

PEAR DECK UTILIZATION TO IMPROVE EFL LEARNERS' MOTIVATION AND EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

Along with the rapid development of technology, many educational platforms nowadays are used to support teaching and learning processes. Among these platforms is Pear Deck. It is an interactive platform that offers benefits to effectively increase students' motivation and emotional engagement. This study aims to identify students' motivation and emotional engagement in English lessons by utilizing Pear Deck. This case study revealed that the students feel emotions before the sessions start, all linked to their past experiences (retrospective outcomes). Fear, happiness, and excitement are the emotions the students feel at the beginning of the sessions, and they turn out to be enjoyable and happy at the end of the session. The emotions that the students feel during the sessions can potentially lead to the prospective outcomes of the students, which are success in their future endeavors. Additionally, the choice of suitable materials that will be delivered to the students must be considered by the teachers or educators to encourage and motivate students and uplift students' emotional engagement with the lesson.

INTRODUCTION

Technological advancements and impacts have influenced digital learning platforms in the educational field, supporting many learning experiences. It has resolved time and space limitations and provided an excellent pedagogical structure to assure learning quality (Lima et al., 2020; Songkram & Osuwan, 2022). Digital learning platforms have been quite popular in recent years due to their role in transforming traditional learning methods into modern ones. These digital platforms, which incorporate multimedia content, collaboration, and personalized learning features, deliver interactive and engaging learning experiences (Sappaile et al., 2023). Thus, utilizing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in students' learning is unquestionably an enhanced teaching method than the traditional chalk-and-talk methods since learners can focus more in an enjoyable and relaxing learning environment (Hashim et al., 2019; Ni et al., 2020; Oksana & Olena, 2021).

Pear Deck is a popular educational digital platform offering numerous features linked with Google Slides, Microsoft PowerPoint, and other digital applications. As a result, the interactive Pear Deck slide functions can be embedded into presentations, leading to an engaging learning and teaching environment (Anggoro & Khasanah, 2022). Several previous studies have pointed out the utilization of Pear Deck for learning processes. Ni et. Al. (2020) conducted a quasi-experimental research assessing the effect of Pocable Game and Pear Deck on enhancing students' vocabulary. Based on the results, using Pear Deck for the learning process enhanced students' motivation and indicated improvements in their vocabulary knowledge.

Hashim and Aziz (2022) also examined students' perceptions of using Pear Deck. They revealed that active learning pedagogical practices are essential to boost students' success, so the students have positive opinions regarding Pear Deck. Therefore, utilizing and implementing Pear Deck boosted interaction and involvement between educators and learners and allowed the learners to improve and broaden their knowledge through active learning activities (Haryani & Ayuningtyas, 2021; Ni et al., 2020).

Along with applying digital platforms to increase students' achievement, simultaneously, students' motivation and emotional engagement have been recognized as an essential factor for academic success (Sappaile et al., 2023; Maesarofah & Rahayu, 2023). Motivation refers to the willingness of students to learn, while emotional engagement refers to how students are involved emotionally in classroom learning activities (Wilson, 2021). It includes student-teacher connectedness, which can be seen in how students participate in discussions, the questions they inquire about, how they seek assistance, and how they demonstrate curiosity

(Wilson, 2021). The involvement and connectedness then lead to the emotions and feelings of being bored, satisfaction, grief, anxiety, and pleasure or displeasure with school, teachers, or employment (Skinner & Belmont, 1993, in Ginting, 2021). At this point, educators must accommodate students' needs and concerns while encouraging them to get more immersed in their studies. However, educators should avoid overloading knowledge to be conveyed, as this may cause them to become distracted with the topic at hand. In addition, relevance is essential for connecting students with appropriate information to apply to current or future life (Keller, 2010, in Ginting, 2021).

Given the elaborated circumstances, the researcher would like to fulfill an opportunity to identify how digital platforms influence students' motivation and emotional engagement. Since it is one of the factors that support students' achievement and success, it is essential to be examined. Therefore, it is paramount to identify the use of Pear Deck on students' motivation and emotional engagement during class. This study aimed to determine students' feelings at the beginning and end of the sessions and how using Pear Deck motivates and improves students' emotional engagement in the learning process. Furthermore, the findings of this study can be used as a reference to provide valuable knowledge for educators to develop well-arranged classroom management.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pekrun et al. (2023) explain that students' emotions play a crucial role in learning motivation., indicating a close relationship between emotions and motivation. The authors further explore this relationship by elaborating on the taxonomy of emotions. A three-dimensional taxonomy of emotions considers valence, arousal, and object focus (see Table 1) as the core features of these emotions. In terms of valence, emotions can be distinguished from positive emotions (pleasantness) and negative emotions (unpleasantness). Arousal refers to the activation system of emotions and distinguishes activating and deactivating emotions. Excitement about new materials and panicking before an exam are examples of activating emotions.

