

Kahoot! and Anxiety in High School: An Interview Study

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Abstract: Learning English in high school somehow still not becoming the favorite subject. Some students still feel anxiety while learning the language. Therefore English teachers must be able to make English class more fun and interesting. One way to do so is Kahoot!, which can be used as a means to teach several topics in English. The main objective of this study is to better understand the use of Kahoot! and its effect on reducing anxiety among students. This research is an interview study to investigate the needs of seven students as one of the inputs for teachers to design their classes to become more fun and interesting. The study's result shows the students' enthusiasm while learning English using Kahoot! and how it can reduce the anxiety of learning the language. Future studies can be conducted to show the teachers' steps in designing their lessons to be effective and fun simultaneously.

Keywords: Teaching English; high school; anxiety; Kahoot!

INTRODUCTION

Commonly, not all students like their subjects during high school. Aminullah mentioned that both mathematics and English are given a negative scourge by students [1]. Although basically English has been taught from elementary school to secondary level, it cannot be denied that many students are still struggling to master it. While some previous studies reveal factors that make the students unable to master English, such as lack of vocabulary, confidence, and unfamiliarity with using English in everyday life, which is normal considering English is considered a foreign language that can cause anxiety [2] [3].

Along with four English skills, research proved the existence of students' anxiety. Regarding speaking, Fadhilah reiterated that the fear and nervousness felt by students affected their self-confidence, which correlated with their success in speaking English orally [4]. While Chow, Chiu, & Wong [5] proved that reading and listening skills made the students nervous and confused because they could not understand every word in the reading passage. In addition, Umam and Khotibul stated that writing anxiety occurred because of four main factors: linguistic difficulties, fear of teachers' negative comments, insufficient writing practice, and time pressure. It makes them feel uncomfortable during writing activities [6].

Anxiety can cause negative impacts on students during the learning process, especially related to their motivation to learn English and the learning outcome. Anxiety may cause tension, fear, nervousness, and worry associated with nervous system arousal. Kusumastuti ensured that the result was decreased students' academic achievement [7]. Yanti, Erlamsyah, Zira, and Ardi started many symptoms of anxiety can be seen such as the students looking tense when studying in class, they felt nervous when asked by the teacher, they became lazy

to do the exercises given by the teacher, they looked sweating when asked to come in front of the class doing assignments/exercises, and their hands were shaking while solving problems in front of the class [8].

Teachers have a crucial role in reducing the students' anxiety, especially in learning English. Creating a fun learning atmosphere and assessment system and applying attractive methods, approaches, and media/games can also be used as a way to reduce anxiety. Technology advances after the COVID-19 pandemic, and it indirectly pushes us to explore a lot about these technological learning media. Kahoot! is one of the applications that can be used to reduce anxiety.

Kahoot! is an online quiz application with a show game as its' aesthetic. According to Lofti, Pratolo & Dahlan, Kahoot! is primarily used in education to construct quizzes, assess students learning, and review concepts [9]. Chiang [10] mentioned how in his study, the participants enjoyed the game-like learning environment, and students had a good opinion about using Kahoot as an evaluation tool in the classroom. At the same time, Wang and Tahir [11] described that Kahoot! can affect the teaching-learning process and, more specifically, how Kahoot! affects learning performance, classroom dynamics, students' and teachers' attitudes and perceptions, and students' anxiety. Seventy percent of the articles focusing on student anxiety believed that Kahoot! could reduce anxiety in class, but there were only two studies with tests for statistical significance, and one study proved that Kahoot! could produce anxiety. In terms of English teaching, Tao and Zou explained in their quantitative study that Kahoot! is one of the learning media that is interesting, effective, and increases student motivation [12].

Previous studies showed the positive effect of Kahoot! in teaching English; nevertheless, the study focuses less on the students' feelings while using Kahoot! Therefore, this study wants to investigate the high school students' anxiety in learning English and using Kahoot as a teaching medium to reduce anxiety using interview study. The interview results can become supportive data to prove the research statement to what extent anxiety in learning English can be eliminated or reduced by using Kahoot! as a medium of teaching and motivating students in learning English.

METHOD

Research design

A qualitative interview study was conducted between April and May 2022 in one of the public high schools in Indonesia. The school was chosen because the English teacher and students had never used Kahoot! before. Furthermore, the school administration permitted us to practice Kahoot! during the English classes. There were six classes consisting of sixteen students of each class. The researcher used Kahoot! to teach Narrative Text topics based on the material given by the English teacher. The Kahoot! was used twice in each class, the first was as an introduction related to narrative, and the Second Kahoot! was about their comprehension of the text given. The students were given the text before the class began through Google Classroom as an online class by the teacher.

