivated, creative, and determined. Hamari et al. (2014) discovered that gamified systems promote constructive learning behaviours and maintain attention, whereas Tan et al. (2018) contended that gamification motivates learners to engage actively and cultivate teamwork abilities. However, the success of gamification is mostly based on how it is designed and the situation of the learners.

Kahoot! As a Game-Based Learning Tool

Kahoot! is a website that lets teachers make quizzes and games that are fun and educational. It has been commended for fostering engagement and enjoyment in educational settings (Charlina & Septyanti, 2019). According to Wang & Tahir (2020), Kahoot! is one of the most popular gamified apps among students, even more than Socrative and Plickers. In language acquisition, Kahoot! facilitates vocabulary recall, listening comprehension, and peer interaction through the integration of competitive components and immediate feedback (Orhan Göksün & Gürsoy, 2019).

Many studies have shown that Kahoot! has a beneficial effect on learning, but not many have looked at how it affects students' motivation to study, especially in Indonesian EFL settings where students don't get to use English very often. This study utilises the gamification concept put forward by Deterding et al. (2011), which underscores the role of game-based features (such as challenge, feedback, and reward) in enhancing learners' intrinsic motivation. This study conceptualises Kahoot! as a gamified learning medium that integrates these components to enhance engagement and motivation in EFL classrooms.

METHOD

This study utilised a descriptive qualitative methodology to investigate students' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences concerning the utilisation of Kahoot! as a medium for English language acquisition. The qualitative method was selected as it enables the researcher to attain a profound comprehension of students' views and emotions regarding the implementation of educational technology in classroom learning (Tondeur et al., 2012). The gathered data were methodically organised, categorised, analysed, and interpreted to yield a cohesive account of the results.

This study involved 21 Grade 11 students, comprising 10 males and 11 females, aged 15 to 17 years. The Ministry of Religious Affairs in Cirebon Regency, Indonesia, selected them

from a senior high school. We chose this school on purpose because it was easy to go to and the English teacher had already used Kahoot! as part of the learning process. After getting a full description of the study's goals and methods, 21 of the 30 students in the class decided to take part. All of the people in the study had used Kahoot! in English class before, therefore they were good subjects for the study.

We used a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to gather data. The questionnaire had six open-ended questions that were meant to find out how motivated, engaged, and learned students were while using Kahoot!. Semi-structured interviews provided the researcher with the option to investigate insights that may not have been disclosed through the questionnaire. The interview questions centred on students' experiences, perceived advantages, and difficulties encountered while utilising Kahoot! as an educational resource in English lessons.

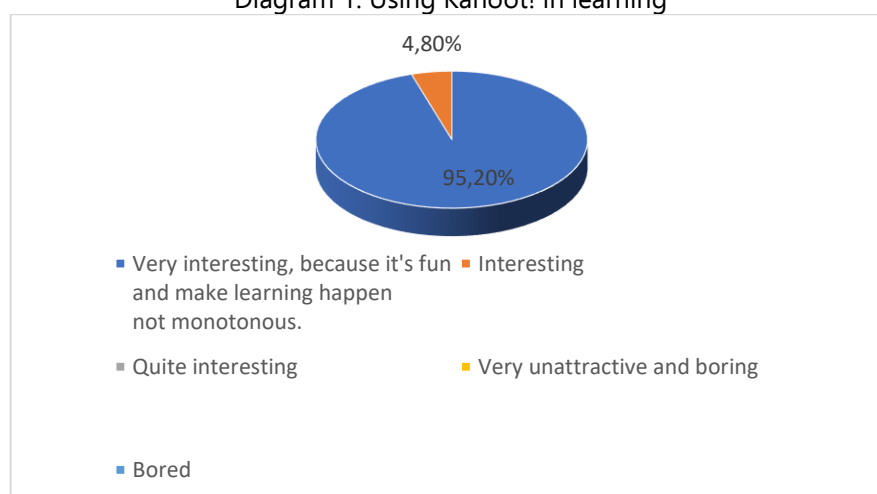
Two English education specialists from Swadaya Gunung Jati University assessed both the questionnaire and the interview guide to make sure they were valid. We used their feedback to make the products clearer, better worded, and more relevant. Everyone who took part in the study knew what it was about and how it would work, and they all signed a form giving their permission before any data was collected. Participation was completely optional, and confidentiality was protected through the use of pseudonyms and the secure storage of all data.

We used theme analysis to look at the data we got from the surveys and interviews. The researcher meticulously analysed the replies, categorising the pertinent data and organising them into developing themes concerning students' motivation, engagement, and experiences with Kahoot!. The data from both instruments were subsequently compared and analysed using triangulation to validate the credibility and dependability of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Engagement and Learning Variety through Kahoot!

