Enriching EFL Classroom with Quizizz Lessons

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Abstract

Quizizz is a free online platform designed to support remote learning; it creates an effective technology-based environment favourable for teaching, learning, and assessing students both synchronously and asynchronously; besides, because of the pandemics in 2020, it expanded to help teach with digital presentations, organize breakout games, get and provide feedback, and engage with interactive assessment tools online. The major goal of the present paper is to discuss the benefits of online teaching with the *Quizizz* platform; furthermore, it focuses on online activities before, during, and after class with *Quizizz Lesson*. Finally, the article aims at underlying the advantages and disadvantages of teaching remotely with *Quizizz* in comparison to other online software providers, as well as the possibility of integrating the *Quizizz* activities into Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Canvas or Moodle.

Keywords: *online teaching, software, formative assessment, engagement, Quizizz features*

Information technology has long been a question of great interest in a wide variety of fields. The first report to review ways in which technology-based learning had progressed and changed was published in 1999 by the National Center for Educational Statistics; in the report, the advantages of such online technology like "e-mail, chat sessions, electronic bulletin boards, video, CD-ROM, audioconferencing, and desktop videoconferencing" were praised; these features seem to had really varied and significantly simplified lots of teachers' tasks (Palloff and Pratt 2013: 62). In light of recent incidents in the entire world, it is becoming extremely difficult to ignore the necessity of using technology in the process of teaching a foreign language, since it allows not only to facilitate the process but also to expand the audience of learners and the borders of the classroom. No one can deny the great power of online learning, as the teacher can teach their students from any corner of the world. Moreover, technology allows the teacher to conduct a full-fledged lesson in real-time, using the resources of numerous internet platforms. Besides, nowadays technology enhances and enriches the formative assessment methods which are so important for the entire teaching cycle. On the one hand, online classes will never replace the experience of face-to-face ones, because "technology is a vehicle, not a driver of online course" (Palloff and Pratt 2013: 62); on the other hand, however, technology, when used wisely, can bring a fresh wave of engagement and motivation among the students of today's class.

This paper aims at discussing the advantages of one of the many online platforms available on the internet today, which can be used as both, teaching and assessment tool, *Quizizz*. This platform allows both the creation of quizzes and presentation slides; it is, therefore, a very useful platform in teaching and assessing students online for free. In addition, the quizzes and presentations within *Quizizz* can be used before, during or after online classes, which facilitates and enriches the teaching and assessment methodology. Ultimately, what counts is a "relevant, contextual environment in the classroom, either traditional or virtual" as no technology is absolutely perfect in achieving all learning objectives (Frohberg, 2006; Palloff and Pratt 2013: 69). Nevertheless, if evaluated according to the five I's of effective distance teaching introduced by Olcott (1999), interaction, introspection, innovation, integration, and information, *Quizizz* meets all of the criteria.

To start working with *Quizizz*, one has to type in the search bar of their browser the name of the platform, *Quizizz*, and get registered with a personal email address. Once created the

account, *Quizizz* offers the possibility to create quizzes and lessons which can later be used live in class or asynchronously, as a pre-teaching activity or as homework. Furthermore, one can find and use, to their own liking, ready-made quizzes by other teachers in a great array of subjects; once customised, the number of questions and answers in a borrowed quiz can be modified. Another important feature considered in the following section, is the 'Reports', where the entire amount of data regarding every quiz and every student is kept for free; the reports show a detailed picture of the students' accuracy in percentage; quite apart from the already mentioned features, questions, overview, and topic modes can be displayed for a more comprehensive representation of the report. Moreover, the individual reports can be downloaded or sent via email to students or their parents.

Exploring Quizizz Features

Students of all ages can be engaged in fun formative assessment thanks to *Quizizz*, which is much more effective, user-friendly, and multifunctional than *Kahoot*, more engaging than *Socrative* and more resourceful than *Quizlet*. The basic features of the platform are:
- Student-paced and teacher-paced mode
- Quiz editor mode
- Quiz customization mode
- Public Quizizz library
- Bring your own device policy
- Quizizz reports.

The student paced mode, a feature that *Kahoot* lacks, means that every student sees and/or reads the questions and the answers on their personal devices, therefore, the questions can be answered at a speed that is comfortable for each student individually. Additionally, the teacher-paced mode allows the teacher to manage the multiple settings provided by *Quizizz* before starting a quiz. The teacher can select the *Classic* or *Instructor Paced* option, *Live* or *Homework* mode; the teacher can also control the number of try-outs per quiz attempted by students, select whether the students receive immediate feedback during the quiz or, on the contrary, at the end of the quiz, or neither of these options; besides, a review section displayed for the students at the end of the game can be selected. Another interesting advantage of the teacher-paced mode is that they can generate the *Name Factory,* which is a way to give fun, safe names to all participants, including shy and outgoing students which gives the game fun and free atmosphere.