In contrast, relief about passing the exam and boredom during class sessions are examples of deactivating emotions. Lastly, as the third core feature, the object focus shares a place between valence and arousal. It comprises two aspects: the type of object that causes the emotions to appear and the temporal relations between the person and the object at a time. Object focus also distinguishes prospective outcomes, which are the emotions that lead to future opportunities and retrospective outcomes, which are those related to past experiences

(Pekrun et al., 2023). Table 1 below is Pekrun et al. (2023) elaborating on the three-dimensional taxonomy of emotions.

Table 1. Three-Dimensional Taxonomy of Emotions by Pekrun et al. (2023)

Object focus	Positive		Negative	
	Activating	Deactivating	Activating	Deactivating
Activity	Enjoyment Excitement	Relaxation	Anger	Boredom
Outcome-prospective	Hope	Assurance	Anxiety	Hopelessness
Outcome-retrospective	Pride Gratitude	Relief Contentment	Shame/Guilt Anger	Disappointment Sadness

Many studies investigating students’ engagement and the use of digital platforms to support the learning process have been conducted previously. Barus et al. (2022) investigated students’ classroom behavioral involvement. They found that the most influential element in determining student engagement was teachers’ support, followed by the structure of the class and school-level characteristics. As a result, it recommended that English teachers and schools provide the best possible support to students and develop a good structure in terms of size and circumstance to boost students’ involvement. Additionally, the study conducted by Munawir & Pratiwi (2021) revealed that the adoption of the digital platform Quizizz had little effect on students’ involvement in the learning environment. They emphasized the significance of the various ways students contribute based on the flow of instruction they get.

Furthermore, the learning environment stimulates students’ thinking. As a teacher’s concern, students require motivation components rather than a scoring system to improve their enthusiasm. Besides Quizizz, Google Docs was also used to investigate students’ emotional engagement. Iskandar & Pahlevi (2021) examined students’ emotional engagement in online collaborative writing via Google Docs. Unlike Munawir & Pratiwi (2021), the results demonstrated that online collaborative writing using Google Docs engaged students passionately in learning how to write. Online collaborative writing also engaged students cognitively by requiring them to learn a new language during the activity. Furthermore, Sappaile et al. (2023) analyzed the influence of digital learning platforms on student engagement and academic performance. They indicated a significant positive relationship between digital learning platforms and student engagement. Students who used digital learning tools more regularly demonstrated higher levels of engagement.

METHOD

This research is a descriptive qualitative case study applied in the natural setting where the data was collected in the field at the site where the participants experienced the circumstances

under study and gathered the information by directly talking and having face-to-face interaction with the participants. The case study was chosen because the researchers would like to present an in-depth study of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2018; Priya, 2021; Yin, 2014), which is Pear Deck and students' emotional engagement. According to Creswell (2018), one of the characteristics of qualitative research is that the researcher is the key instrument for collecting the data through examining documents, observing behavior, and/or interviewing the participants. In this case study, the researchers observed behavior during the sessions and interviewed the participants afterward. The sessions were conducted twice to construct the systematic material to be conveyed and avoid overloading knowledge, which may cause the students to become distracted.

The participants of this study were three EFL learners at the beginner level identified as DEW, AZCP, and MHY. Their ages range from six (6) to eight (8) years old. Consequently, in collecting the data, students are provided with multiple-choice answers. According to Coombes et al. (2021), children think dichotomously, so by providing choices, children can become clearer with their answers. The material given was ten (10) pieces of English daily vocabulary, which were presented sequentially from the very first activity to the latest activity done in daily life. These were delivered in two meetings and sixty (60) minutes each meeting. The material was selected due to the focus of the study on EFL learners at the beginner level, where basic knowledge, such as everyday vocabulary, would be easily grasped. Moreover, they were already familiar with the concept of daily activities. This choice is in line with Barus et al. (2022), who emphasized the significance of providing materials at an appropriate level to enhance students' engagement.