Diagram 1. Using Kahoot! in learning



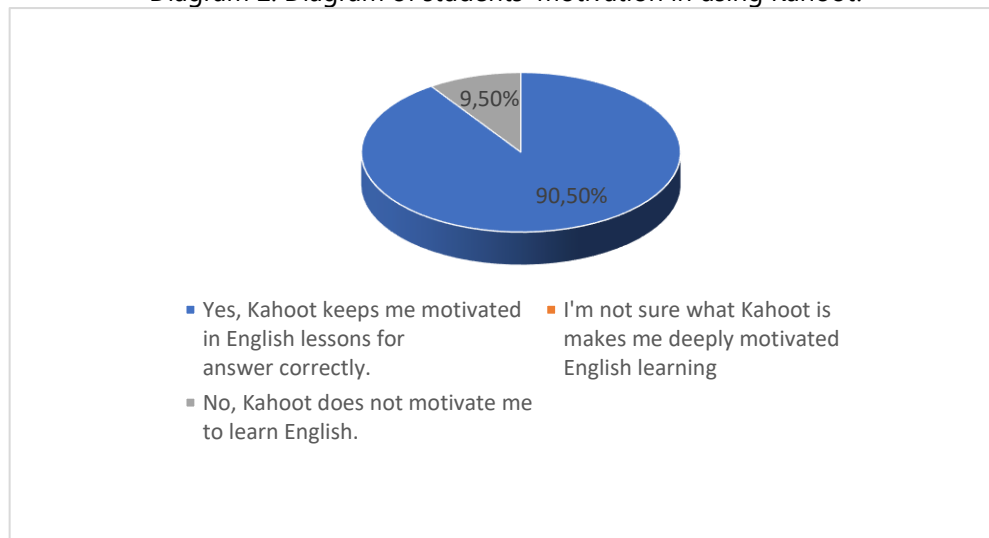
The results show that Kahoot! makes traditional classrooms more fun and dynamic places to learn. Puji Utami (2022) noted that traditional learning frequently results in student passivity, characterised by limited engagement. The statistics indicating that 95.2% of students

found Kahoot! pleasant and motivating corroborates the idea that game-based learning fosters active involvement. This shows that the platform can combine fun and learning, turning quizzes into chances to build knowledge actively. The findings align with Orhan Göksün & Gürsoy (2019) who determined that Kahoot! fosters engagement more successfully than alternative platforms like Quizizz. The consistency between quantitative results and other research substantiates that Kahoot! effectively alleviates learning monotony while maintaining student attention and involvement.

Kahoot! Makes Students Want to Learn English

Learning media is a crucial part of reaching learning goals (Utamingtyas et al., 2023). Kahoot! really helps them want to learn English. Students said that the quiz structure, which was both interactive and competitive, made learning more fun and fascinating. They also feel challenged to answer questions fast and correctly, which helps them stay focused and absorb the content better. A lot of students said that Kahoot!'s visual features, scoring points, and scoreboard made them want to study more. So, Kahoot! is not just a way to study; it's also a great way to get pupils excited about learning English.

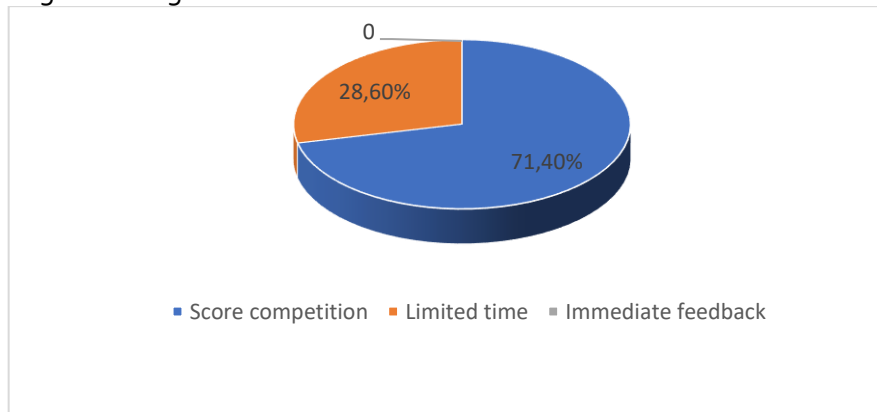
Diagram 2. Diagram of students' motivation in using Kahoot!



Learning media are very important for reaching educational goals (Utamingtyas et al., 2023). The findings of this study validate that Kahoot! substantially enhances students' motivation to learn English. The quiz's competitive aspect and visual appeal make pupils more likely to pay attention and reply. The triangulation of the 90.5% motivating response rate, students' qualitative statements, and corroborating literature indicates that motivation in this situation is derived from both intrinsic satisfaction and extrinsic challenge. This is in line with what Kusumayanthi et al. (2021) say, which is that game-based learning boosts motivation beyond just playing the game. Kahoot! combines visual engagement, score accumulation, and competition to stimulate both the mind and the emotions, which helps students stay interested and focused in English lectures.

