

Kahoot and Powtoon: Student-Friendly Digital Platforms

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Abstract

Language Learning must be a natural and fun-filled process that ensures the maximum participation of all the learners. The present generation is highly techno-savvy and for that reason, the old effective methods of language learning will not be suitable for them. The paper presents the possibilities of creating innovative platforms in the English classrooms through online applications – Kahoot and Powtoon. Online learning through Kahoot and Powtoon is ground-breaking and it successfully retains the students' interest in face-to-face and online classes. It is easy to create animated videos and presentations through Powtoons. The monotonous nature of PowerPoint presentations can also be solved as Powtoons bring awesomeness to the presentations. Language learning should give ample scope for the creativity of the students. The animated videos will be beneficial for presenting different genres of literature and various perspectives on an issue. In a traditional classroom, it is difficult for the teacher to maintain the interest of the students who have multiple intelligence levels. By introducing Kahoot, the teacher can promote peer teaching. Students can involve in a variety of activities like online quiz, discussions, surveys, problem-solving and so on. Any student who has a mobile phone with internet access can involve in this learning process. The paper projects the various methods to motivate the digital generation and analyses the practical difficulties of implementing such novel strategies in face-to-face and online classes.

Keywords: online learning, games, Kahoot, Powtoon, motivation

Science and technology have established its dominance in all spheres of life. Life has become more accessible and comfortable with technology. A few remarkable contributions of technology that are beneficial to mankind are communication through emails, online shopping and transactions, social networking, online registrations and examinations. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has given way to Technology Assisted Language Learning (TALL). The teachers who were once comfortable with the chalk and walk method have realised that it is difficult to control the modern gadget-loving pupils with the old and traditional ways. Though the teachers are slow in adapting to the technological changes, students are faster in matters related to technology. The English language and Hindi language competency of young children in India developed considerably due to the influence of the cartoon networks. The strenuous work has become easier with the help of mobile apps. By installing certain apps, it is possible even to buy even fresh fish without visiting the fish market. Technology has enabled the situation where the teachers can control the class with mobile phones.

With technological advancement and globalization, English has become a world language linking the different parts of the world. Since English is a global language, a proper method and approach should be adopted. A method basically answers the three questions: why, what and how to teach. It determines what and how much is to be taught (selection), the order in which it is taught (grading), how the meaning and form are conveyed (presentation) and what is done to make language unconscious (repetition). Though the textbooks introduce a proper method through selection, grading, presentation and repetition, unfortunately, it is not reflected in teaching.

Moreover, the method prescribed in the printed textbooks will not be suitable for all the students. With technical assistance, the teacher can alter the methods according to the needs of her students. Edward M. Anthony defines an approach as “a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and the nature of language teaching and learning”(94). An approach, on the other hand,

is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught. He further states that an approach “is a point of view, a philosophy, an article of faith – something which one believes but cannot necessarily prove”(94). A method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, all of which is based upon the selected approach. While an approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural. Within an approach, there may be different methods. The methods are frequently called mim-mem(mimic-memorize) and pattern practice. A technique is a particular trick, a stratagem used to accomplish an immediate objective.

Techniques must be in harmony with method and approach. Techniques differ according to the individual artistry and composition of the classroom. Many approaches were experimented within English language teaching. Technology has contributed significantly to the field of English language learning. Overhead projectors, audio and video aids are a few examples of the earliest techno-teaching aids. Traditional computers are replaced by laptops and tablets. The most convenient device used for learning is the mobile phone. E-learning has become M-learning as smartphones can perform all the functions of mainstream computers. It is the ability and possibility to learn from anywhere and anytime using a very light and portable device. It promotes self-learning as the students can download a variety of apps. Important apps to improve the English language are Duolingo, Two Min English, Game to Learn English, Powowbox, Real English and so on. Teachers are hesitant to use high tech aids in the classroom as they have to present it before digitally competent students. This actually creates a digital divide. Through Kahoot and Powtoon, innovative platforms are created in English classrooms. Online learning through Kahoot and Powtoon is ground-breaking and successful in retaining the interest of the students. It is easy to create animated videos and presentations through Powtoon. The monotonous nature of PowerPoint presentations can also be solved as Powtoons bring awesomeness to the presentations. Language learning should give ample scope for the creativity of the students. The animated videos will be handy for presenting different genres of literature and various perspectives on an issue. The students can learn in any environment using Kahoot and Powtoon. If the

students have mobile phones with internet access, any classroom can be transformed into a language lab. The structural approach treats structures as tools of language. These tools are sounds, stress, rhythm, intonation and so on. The audio files in Powtoons will enable the learner to comprehend the structural tools.