Participants and recruitment

Recruitment occurred in two stages. Firstly, a separate survey was given to the students after they followed the English class using Kahoot! The second stage was conducted after seeing the students' positive or negative answers. We planned to interview ten students from six classes as the representative; however, on the interview day, only seven (three male and four female) had the opportunity to join the interview.

Data

Data were collected with semi-structured interviews undertaken in the school laboratory. The interview was conducted separately for each participant in Bahasa Indonesia and sometimes used local language if the students could not understand the questions. The researchers asked the questions several times to ensure the consistency of the answers. The interview was recorded and then scripted; for the purpose of this study then, the interview results were translated to English.

A semi-structured interview schedule enabled the interviewers to cover all topics of interest. Five questions were asked: (1) Do you feel anxious when learning English; (2) What do you feel when using Kahoot! for learning English; (3) Do you show certain gestures when you are anxious while in an English lesson; (4) When there is assignments/reference in English, do you feel a lack of confidence to finish them; and (5) If there is a necessity to speak using English, will it affect the decrease of focus in the lesson?

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed thematically, employing inductive data. The initial analysis stage consisted of reading and re-reading the transcripts to become fully conversant with the data. Next, the preliminary codes were collated into potential themes. Information that did not align with the study's research questions was removed, and categories were compared and contrasted to identify major themes. The refined themes were named. Finally, extracts were selected to exemplify each theme [13].

Ethical Approval

The ethical approval was processed through the permission of the educational board in the South Kalimantan Province and the university's ethics committee leading the study. While the consent of the teacher and the students were asked during the interview, pseudonyms were used to ensure the confidentiality of both the school and the participants. After the interview, the researcher confirmed with the participants about their answers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Throughout the five questions asked to the participants, the researcher had to explore more about each participant's answers to withdraw the study's main theme.

The participants' anxious feelings when learning English

Overall, four participants mentioned that they mostly love English. Some of them even mentioned that their scores in English are quite high, around 80 – 90. Therefore they express their positive feeling toward learning English. We can see it from some excerpts from the conversation.

“I **love** English. My score can even reach **90**. I **like** English very much because I have learned English for 7 years. I use English with my teacher. Therefore, **I don't feel any anxiety** while speaking English.” (Interview P5)

“I have never been worried about using English. My English score is **80** on average.” (Interview, P7)

One student answered that they like English, but somehow, they still felt anxious. The other students mentioned that she dislikes English but still try to learn it by watching Korean Drama, and the last one did not mention whether she likes or dislikes English but felt panicked. We can see from the excerpt as follows:

“If I can be honest, I really **like** learning English, especially speaking. My score is averaging **70** as well. However, sometimes *I feel anxious* (when speaking) since my vocabulary is limited. Besides that, when I converse with myself (using English), *I feel anxious* since I am afraid to make a mistake.” (Interview P4)

“Never, to be honest. However, if there is an exam suddenly, then I would complain. Because the teacher didn't let us know in advance. Often time they would hold exams out of nowhere. To be honest, I *dislike English*. The reason is It's difficult. However, I still try to learn it by watching Korean Dramas with English subtitles.” (Interview P3)

“I *panicked* since I couldn't use English. Honestly, my average score is **70**, but I still *feel nervous*. However, if the teacher asked me to answer a question, I could do it.” (Interview P5)

The participants feeling when using Kahoot! for learning English

All participants answered that they like Kahoot! because of several reasons. Mostly they mentioned that learning English using Kahoot! is more interesting than the previous way the teacher taught English.

“Usually, if the teacher is teaching English, he would explain the topic by (writing it on) whiteboard, like for example, we are having a lesson about Recount, then write this, this, that, and that's it. Not using LCD. I like both methods, to be honest, but using **Kahoot is more exciting**. The reason I think so is that Kahoot **motivated me to learn English**. I want to master English, so I can talk with tourists, although *I am not yet confident*.” (Interview P4)

“I think using Kahoot! is **more interesting** than just giving a lecture. I **didn't feel anxious** while playing the game because it was a fun competition. I can be a winner or a loser.” (Interview P5)

“Like, **having fun, exciting**, something like that. What's more, there is competition alongside other students; we can tell what's wrong and correct, making it very exciting. Seems easy because It is similar to playing the game. Like, there is so much variation, so when we are learning (by using) colors, it is unusual and not bland. So, like, the colors changed, making it colorful. But, after using Kahoot! **It is become better; more fun**.” (Interview P2)

The participants gesture when they feel anxious while in an English lesson.

All participants agreed that they mostly feel fun learning English; some express their anxiety in a certain situation, for example, if their scores become lower or the teacher asks them to finish an assignment.