Competitive Features as Motivation Drivers

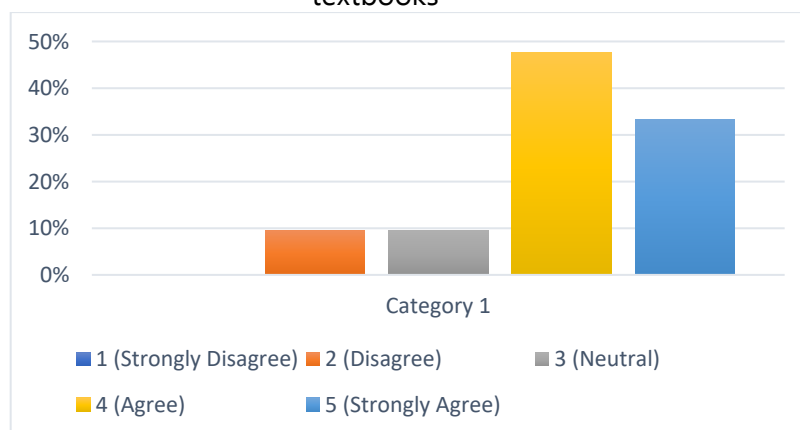
Figure 3. Diagram of Kahoot! Features that influence students' motivation



The score competition feature is one of the strongest motivators for students. The data reveal that 71.4% of respondents are driven by the scoring system, while 28.6% cite time limitation as the primary factor. The sense of achievement, supported by the leaderboard and ranking system, reinforces the desire to perform well. Students' responses confirm that competition leads to greater focus and deeper understanding of the material. This data corroborates (Purmama et al., 2019) who emphasise that motivation is crucial for attaining educational goals. The combination of quantitative data and student experiences demonstrates that Kahoot! utilises competition not as a source of pressure, but as a motivational catalyst that enhances engagement and comprehension.

Focus and Interest through Interactive Learning

Chart 1. Students' focus and interest in learning when using Kahoot! compared to reading textbooks

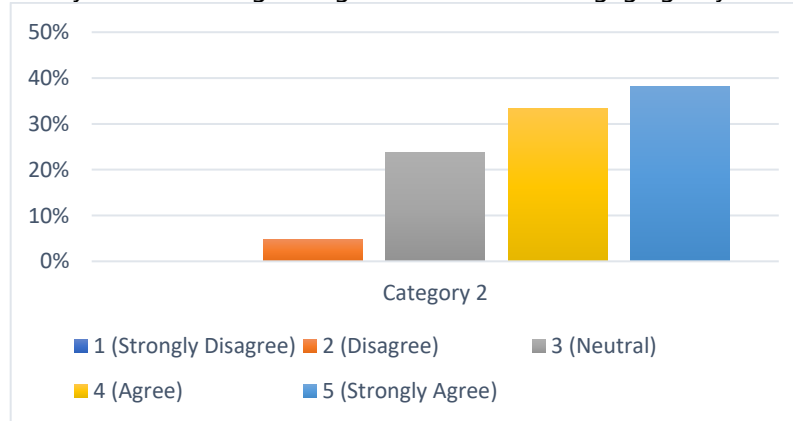


Kahoot! effectively maintains students' focus and interest by presenting content in an active, visual, and time-bound format. The findings, with 42.9% of students reporting higher focus compared to textbook-based learning, indicate that gamification promotes sustained attention. One student stated, "Because learning to use Kahoot! uses a quiz format, so I am more focused and concentrated in answering questions in class" (S, Male 17). This aligns with (Jin et al., 2018), who note that learners retain more when they engage in active practice rather than passive reading or listening. Consistent with Chen & Wu (2023), the present study confirms that game-based learning produces higher satisfaction and learning motivation. The

combination of empirical data, direct quotations, and existing theories provides strong triangulated evidence that Kahoot! enhances both cognitive and affective dimensions of focus.