During the sessions, the researchers took field notes regarding the behavior and activities of the participants at the research site utilizing structured Pear Deck slides. To be more specific, the researchers included some slides using Pear Deck asking about the students' feelings at the beginning and the end of the sessions (Figure 1). The students were asked to circle what they felt before the teacher started to deliver and explain the materials, which was also done at the end of the session. In addition, a slide regarding the difficulty of the material delivered to the students was also included (Figure 2). At the end of every session, the students were required to drag the icon to the difficulty level of the lesson based on their opinions. The students were informed that their answers would not affect any learning process or assessment. They were also informed that Pear Deck would not record their name or be anonymous so they could express themselves during the learning process. After conducting the class observation, the researchers interviewed the students to obtain the data, which was performed using Bahasa

Indonesia. The behavior observation and interview were also conducted for triangulation to ensure research credibility and obtain data from multiple sources. Furthermore, investigator triangulation was also applied in the light of cross-checking the works (Adler, 2022).

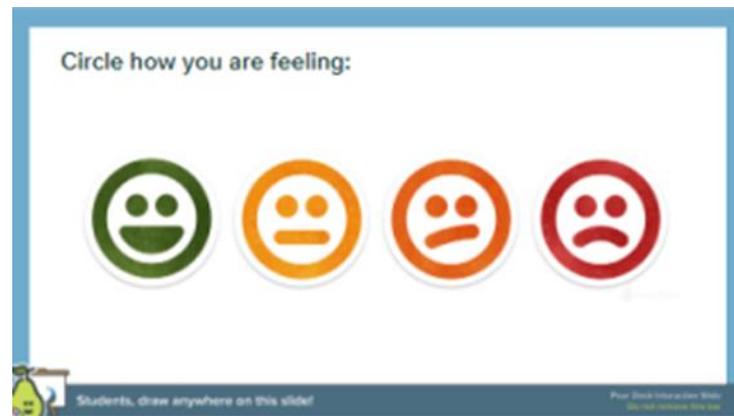


Figure 1. Slide Asking Students' Feelings at the Beginning and the End of the Session

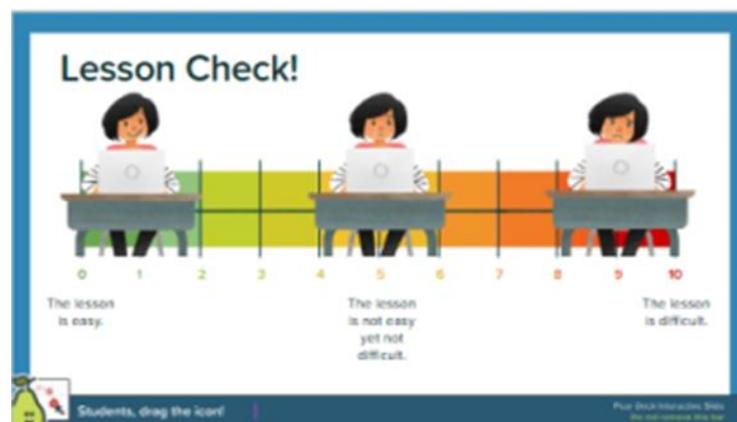


Figure 2. Slide to Check the Difficulty of Material Delivered

In analyzing the data, the information gathered from class observations was captured on screen and organized according to each session, and the results of the interviews were transcribed. Then, the data was analyzed using Pekrun's emotions taxonomy (2023), which brings together a link of students motivation and emotional engagement covering three dimensions of emotions such as valence (positive and negative emotions), arousal (activating and deactivating emotions), and object focus (prospective outcomes and retrospective outcomes). The interview results were also analyzed further to identify the use of Pear Deck in the sessions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Students' Motivation and Feeling at the Beginning and End of the Sessions

In meeting one at the beginning of the class, two students circled the first icon, and one student circled the fourth one (see Figure 3). At the end of the class, all the students circled the first icon when the teacher asked about their feelings after joining the class (see Figure 4). Since it was anonymous, the teacher could not individually identify the students' feelings. However, after being interviewed, those who did not feel good at the beginning of the class could be identified. The students expressed their feelings and thoughts about Pear Deck during the interview.