“I am anxious if *my score suddenly becomes low* because sometimes there are some questions that I can answer and some I can't. So, in conventional lessons, **my anxiousness is high, but with Kahoot! (it is less so) since it doesn't feel like having a lesson but more like playing**. The teacher does not like if we are noisy but will get angry if we become quiet once he asks a question.” (Interview P4)

“*If the teacher asked me to finish an assignment, I panicked*. The reason is I felt that English is hard. But, with the help of Google Translate, every assignment can be finished.” (Interview P5)

“Usually, *if I'm anxious, I will hold my head down*, but when it comes to English lessons, it doesn't make me afraid; unless there is *a sudden exam or being pointed out (to answer or read something)*.” (Interview P3)

The participants' lack of confidence in finishing tasks or assignments in English

Interestingly, when the four participants answered this question, they mentioned their lack of confidence could be overcome using Google Translate. It seems that during class, the teacher gives them opportunities to use their mobile to help during the class, but during the exam, the students become nervous since they cannot use Google Translate.

“Uhh, usually checking it in **Google**, right? If we got new material, I'm confident enough. Maybe when it comes to exams, I felt nervous. But, if it is through a lesson, it never happened. I mean, we already have a dictionary. Those couldn't be incorrect, could they?” (Interview P2)

If there is an assignment, usually I'll finish it by searching in **Google**, and then if there is a competence test assignment, we were put in pairs, and we work together. Well, there was a time when *I lost confidence because I was afraid I was wrong*. Usually, the *spelling* is different from the Indonesian language; if one letter is wrong, then all of the words will be wrong. Or, when speaking, I'm unsure about the *pronunciation*; “Is it right or not?” (Interview P3)

The participants decrease of focus in a necessity to speak English

The participants understand that communicating in English is important. However, two participants felt insecure that they still have limitations in using the language.

“If in the lesson there will be 50% English, *I will have difficulty since I don't have a lot of English vocabulary*. But, if asked to converse, In shaa Allah, I would do it.” (Interview P1)

“If the whole class used English dominantly, I would feel *my focus decreased since I am afraid, like earlier, of making mistakes when saying something*.” (Interview P3)

Four participants mentioned Kahoot! can help them pass through these challenges.

“Truth to be told, I don't feel that nervous and lose focus when learning English. However, when it comes to Math, I would feel so. **Math should have been taught using Kahoot! as well.**” (Interview P4)

“I think using **Kahoot! will increase my focus**. Even though playing Kahoot will be very loud, it made me happy, to be honest. Moreover, it made it easier to receive (the lesson) by Julian's method since he explained it one by one after each question.” (Interview P5)

“I don't have any problem if my teacher asks me to do any assignment. I think the teacher should use **Kahoot! in the class; it can give us more concentration.**” (Interview P6)

“It seems I am **more likely to focus when using Kahoot**; even if the class becomes loud, I can still learn.” (Interview P7)

Discussion

This study wants to investigate the high school students' anxiety in learning English and the use of Kahoot! as a teaching medium to reduce anxiety using interview study. Some themes can be drawn from this study. Seeing the results concerning using Kahoot! in learning English is quite interesting. Previous studies showed the effectiveness of using Kahoot! [11] [12], however, this study adds up some data that enrich the implication of using Kahoot! in teaching English.

The students experience anxiety during English classes for several reasons. Nevertheless, they mentioned using Kahoot! partially or completely decrease their anxiety level. From the data obtained, some students feel insecure in using English; this is also what sometimes makes them afraid, feeling nervous when entering English lessons, and afraid of being wrong in pronunciation so that their concentration is also disturbed in the lesson. In theory, this has entered the characteristics of people who experience anxiety [8].

It is the same with learning English, where some students who were the subjects in this study felt worried when English lessons began. But with Kahoot! the students find it helpful and fun to use the media; they even feel that Kahoot! can give them confidence, focus, and concentration to learn English. The media makes them able to study in a relaxed and not anxious manner. They can also focus more on the material given since the explanation was given right after every question asked. All in all, the Kahoot! application can be a recommended medium in learning English, especially at the high school level.

CONCLUSION

Learning English in high school still becomes a challenge to several students, especially when they showed some anxiety symptoms. Therefore, teachers must consider using fun and interesting ways to teach English. Kahoot! is one of the applications that can reduce anxiety during English learning. This study proved that Kahoot! not only becomes so attractive to the students but also can decrease the anxiety and even add up some benefit such as give them some confidence, focus, and concentration to learn the explanation of each question one by one. It became more effective for them to learn English because they did not feel that they were learning but playing. Future research can explore more about designing integrated skills lessons using Kahoot! to benefit the high school students better.

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