Figure 1. Game Settings (Quizizz)

Moreover, the question timer can be managed as well, accordingly, the option to shorten or increase the amount of time per question, or to switch the timer off, are very useful settings. One more feature which motivates and engages the students during any quiz is the *Show Memes* option, which can be turned on or off, according to the type of the test; it displays fun, inspiring memes for both correct and incorrect answers. The *Show Memes* setting, by default or self-created one, releases students' tension and stress during the quiz and creates a cosy, cheerful environment for formative assessment.

Figure 2. Show Memes Setting (Quizizz 2016)

An important feature of *Quizizz* is that a different set of questions is generated for each student engaged in the game, therefore, each player gets a different variant of quiz; moreover, the set changes with every additional attempt, hence, all the try-outs lead to a "unique set of questions and a more meaningful and personalized learning experience for every student" (Quizizz 2021a). This feature is most effective with larger quizzes as more variety ensures students are exposed to a unique set of questions in each attempt, and cheating is, therefore, reduced to a minimum.

Quizizz also proposes a *Redemption Question* setting, which can be turned off, if necessary, but which is very useful when the goal is to review or consolidate the material taught in face-to-face or online class. Within the *Redemption Questions* setting the students are given the opportunity to retake a question they previously got incorrect. Every live quiz suggests one or more redemption questions, depending on the length of the quiz, which appear during or at the end of the game. When the *Test Setting* is selected, the *Redemption Question* option is automatically turned off and the teacher gets an accurate picture of students' scores.

Furthermore, another original and productive feature is the *Power-up* Setting. This addition is definitely designed to uplift student's participation and involvement in *Quizizz*. *Power-ups* are a kind of reward 'super-powers', granted to those students who give three or more consequent correct answers, which students seem to absolutely adore and take advantage of. Once acquired, the power-up icon appears at the bottom of the student's screen and can later be activated for a certain question. There are nine power-ups available at the moment (Quizizz 2021b), these include:

1. 'Double jeopardy' (the player gets double points for a correct answer),
2. 'X2' (the player receives twice the points per question),
3. '50-50' (the program removes half of the incorrect options),
4. 'Immunity' (the player is given a second chance after an incorrect answer),
5. 'Eraser' (the system eliminates one incorrect option),
6. 'Time freeze' (the player can stop the timer and still get the total score of points for a question),
7. 'Power play' (all the players get 50% more points for 20 seconds),
8. 'Streak saver' (it protects the player's streak against a wrong answer),
9. 'Glitch' (all the players, except for the one who activated it, get a glitchy screen for 10 seconds).

Power-up settings can be turned off by the teachers when they create the game; however, this feature is turned on by default for *Live*, *Team* and *Homework* modes if the game host did not inactivate it.

The Quiz editor mode offers the possibility to create five types of questions which are saved automatically after they are created; moreover, the questions are shown in the right part of the screen exactly in the way they will appear to the students. All these question types have the function to vary the quiz content and to assess the reproduction skills and extended and strategic thinking.

The first type is the 'Multiple choice' question where the student has to choose only one correct answer from a multiple of other options; the second type is the 'Checkbox' question which allows the creation of multiple correct answers per question; the advantage of this type of question is that the points are distributed evenly, and the students get the fair number of points even if they did not select all the correct options. For instance, *Socrative* does not have this type

of question and in case the students omitted one correct option, but still got the others, they get zero points per question anyway, which is unfair. The third type of question, 'Fill-in-the-Blank', enables the students to manually enter the answer in the space provided; "the character limit for FIB is 160 chars. A message shows up when the answer exceeds 120 characters (Quizizz 2021c). The 'Open-Ended' question is the fourth type of question that gives the chance to check students' creativity by giving longer, personal responses (up to 1000 characters). These answers are not graded by the system, they have to be evaluated by the teacher, however, they are automatically considered as 'correct' in the quiz report. The fifth type of question is the 'Poll'; it does not have any correct answers, the players can select only one option or multiple options, according to the variants originally imposed by the host. In addition, the host can add text images to their questions or put on images as answer options. This option is useful for quizzes prepared for young learners or the vocabulary sets for EFL learners of any age. Finally, worth mentioning are some extra features that help teachers save time as they can import questions from other quizzes with the 'Teleport' option or even import a quiz from a spreadsheet.