Kahoot was introduced to the students and the teachers of various colleges of Kerala as part of the gamification introduced in Malabar Christian College, Calicut. The main objective was to promote student engagement in active learning with the aid of technology. “We often try out new concepts in teaching and the game based pedagogy, not attempted by any other educational institution in the state, is our new strategy,” states Dr Premanand, an Associate Professor of English, Malabar Christian College, Calicut. Moreover, the participants got an opportunity to play Kahoot in the Second International Seminar on “New Trends in Language Learning Using Technology” held at Malabar Christian College in 2016.

The English Department of Farook College, Calicut, Kerala, conducted ‘Shakespeare Fiesta’ in February 2017, in which one important event hosted was Shakespeare Kahoot. ‘Shakespeare Fiesta’, an Intercollegiate Literary Fest to commemorate the Quadricentennial Death Anniversary of William Shakespeare, was organised by the M.A. English students (2015-17) of the English Department, Farook College, on 8 February 2017. Shakespeare Kahoot, an event in ‘Shakespeare Fiesta’, was totally different from traditional quiz competitions and was a new and different experience for the participants and the audience. More than eighty students from fifteen colleges in Kerala participated in the competitions. Ms Nimi, a Postgraduate student of St. Joseph’s College, Devagiri, bagged first in Shakespeare Kahoot. The participants were thrilled to take part in Shakespeare Kahoot and they opined that it was a rewarding experience for them. The participants assembled in the Audio Visual Theatre of Farook College with their smartphones. The students were instructed beforehand to ensure good internet connectivity. Since it was the first time many students were playing Kahoot, a trial round with proper orientation also was given.

Due to Covid 19 Pandemic, when online teaching has become the new normal, Kahoot is used by most teachers for assessment purposes. The unique music and colour effect make Kahoot tension free for students. Voice clippings and video files can be incorporated into the quiz. The participants can play it individually or in a group. When the students play it in a group, they have to discuss the answers and write down the points to avoid chaotic situations. The teacher conducting the Kahoot should give more time to each question, if it is done as a group activity. Simple to complex questions can be included in Kahoot. Students are scared of the traditional assessment system but are excited when the assessment is conducted on the Kahoot platform. After each unit, if the teacher conducts a quiz through Kahoot, students' interest can be retained. The students can involve in this task in a fun-filled and tension-free manner.

Technology has a significant role in the Communicative Method, which develops students' communicative competence. The teacher is the facilitator who manages the class. By using Kahoot and Powtoon, the learners can involve in activities like role play, problem-solving tasks, games and so on. All four skills – Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing – can also be given equal emphasis through this. In the Communicative Method, the Mother Tongue is not used; instead, the target language is used for all communication. Accuracy is only secondary, and errors are considered tolerable. The possibility of using the mother tongue is higher in the traditional classroom, but by using Kahoot and Powtoon, that tendency can be minimised.

The method which was once used for teaching the English language may not be adequate to handle the digital generation. It is ridiculous to try the old methods on highly competent students in technology. Through Powtoon and Kahoot, a virtual platform can be created where students can interact with each other and portray their skills. Powtoon and Kahoot provide promising platforms to strengthen the language skills of the students.

Powtoon is a portmanteau of “PowerPoint” and “Cartoon”. Powtoon is similar to PowerPoint in many respects, but the animation, characters and variety of images make powtoon awesome. Every aspect of the template can be changed in Powtoon. The text colour

can be changed by clicking on the “+” below “my colours”. The images and props can be easily swapped and be customised for each class. The order in which texts, props, characters and symbols should appear can also be adjusted. The variety in the presentation will enable teachers to handle even complicated topics. Even complicated lessons from History, Geography, various theories and stories can be presented in a simple student-friendly manner that can be easily grabbed by students.

Step-by-Step Guide to register and Use Powtoon

- Step 1. Using your preferred browser (Chrome, Firefox or Explorer), go to www.powtoon.com.
- Step 2. Select the tab that says “Sign up for free”.
- Step 3. Complete the fields on the Sign-Up screen. Under “Select a profile for a customized experience”, choose “Education – Teacher”.
- Step 4. After you have completed the registration process, you should receive a confirmation email with an activation link. Click this link, and it will take you back to Powtoons to log in. Enter your Email or Username and Password in the fields. Then click “Login”.
- Step 5. Now you are ready to create a New Studio Project. Notice the yellow/grey box – you can also add voiceovers! But right now, click “Create”.
- Step 6. The great thing about PowToon is that it is constructive for new users. The 7 Clicks Tutorial help to learn the basics of creating a PowToon video. Go ahead and click “Start”.
- Step 7. Follow the instructions of the Tutorial onscreen to create a short video.
- Step 8. You can now start a new Powtoons or customize one of the existing templates.
- Step 9. Either way, there are Tutorials available to help get you started on your first project.
- Step 10. Like a PowerPoint Presentation, you can choose a blank video, a template or a ready-made PowToon

Step-by-Step Guide for Using Kahoot!