Figure 3. Students' Feelings at the Beginning of the Class (Meeting 1)

MHY said he was afraid of learning English and had never learned it before. This was his very first time, and MHY felt quite anxious. He feared the material that would be delivered and worried about the incomprehensible materials. MHY expressed his fear by saying, *"I am afraid because I did not learn English at school."* On the other hand, AZCP expressed her enthusiasm because she could bring and use her handphone during the session. She said, *"I feel happy because I am allowed to bring my handphone and utilize it for learning."* AZCP had some previous experiences when her parents prevented her from bringing and using the handphone when she was studying because it was probably distracting. Like AZCP, DEW showed her happiness and excitement before the session started. DEW also informed that there was no English subject in her school anymore for these two years. *"I am happy, Miss. There has been no English lesson in my school since I was in grades 2 and 3. So, I am happy to learn English again,"* said DEW. Therefore, it was a good chance for her to learn English again. At the end of the meeting (Figure 4), the students said they were pretty satisfied learning English using the Pear Deck. MHY and DEW were impressed by the features available. *"I am happy because I can choose many colors and draw flowers, Miss,"* said MHY, while DEW said it was her first time knowing Pear Deck. Her teacher in the school usually used books only. *"I am very happy learning English using Pear Deck because it is my first time. My teacher at school usually uses books only."* Another student, AZCP, said she was excited about the next

meeting. “Miss, we can use Pear Deck again for the next meeting because I feel motivated,” said AZCP.

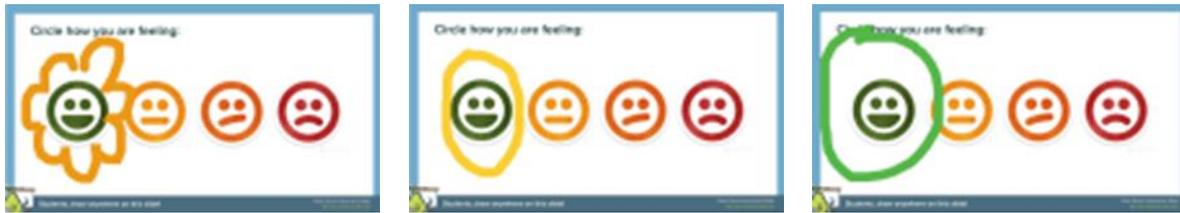


Figure 4. Students’ Feelings at the End of the Class (Meeting 1)

Since the first meeting, students have experienced various emotions. One was the fear MHY felt about learning English because MHY had never learned English through formal education at or outside the school. Besides, MHY felt worried about the materials to be taught. This showed that there was the presence of activated negative emotion at the beginning, which caused anxiety to appear. In this case, there was a negative feeling of activation on MHY regarding the materials to be given. The feelings of fear and anxiety felt by MHY were related to the experience that he had never learned English previously. In this case, it was called retrospective outcome, synchronizing someone’s past experience (Pekrun et al., 2023).

On the other hand, AZCP and DEW showed an activating positive emotion of enjoyment at the beginning of the class when they joined the English lessons. Similar to MHY, activating positive emotions felt by DEW referred to her experience when she learned English in school. Her utterance indicated that she enjoyed the English lessons in the school and was a bit sad when there was no English lesson anymore. One interesting thing that was found in the positive feeling felt by AZCP was the use of digital technology in teaching and learning activities. This showed that AZCP felt an activating arousal, which led to the hope that the learning process would be enjoyable. However, unlike how students thought at the beginning of the class, the students’ feelings at the end of meeting 1 were relatively the same. The students were happy after learning English using Pear Deck. At the end of meeting 1, students showed the existence of activating positive emotion, in this case, enjoyment, which potentially led to excitement. The students felt Pear Deck was fun because its interactive features did not make the class boring. This excitement could lead to prospective outcomes for the students, which were emotion-related to future success (Pekrun et al. 2023), such as studying English using Pear Deck.

Similar to the first meeting, in meeting two at the beginning of the class, one student circled the fourth icon, and two students circled the first icon (see Figure 5). At the end of the

class, the same responses appeared (see Figure 6). The same interview was conducted in the second meeting to obtain further information from the students regarding their feelings.