 All the created quizzes are kept in 'My Library' section and can be organized into special folders; the system also gives the possibility to modify already saved quizzes, to change their name, as well as to fix possible mistakes, if any. However, it is important to make the changes before starting the live game because there is no option to change/fix the quiz in the game mode. Once the quizzes are created and saved, the teacher is allowed to host multiple quizzes at the same time, as well as conducting multiple game types, *Live* or *Homework* simultaneously. At the end the teacher can easily trace the results of each quiz, owing to the fact that every game has its own report. In addition, the teachers can download the tests in Pdf format with or without *Answer Keys* and the quiz will look just like an ordinary test paper that can be written in class.

The customization mode allows the teachers to adjust the level of competition, the speed, and lots of other factors. All the quizzes on the platform can be modified by the teachers in consonance with their requirements.

Mobile technology in higher education, and not only, is no longer seen as "a disruptive influence, one that hinders education rather than enhancing it"; the effective power and convenience of mobile technology usage the in classroom have been recognized due to the possibility to diversify and enrich the teaching process (Pallof and Pratt 2013: 66).

> Mobile technology has the potential to change learning and teaching as we have known it. The use of this technology can empower students to become true informal learners that carry that knowledge through a lifetime of practice. (Palloff and Pratt 2013: 69)

The BYOD means that the students can use their own devices to participate in the quiz; *Quizizz* makes it possible to play the games and quizzes from any device which has an internet connection, with any browser, and any operating system. It is very convenient for the teacher since there is no need for any additional screen or projector, as it is with *Kahoot*. For the students, likewise, it creates a perfect environment to answer the questions attentively, each at their own pace, without being pressed by the speed of other students.

With reference to the 'Public library' option, it is a resource that offers public ready-made quizzes. To put it simply, these are free, public quizzes created by other teachers that can be borrowed and adapted to one's own class; one can look for quizzes by their names, their keywords or by the username of the creator of the quiz.

The last, yet one of the most credited basic features, is the 'Report' section. The *Quizizz* software provides complete, comprehensive student-level and class-level insights for every conducted quiz; the reports can be printed, downloaded or sent via email in Pdf or Excel formats

to students, their parents or others; this function is extremely useful in students' involvement and active learning. Additionally, reports are necessary for the teachers because they can use the feedback from reports to modify their lesson plans in real-time, as well as trace out the struggling students and those who need additional guidance. The types of reports available are 'Class report by Question', 'Class report by Player' and 'Individual Player report'.
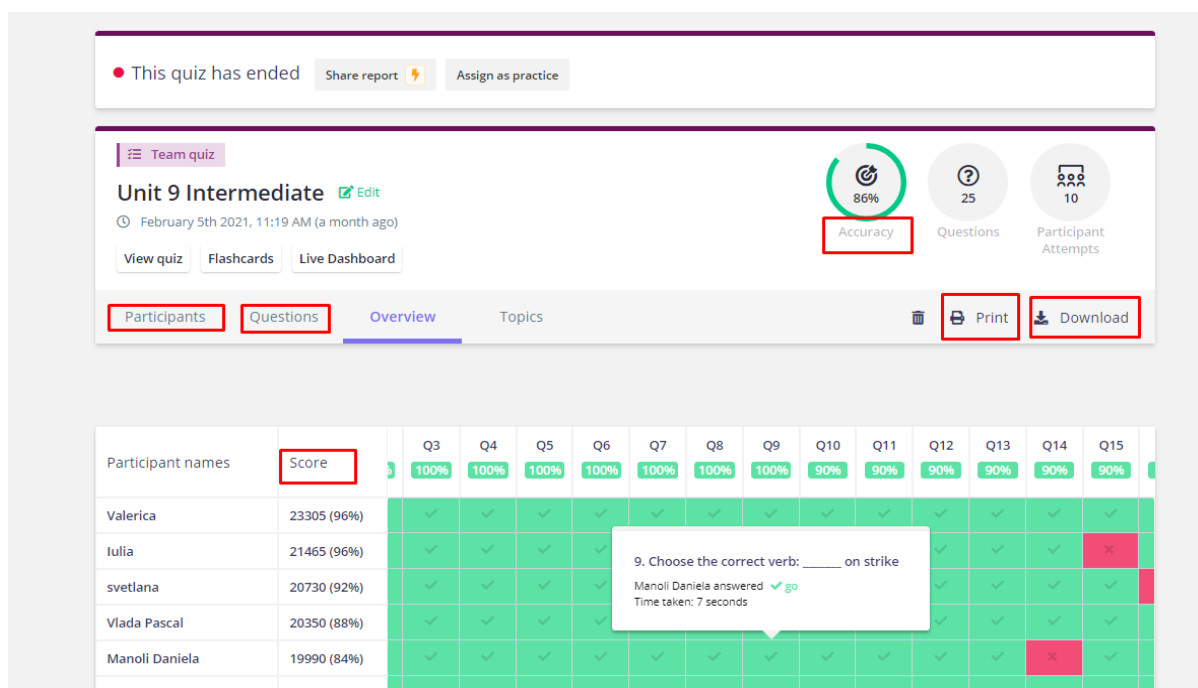

