

The Use of *Socrative* in English Language Teaching Classroom: Students' Perspectives

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Abstract

Socrative is an online response system that enables students to answer questions given by the instructor with the help of devices connected to the internet. This paper deals with the use of *Socrative* as a tool of a web-based and real-time response system in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms and students' perception toward it. The study was conducted at the first semester of 2018-2019 academic year in a university environment. The data is collected qualitatively by distributing open-ended questionnaire to the participants of the study. This study describes the students various perceptions toward the use of *Socrative*. The result of this study indicates that *Socrative* gives contribution to the improvement of students' engagement in the classroom.

Keywords: *Socrative, student perception, English language teaching*

Introduction

Attracting students to learn is not an easy task for teachers. Teachers' conventional learning activities are now considered as boring activities resulting in students' low engagement in the classroom. Teachers need to find more effective teaching media to motivate interest in the course and build bridges between students' knowledge and the learning objectives of the course. As a result students will be able to increase the willingness to achieve the goal of learning.

The concept of learning in this era has been related to the rapid development of technology, the emerging and developing of technology and its application to teaching comes into full play in education (Hashim, H., 2018). He argues that as a consequence, educators are facing challenges in adapting their teaching styles to accommodate a new generation of learners. The new generation of learners, who are now entering schools, colleges and universities, have learning expectations, styles, and needs that are different from past students (Hashim, H., 2018). The argument is in line with Prensky (2005) in Wijaya, A. A., (2017) students in the digital era are more likely to engage with technology and bored by lectures in class. They need to focus on using new tools, finding information, making meaning, and creating. Brown, J. S. (2006) also argues the students in digital era are more engaged with the world differently than the earlier generation. Due to the unique characteristics of the new generation of learners, Hashim, H., (2018) argues teachers could not run away from integrating and applying technology in teaching and learning as, for these learners, technology is not considered an accessory to life but is viewed as a way of life. This study, therefore, discusses the integration of a tool of a web-based

system called *Socrative* (www.Socrative.com) in EFL classroom to make learning activities interesting and more effective. This study explores the use of *Socrative* in EFL classrooms and students' perception toward it.

Theoretical Framework

Fátima, Faya & Harrison, Ana Martín-Macho (2019) define *Socrative* as a formative assessment tool of mobile app that helps teachers and learners to assess understanding and progress in real time in class through the use of quizzes, questions and reflection questions and it can be accessed via website or app, with separate apps for teachers and students. Coca & Slisko (2013), as cited in Wijaya, A. A. (2017) define *Socrative* as a smart student response system which allows all students to answer several questions very fast and the teacher knows the answer immediately. Furthermore, Dervan, Paul (2014) defines *Socrative* as a cloud-based response system which is available free of charge and can be accessed by students over a WiFi or mobile data connection using PCs, mobile phones and tablet devices.

Benefits of Using *Socrative*

O'Keeffe (2011), as cited in Dervan, Paul (2014) explains *Socrative* provides an immediate source of feedback for the academic and student, rapidly identifying areas of misunderstanding. Significantly, he adds, students are enthusiastic towards their use. Moreover, there are potential improvements in student learning coupled with increased levels of advance preparation, improved student interaction, engagement and active learning.

Reasons for Using *Socrative* in the Classroom

Johnson (2005) cited in El Shaban, Abir (2017, p.74) explains the reasons for using *Socrative* in the classroom as follows:

1. Students' academic engagement leads to academic success. The use of *Socrative* would increase students' engagement.
2. It is important that each student should have a voice in the class and share his/her opinion regarding the course content. The use of *Socrative* would provide shy and less involved students with the opportunity to have a voice during the class.
3. Critical thinking and collaboration are two of the most important 21st century skills. The effective use of class tasks with *Socrative* could promote these two skills.
4. *Socrative* has become more accessible and efficient to use. Language teachers should take advantage of it.
5. *Socrative* is an effective tool that can provide ESL students with instant feedback and help the teacher to evaluate students' understandings of the subject matter.
6. With the use of *Socrative*, language teachers can set up students' responses as anonymous. Doing so would encourage even more hesitant students to respond without the fear of embarrassment or intimidation in case their answers were not right.
7. *Socrative* can be used as an assessment tool inside and outside the classroom confines.
8. The use of *Socrative* can meet the passion of the tech-savvy new generation and, if it is used efficiently and effectively, it can break up the dullness of traditional classroom settings

(Johnson, 2005 cited in El Shaban, Abir, 2017, p.74)

Students' Perception

Students' perception has a significant role to support the learning process. Sekuler, R & Blake, R. (1990) argue that perception is what person feels about particular thing both conscious and unconscious, whether visual or auditory. Perception, according to Allport (1996), is the way we judge or evaluate others. Furthermore, Eggen & Kauchak (2001) give cognitive dimension of perception; they see perception as the process by which people attach meaning to experiences. This is in line with Forgas (1966) explaining that perception encourages all processes associated with the recognition, transformation, and organization of sensory information. In other words, students can have a perception towards something if they have experienced the process as mentioned by Forgas. Students' perception according to McGoldrick and Caffrey (2009), cited in Handayani, Aprilia & Umam, Amalul, (2017) is the students' ability to justify their own opinions and distinguish it from research being presented in the class. Students' perception towards teacher knowledge of subject matter, attitudes to work and teaching skill is absolutely dependent on the fact that they have been taught by the teacher under evaluation and familiar with them.