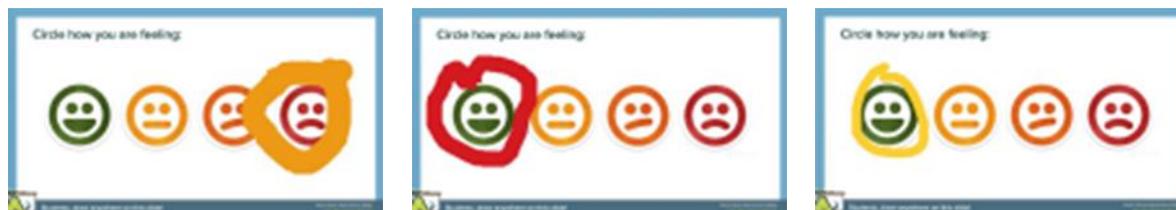


Figure 5. Students’ Feelings at the Beginning of the Class (Meeting 2)

At the beginning of the second meeting, AZCP said that she felt sad because her father was mad at her when she left. After all, she brought her handphone with her. However, she was still excited to learn English using the Pear Deck. *“I am sad. My father is mad at me because I bring my handphone,”* said AZCP. Also, MHY and DEW were happy and excited to start the lesson because they knew they would use Pear Deck again. *“I am excited. Miss. I am going to open Pear Deck,”* said MHY. *“Today, I am happy because I am going to learn English using Pear Deck like yesterday,”* said DEW. At the end of the second meeting, two students expressed their happiness and satisfaction after learning English using Pear Deck. *“I am very happy. I would like to learn English using Pear Deck again,”* said MHY. *“I am happy because Pear Deck is fun. I love Pear Deck,”* said AZCP. On the other hand, one student, DEW, felt sad because the class was over, and she could not use Pear Deck again to learn English. *“I am sad because today is the last meeting, and there is no Pear Deck in my school, so I cannot use Pear Deck again,”* said DEW.

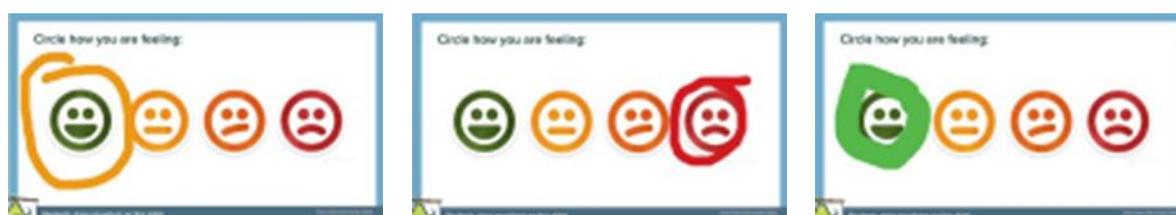


Figure 6. Students’ Feelings at the End of the Class (Meeting 2)

AZCP initially felt sad during the second meeting, but this emotion was unrelated to using Pear Deck in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, MHY and DEW expressed motivation to learn English once again and enjoyed using the Pear Deck application. This indicated that the students’ experiences (retrospective outcome emotion) during the first meeting influenced their excitement and motivation to learn English during the second meeting. Therefore, it was crucial to establish a positive initial experience for students to enhance their motivation and enthusiasm for learning. Integrating digital technology into the

teaching and learning process was equally important. As a digital generation, students felt happy when they could utilize their gadgets in teaching and learning activities.

The result indicated that digital learning experiences (Pear Deck in this context) were effectively implemented to empathize with the students. Pear Deck's anonymous feature also allowed students to express their feelings without fear and judgment. Even though the teacher did not know the students who did not feel good, the teacher had the opportunity to adjust the teaching and learning process with the identification results. It also made students aware that they and their feelings were recognized. The result was in line with Ginting (2021), where one of the external factors that could increase student motivation was recognition, which, in this case, was students' feelings. Furthermore, it can transform extrinsic motivation into internal motivation if applied continuously and well (Ginting, 2021; Harnett et al., 2011; Shillingford & Karlin, 2013). Moreover, the well-implementation of recognition could trigger feelings of involvement in students so the students would automatically be willing to commit and give significant effort and time to be involved in the environment, in this context was the academic circumstances (Astin, 1999 in Ginting, 2021).

The Use of Pear Deck in Improving Students' Motivation and Emotional Engagement

Wilson (2021) elaborated on the strategies that could be implemented within any class setting, virtual or in-person, to increase students' motivation and emotional engagement. It included greeting students with genuine optimism to encourage and motivate them, avoiding approaching students with stereotypes or judgments based on previous struggles, creating a predictable learning environment with routines and regularity to foster trust, and being open to learning progress. During the session, the teacher applied some interactive activities and encouraged students to be involved in the session by combining them with the various features provided in Pear Deck. Figure 7 shows that Pear Deck supports teachers by providing interesting figures that could bridge the interaction between teachers and students and improve students' motivation to learn. In line with Wilson (2021), the student's motivation was built by giving genuine greetings at the beginning of the session and providing introductions to establish initial acknowledgment and connection between the teacher and students.