Figure 3. Class and Student Reports (Quizizz 2021d)

Nevertheless, apart from the amazing 'Quiz'-related features, *Quizizz* introduced a new feature, 'Lesson', in 2020, which is an addition to the teaching methods, since now teachers can perform not only independent learning and formative and summative assessment but teach and facilitate mini or full-length lessons with *Quizizz*. It is a teacher-based mode where slides can be combined with questions and polls, and the teacher is the one who controls the experience, which is especially convenient in online learning. The teachers can create presentations by choosing from a variety of slide types and include polls and questions at any point in their lessons to make them instructive and, at the same time, engaging for the students. However, the teacher can choose whether to show the slides on one main screen or on individual devices or even authorise both.

Creating and conducting a 'Lesson' is very intuitive and similar to 'Quiz'. In the case of remote learning, the teacher controls the pace of the presentation; all the slides and questions are shown on student devices simultaneously. The players progress at the same time but the teacher can "control whether to pause, move between slides, or stay on the same slide. This is ideal in a remote learning situation where every student gets to see content on their own device" (Quizizz 2021e). The platform offers a variety of text slides and media slides to create interactive lessons, even more, the teachers can combine their presentation slides with question slides format (the five types of questions described earlier) and there is no limited number of slides per lesson. *Quizizz* 'Lesson' provides such formatting options for slides as font style, sub-script and super script, as well as the math equation editor to draft the presentations; in addition to that, the

import of PDF format file and their convert to a lesson on Quizizz is also allowed.
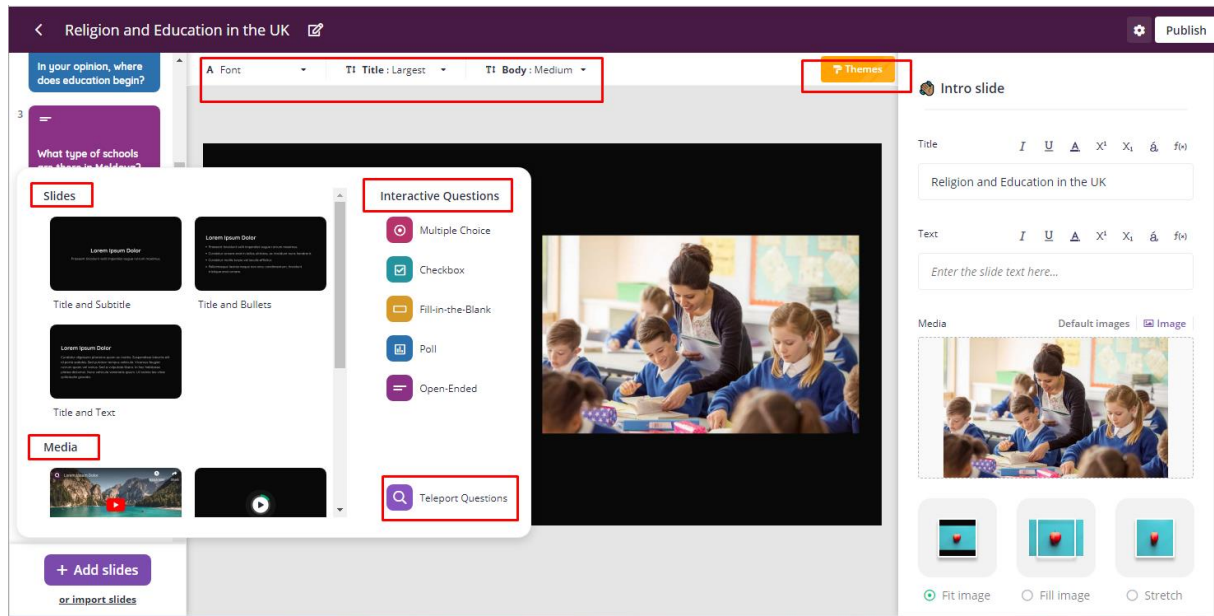