- Step 1. Using your preferred internet browser (Chrome, Firefox or Explorer), go to <https://getkahoot.com>.

Step 2. First, you must select your role – choose “I’m a teacher”.

Step 3. Enter the name of your School or University. Then complete Your Account Details by filling in the fields on the screen.

Step 4. After you have created your account, you will be redirected back to this page to Sign In.

Step 5. Your dashboard page will appear

Step 6. To create a New Kahoot, click on “Quiz”. You will be prompted to give your quiz a name.

- You can see the statistics of the Kahoots you have made.
- You can download the results of the games you have played.
- You can create a New Quiz, New Discussion or a New Survey

Step 7. After naming your quiz, you can start entering questions:

Step 8. Continue to add questions until you have completed creating your quiz. Once you have completed, click “Save & continue?”.

- You can add your own image to the question – this is recommended because otherwise, the flash image will be distracting
- You can change the time limit
- You can insert up to 4 possible answers – click the “-” sign if you want to reduce the number of possible answers.
- To denote the “Correct” answer, simply click on the “Incorrect” button under the correct answer. It will turn green and say “Correct.”

Step 9. On the next screen, you can change the settings. While most of this page is fine to leave uncompleted, you must select a Primary audience.

Step 10. You have almost done! This page allows you to add a cover image for your quiz. You can leave this page as it is, but you must select a Primary audience.

- Once you have finished, click “Save & Continue.”
- Once you have finished, click “Done”.
- You can even upload a YouTube video to play in the background.

Step 11. Now you are ready to play! If you want to preview or edit your quiz, you can do that on the screen.

Step 12. When you select “Play now”, you are redirected to a new link as the game host.

- Step 13. If some players get accidentally disconnected during the game, it is better to display the game pin throughout. So, select “On” for this option. Additionally, it is also better to “Randomize the order of questions and answers”. Why? If you don’t, and you always entered the correct answer as “A”, then every answer will be “A” on the quiz.
- Step 14. After you click “Launch”, the next screen that comes up shows the link that students will go to in order to connect to and play the Kahoot!
- Step 15. A game pin will appear that students will use to access your Kahoot! This is a unique, one-time, 6-digit number – each time you open this specific Kahoot!, a new game pin will be issued. This number is also used to re-enter a Kahoot! if a student is disconnected at some point during the game. (As you can see, the “Start now” button is inactive. Before you can start the Kahoot!, players must join the game.). Students can access the Kahoot game through two places: 1) <https://kahoot.it/> or 2) Kahoot! app.
- Step 16. When students reach the homepage, they will be prompted to enter the 6-digit code from the game’s home screen.
- Step 17. Students can play solo or with partners/teams. Either way, they should enter a Nickname on the following screen and then click “Join game”.

As there are pros and cons for any system, Kahoot and Powtoon have many advantages and disadvantages. Basic knowledge in technology is necessary to use Kahoot and Powtoon. In Kerala, some students do not know even to send emails. Teaching through Kahoot and Powtoon is highly dependent on a technical device. Initially, it may be embarrassing for shy students. Moreover, mobile phones are banned in classrooms. Even if the teacher permits the use of mobile phones in the classroom, a few students may be involved in social networking and other distractive activities. The internet connection is also a problem while playing Kahoot. The speed of the internet and the finger really matters in deciding the score of each question. The response time is divided by the question timer. Though the question timer cannot be disabled while playing Kahoot in the

synchronous mode, it is possible to deactivate the timer in the asynchronous mode while assigning the Kahoot to students. During the Covid time, when most of the educational institutions are supported by strong Wi-Fi connections, students can be given proper internet facilities by the educational institutions.

After giving an orientation session on Kahoot and Powtoon, the students can be involved in self-learning, peer learning, and classroom learning. It will promote healthy competition among students. Through Kahoot and Powtoon, the boredom of classroom teaching can be avoided as students can actively take part in the teaching process. Each student can present her own perspective of a social problem or a piece of literature. It is also suitable for a class where students have multiple intelligence levels. Each student can be the quizzer. The students will learn to frame questions and also will be able to select questions of different difficulty levels. Easy assessment can be done through this. It will motivate even the weakest student to do something of significance in the class. Students will unknowingly take part in the learning process and it will build up their confidence in a natural and fun-filled manner. Through Kahoot and Powtoon, teachers can make their cases interactive, fulfilled and student-friendly, no matter whether it is a face to face class or online class. Both Kahoot and Powtoon are highly recommended tools for peer teaching also. The question pattern of NET/JRF, the competitive examinations started by the University Grants Commission, is restructured. The students who can memorise the answers can get through the exam easily. The quiz through Kahoot is fun-filled and students may find it easy to recollect the answers. The students demand more Kahoot sessions as they are tension-free and highly engaging in offline and online classes. It is always rewarding for a teacher to get positive feedback from the students about Kahoot and Powtoon.

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