Figure 7. Opening or Greeting Slide



Figure 8. Students-Emotion-Acknowledgement and Readiness Slides

The follow-up slides included student-emotion acknowledgement and readiness checks, as seen in Figure 8. Besides providing interesting figures, Pear Deck also accommodated the personalized structure of teaching material. Figure 8 shows that Pear Deck made emotional engagement one of the important things to be considered in the learning process by providing template slides to acknowledge students' feelings and readiness before starting the lesson. "I like it when I circle emoticons at the beginning of the session, Miss," said DEW. Moreover, MHY said he liked the emoticons and slides provided during the session because those slides were colorful and exciting. Additionally, AZCP said that she liked how she could express and show her feelings before starting the lesson.



Figure 9. Some of the Pictures Used to Deliver the Lesson Material (Source: Google)

Moreover, Pear Deck's capability to integrate external sources, as illustrated in Figure 9 above, enabled teachers to create visually engaging material designs to be presented to the students in the classroom. According to the interview findings, DEW mentioned her appreciation for how the pictures complemented the provided material, serving as helpful hints for students to enhance their comprehension. *"I like the pictures, Miss. It eases me to know the vocabulary."* It provided the knowledge that the appealing materials design effectively boosted students' motivation and improved their emotional engagement. On the other hand, different input came from different students. AZCP said that she easily remembered the material because it was arranged sequentially, *"The lesson is easy, Miss, because I remember my daily activities starting from wake up until sleep again, similar to the pictures."* Therefore, the combination of interactive and appealing materials also needed to be supported by the appropriate arrangement of the materials.

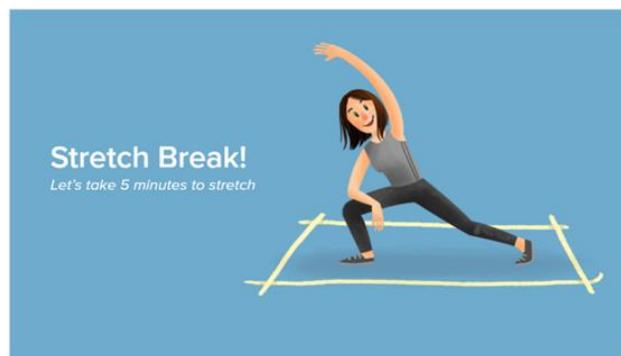


Figure 10. Kinesthetic Feature Provided by Pear Deck

In addition to Pear Deck's capability to integrate external sources, it caters to various learning methods, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches. Besides the visual learning method in the slides, the kinesthetic method was also applied. Figure 10 shows that Pear Deck enabled students to interact actively with the materials on the screen and allowed the teacher and students to explore many learning methods. MHY said, *"I like when all of us move our body practicing what you say,"* which could be said that through Pear Deck, students could learn through various ways and methods.

Moreover, the students were asked to briefly assess the material delivered at the end of every meeting. At the end of the first, when the teacher showed the slide to check the difficulty of the material delivered, one student dragged the line into the green area, one into the yellow area, and one into the orange area (see Figure 11). It indicated that one student felt that the lesson was easy, one thought that the material was moderate, not easy yet not difficult, and one felt that the material was difficult. MHY said the vocabulary was difficult to memorize based

on the interview results regarding the materials provided. However, he understood what the material was about. *“I have not memorized the materials, Miss, because it is quite hard for me to memorize,”* said MHY. On the other hand, AZCP said that the difficulty she faced was writing the word well because its writing and pronunciation were different. *“I cannot memorize the letters; ‘breakfast’ is difficult, but I can read it,”* said AZCP. However, DEW did not encounter any difficulties. *“The lesson is easy, Miss. I usually do those activities, so it is easy to memorize them,”* said DEW. Then, at the end of the second meeting, the students’ feelings of difficulty regarding the lessons given tended to decrease (see Figure 12).