Figure 4. Quizizz Lesson Settings

The questions or polls incorporated into the presentation can be used to collect feedback, check for students' understanding, or initiate a discussion during the 'Lesson'. The answers are displayed and visible immediately on the leader board screen and the teacher can review, as well as share the result in real-time with the students via the share mode if the lesson is organized on Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams. There are also paid options (5 dollars a month, on average) which allows the teacher to include images, audio files, and embed videos in the presentation. The 'General Settings' and 'Activity Settings' of the 'Lesson' are almost the same as in 'Quiz Settings'; the settings can be turned ON or OFF, depending on the teacher's objectives. After the 'Lesson' is created and saved it can be presented in real-time to the students after they receive a shareable link from the presenter.

Figure 5. Quizizz Lesson Settings

'Lessons' as 'Quizzes' can be found in the library according to their keywords or to the proposed categories: Recommended, Mathematics, English and Language Arts, Social Studies, World Languages, Science, Computer Science and Skills, Career and Technical Education, Creative Arts and Health and Physical education. As stated by Quizizz.com, the software is already used in more than 150 countries and has already gained more than 10 million active users worldwide in less than four years, from its beginning in 2015 up to 2018 (Venturebeat 2018).

Before, During and After Class Activities

'Lesson' feature is suitable for both synchronous and asynchronous learning. Regardless of the type of activity, the teacher has the possibility to share the *Quiz* or *Lesson* via Google Classroom, Remind, Schoology, Microsoft Teams, and Twitter, or get the shareable link to send it directly to the students. Thus, the teacher can share the presentation with the students ahead of class to better prepare them for the new concepts and ideas which are going to be taught in class, or, on the contrary, to evaluate and determine students' expectations about the next class or even about a future course. To create these types of presentations the teachers are encouraged to use slides combined with polls and open-ended questions. Among the before class activities that can be introduced in the lesson plan are:

- prepare students for the class using text and media slides combined with multiple-choice questions
- prepare students for a summative evaluation by using slides and all the five types of questions
- estimate or shape goals and expectation by creating slides coupled with polls and open-ended questions
- introduce new topics in order to build and extend necessary background knowledge using the Flashcards option
- present new concepts or even new courses to stimulate motivation and a positive learning attitude by means of text and media slides.

Among the activities suitable for the in-class learning the following can be listed: practicing various reviews and recaps; introducing new concepts, topics; carrying out formative assessment to check students' understanding and engagement; generating discussions and debates according to poll results and engage in interactive live games among others. Moreover, the teacher can prepare fun check-in quizzes or ice-break polls as warm-up activities for the beginning of the class; respectively, to collect valuable insights, the students can be asked to complete an exit ticket at the end of the online class.

Asynchronous learning via *Quizizz* is possible due to the self-paced mode, homework, and flashcards features. The sets of quizzes and flashcards are easily sharable through links, as are the homework quizzes or lessons. The general settings and deadlines are flexible, and the results are registered by the detailed game reports. Finally, the students can be challenged to create their own quizzes based on new or learned topics and later host them in class; this type of activity will challenge their speaking and digital skills.

Conclusions

This study has confirmed the effectiveness of using *Quizizz* in teaching, thereby, it is worth mentioning once again Olcott's (1999) criteria of effective distance teaching to make a valid

conclusion; when evaluated according to the five I's, *Quizizz* is:

1. Interactive - it promotes teacher-student and student-student communication, and it can be successfully used synchronously and asynchronously
2. Introspective – it permits integration of text and media, questions and polls in the online class
3. Innovative – it empowers continuous experimentation with technology-based learning, moreover, in only five years of existence Quizizz underwent dramatic changes and upgrades
4. Integration – it allows embedding of media and Pdf files, as well as sharing the quizzes and lessons on other educational platforms; besides, it supports computer and mobile technology
5. Informative – it facilitates good learner-centred teaching environment.

To wrap it up, *Quizizz* is gaining popularity worldwide and is continuously upgrading its features. It is an effective web tool to teach and learn remotely because it addresses many burning educational issues, like motivating students, creating and organizing engaging classes, grading students efficiently, as well as providing immediate and comprehensive feedback. A very useful feature of *Quizizz* software is the possibility to create as many variants in a test as there are players involved in the quiz, which prevents the students from cheating. Regardless of its paid options, there are lots of free, interactive, user-friendly features which prevail and more than suffice. Quizzes and lessons created with *Quizizz* software are easy to share on other educational resources like Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams or Moodle and in this way, digital slides, questions and polls are coupled with online meeting experiences.

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