Understanding and Cognitive Engagement

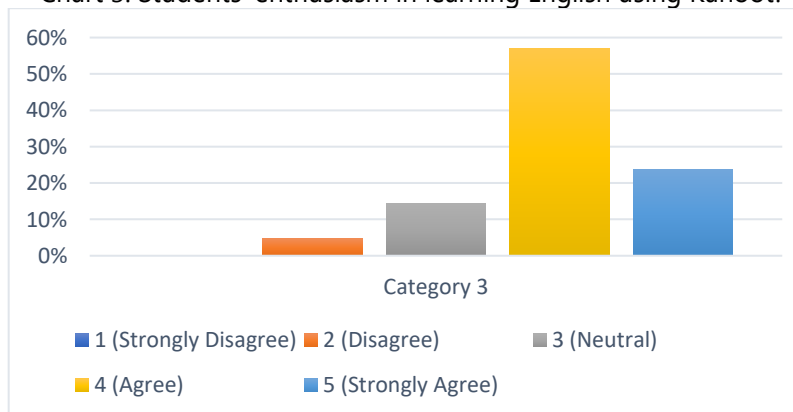
Chart 2. Easy Understanding of English material in an engaging way with Kahoot!



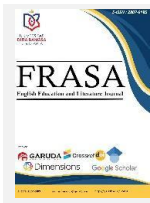
The findings also show that 47.6% of students "agree" that Kahoot! makes it easier and more fun for them to learn English. The platform encourages deep learning by getting people to think about and interact with things in context instead of just memorising them. Gunter et al. (2008), and Wang & Dostál (2018) contend that educational games inherently promote self-awareness and autonomous learning. Students corroborate this assertion: "I remember vocabulary easier because Kahoot! creates challenges and is enjoyable in itself due to the time limit for answering questions" (HR, Male 17). The integration of quantitative data, theoretical frameworks, and qualitative evidence demonstrates that Kahoot! functions not merely as an assessment instrument but also as a platform that promotes cognitive knowledge production through interaction and challenge.

Enthusiasm and Learning Attitude

Chart 3. Students' enthusiasm in learning English using Kahoot!



Adding Kahoot! to English lessons has also been demonstrated to make pupils more excited and optimistic about learning. 57.1% of people who answered agreed and 23.8% strongly agreed that Kahoot! gets them more excited about studying. This enthusiasm shows up in more engagement and conversation in the classroom. One student said, "I am more excited about learning English with Kahoot! because it is fun and not stressful" (CM, Female 16). This aligns with Troussas et al. (2023), who discovered that digital games facilitate optimal



learning activities customised to individual learning styles. Qualitative reactions and theoretical evidence underscore that Kahoot! fosters a learning environment that integrates enjoyment, competitiveness, and collaboration. In Indonesia, this method is a good way to get kids interested in learning English again by connecting motivation with useful learning results.

DISCUSSION

This research examined the experiences of Indonesian secondary EFL students utilizing Kahoot! as a gamified educational resource. The results show that Kahoot! boosts students' engagement, motivation, concentration, and enjoyment in English classes. Incorporating competitive elements, scoring systems, time constraints, and immediate feedback effectively converts traditional classrooms into more engaging and student-focused learning spaces.

From a cognitive viewpoint, Kahoot! encourages active engagement and quicker information processing, aiding enhanced understanding and memory of educational content. Students indicated that the quiz format allowed them to focus better than traditional textbook learning. The interactive and time-constrained format fostered critical thinking and precise answers, rendering learning more engaging and significant.

Beyond cognitive advantages, Kahoot! enhances students' emotional engagement. Numerous participants reported feeling more excited and less apprehensive when learning English via gamified activities. The enjoyable yet competitive atmosphere fostered a supportive classroom setting that boosted confidence and involvement. These results imply that gamified digital resources can tackle prevalent issues in EFL settings, including lack of motivation and restricted exposure to English.

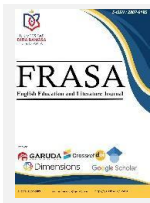
Nonetheless, this research has a number of limitations. The limited number of participants and the emphasis on just one school limit the broad applicability of the results. Additionally, the dependence on self-reported information from surveys and interviews might not completely reflect students' true behavioral involvement in classroom environments. Future studies ought to engage larger and more varied samples, include alternative data gathering techniques, and examine wider viewpoints to achieve more thorough outcomes

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that Kahoot! shows great promise as an efficient gamified learning resource in EFL classrooms for Indonesian secondary students. The platform boosts students' motivation, engagement, concentration, and enjoyment, while aiding improved understanding and retention of English learning resources.

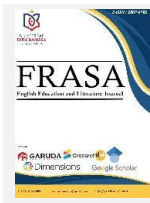
In addition to enhancing cognitive skills, Kahoot! promotes positive learning attitudes and alleviates anxiety, leading to a more supportive and student-focused educational atmosphere. Its competitive and interactive elements enhance the dynamism and significance of language learning.

Although it has its constraints, this study offers important perspectives on students' direct encounters with gamified education. Educators are urged to incorporate tools such as Kahoot! purposefully to improve classroom engagement and maintain learning enthusiasm. Additional research is suggested to explore the lasting impacts and wider uses of gamified learning in EFL environments.



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