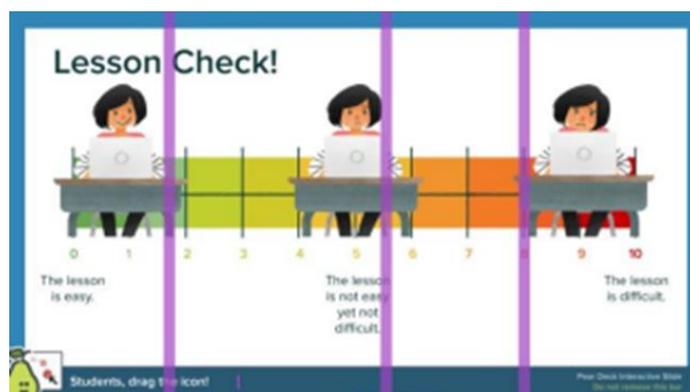


Figure 11. Students’ Response to the Difficulty of the Material (Meeting 1)



Figure 12. Students’ Response to the Difficulty of the Material (Meeting 2)

This was relevant to the research done by Ginting (2021) and Inayati & Waloyo (2022), which explained that the choice of suitable materials also affected the motivation and emotional engagement of the students. The selection of materials delivered in the class that suit the capability level of the students was an important thing for the teachers to consider. If the materials were too easy or difficult, it could cause students to be unwilling to ignore the materials taught or become unmotivated by them. Moreover, based on the interviews conducted with the students, the results indicated that the illustrations provided on Pear Deck

could effectively enhance the students' emotional engagement. Various illustrations could also prevent the class from activating negative emotions, potentially leading to boredom and unmotivated feelings experienced by the students. MHY said that he was interested in the illustration provided by Pear Deck, and it boosted his motivation to follow the lesson even though he found it difficult to understand the materials at the first meeting. Moreover, DEW mentioned that Pear Deck was colorful, so she found it more interesting than reading the printed book that her teacher usually did at school. She also expressed that the class was enjoyable and not too serious, so it did not stress the students. Like DEW, AZCP said that the English class using Pear Deck was enjoyable—the feeling of joy and excitement that the students felt could lead to the prospective and retrospective outcome. The prospective one was a hope to be successful in learning English. At the same time, the retrospective outcome was happiness and enjoyment in learning English, which could shape the perspective that learning English was fun.

On the other hand, there were some inseparable challenges in the teaching and learning process of Pear Deck implementation. Even though the students had been exposed to digital technology, the teacher's direction was still needed to access and operate Pear Deck due to their unfamiliarity. Most of the time, they only learned to use printed books in school, and learning through digital technology became new. Not to overlook the distraction that came from the notification showing up on their handphone. It also made students shift their focus to the notification sometimes. If the notifications were related to what they accessed daily, such as games, the students might divert their focus. Therefore, teachers had to return students' focus to the materials taught swiftly. In other words, the application of Pear Deck would be more challenging if it was applied on a large scale, especially for students of young ages or children, because teachers had to ensure that students followed the lessons delivered within the limited lesson time. Likewise, with the anonymous feature on the Pear Deck, which accommodated its good benefits where students could express freely and without fear of giving wrong answers, the other side of this anonymous feature was that teachers had limitations in monitoring students to follow the lessons being delivered.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to identify the use of Pear Deck in improving students' motivation and emotional engagement in learning English. This case study reveals that synchronizing digital technology through Pear Deck can effectively boost students' motivation and emotional engagement in learning. The interesting illustration and interactive features provided by Pear

Deck are concrete evidence that the utilization of Pear Deck can affect students' motivation and emotional engagement during the session. The suitable materials to be delivered to the students are also significant factors that educators must consider. The students' retrospective and prospective outcomes also appear during the learning process. Those outcomes relate to the student's experience and future hope in learning English using Pear Deck. Teachers' direct assistance during the learning process is still needed to ensure that students follow the lesson well and swiftly return their focus to the material if they are distracted by notifications from other online applications.

As this study was mainly focused on the utilization of Pear Deck and its impact on students' emotional engagement during sessions, future researchers have the opportunity to delve deeper into emotional engagement among students using various educational platforms. Additionally, it is possible to conduct a needs analysis of EFL students, develop comprehensive lesson plans, and integrate Pear Deck with them. This case study may have limitations regarding the number of subjects involved and the analyzed data. Nevertheless, it provides valuable insights into Pear Deck's interactive and engaging features to foster an engaging learning atmosphere. Due to the limited number of subjects, generalizing the findings is not feasible. Future research could focus on examining a larger sample size with a more structured study design and detailed experimental approach to scrutinize further or validate the findings of this study.

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