Method

This study is conducted to explain the use of *Socrative* in English classroom and students' perception towards the use of it. The perception itself needs to be presented comprehensively in order to get thorough explanations of the real condition. The participants of this research are 40 students in the first semester of 2018-2019 academic year enrolled in intensive listening course. They were asked open-ended questionnaire as well as probing questions to share their thoughts on how they perceived toward the use of *Socrative* in EFL classroom. The data are coded and analyzed descriptively and qualitatively to describe students' perception toward the use of *Socrative* in EFL classroom.

Findings And Discussion

The Use of Socrative in EFL Classroom

This part focuses on how teachers use *Socrative*. Firstly, teachers need to register on www.Socrative.com in order to use it. Kaya, A. & Balta, N. (2016) explain once the teachers create an account from *Socrative* they have their own virtual room and room name. Teachers can create multiple choice quizzes, open ended quizzes online and exit tickets in their rooms or they can use the *Socrative* template for creating quizzes and import them into their room for future usage. Students need only to download the application to their smartphones or tablets. When they access the system they will be asked to enter the room name of their teachers. Before starting a *Socrative* quiz there are choices for setting the quiz. Teachers are able to choose student paced-immediate feedback. Students receive immediate right/wrong feedback and explanations after they answer each question. Students answer questions in order and cannot skip or change their answers. The teacher is able to monitor their progress via a live results table or student paced – student navigation. Once they have completed the activity they can submit the entire assessment. Again, the teacher is able to monitor their progress via a live results table or teacher paced quiz (Teachers control the flow of questions). The teachers send one question at a time and show the responses as they come in. They can skip and revisit questions. There are additional settings: The instructor can disable student names, randomize question order, randomize answer order and disable student feedback. After finishing the settings the teachers click to start the quiz. At the end when all the students finish answering the quiz, the teachers click to finish and he/she will be asked, "How would you like your report(s)?" You can get it via e mail, download, send to Google drive, view chart or view later. The next step is choosing your report type. Instructor can get

whole class Excel, individual student(s) PDF or question specific PDF, then submit it (Kaya, A. & Balta, N., 2016, pp. 5-6).

Students' Perception toward the Use of Socratic

The participants have responded to the open-ended questionnaire given by the researcher. Students perceive that the use of *Socratic* can improve their engagement during the lecture. This is based on the statement of a respondent that *"The use of Socratic really helps the learning process. The course becomes more interesting and effective"* (R1). The statement means that students' degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion are shown when they are learning or being taught.

Students also assume that *Socratic* makes the lecture more interactive. *With Socratic student can ask teacher for an explanation and teachers can give feedback to student based on student mistake in question* (R3). This means that teacher and student are influencing or having an effect on each other. The teacher also actively involves the students in learning process by way of teacher-student interaction. This also means *Socratic* highlighted gaps in students' knowledge. Johnson (2005) in El Shaban, Abir (2017) argues that it is important that each student should have a voice in the class and share his/her opinion regarding the course content. The use of *Socratic* would provide shy and less involved students with the opportunity to have a voice during the class.

Socratic is thought to provide gamification. It motivates students to learn by using game elements in learning environments that can maximize enjoyment and engagement through capturing the interest of learners to continue learning. *"Socratic is very useful and fun because students can play while learning"*. (R3). In the classroom, teacher includes time restrictions of countdowns which make the class a competitive game. The rank can be seen from the score shown after answer submission. This is in line with Wood (2001) that the use of game-like formats could be more effective at capturing learners' attention than traditional media such as textbooks" (cited in Wijaya, A. A., 2017). Since the era of using English textbook has no longer an effective way to engage the students in learning English language, teachers can use the advance of *Socratic*, (Wijaya, A. A., 2017).

Socratic is perceived to improve students' understanding of course materials. Immediate feedback from teacher makes the student understand the course materials. This is based on student's statement that *"The feedback from Socratic makes the materials easy to understand"* (R24). Teacher's written and verbal feedbacks include comments on what is done appropriately. Their friends' comments relating the feedback also help the student elaborate their understanding.

Socratic is perceived to be very easy to use. Students do not need to make complicated registration before accessing *Socratic*. Student can access the artificial classroom just by entering the room name provided by the teacher. Students submit their answers and the whole

classroom can visualize it. “*Socrative is very simple and easy from the beginning to the end of the use. We do not need make complex registration. Just enter the room name and do the exercises*” (R5). The statement implies that student has compared *Socrative* with the other application in which *Socrative* is considered the simplest one.

Socrative gives fast scoring (live result). “*Socrative is very quick in calculating the score without having to count the score manually like in a printed book. We can also see our wrong answer highlighted in red shown by the teacher. So by using Socrative, learning becomes an interesting activity*” (R4). Based on the writer observation, students love seeing the percentage of correct answers on multiple choice questions. Their enthusiasms were shown when the total score of the correct answers are displayed through the projector. Students’ curiosity to their score achievement creates a lively classroom atmosphere.

Conclusion

The results show that *Socrative* is a feasible tool that can facilitate active learning in classroom. Students perceive that the use of *Socrative* can improves their engagement during lectures, makes the lectures more interactive, improves students’ understanding of course materials, gives fast scoring (live result), provides gamification, and is very easy to use. It implies that *Socrative* can be used as the solution to the problem based on the engagement to get involved inside the classroom. *Socrative* is a very useful tool as it provides the possibility for the teacher to know the learning process of all the students in real time.

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