

# PERCEPTION OF THE STUDENTS ON THE ONLINE ENGLISH COURSES

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## Abstract

For the past couple of years, online teaching-learning practices have become the new norm due to the scare of the Corona Virus pandemic. Although the new trend received a mixture of reaction, appreciation, and apprehensions, it has become inevitable in imparting knowledge through this digital medium. Since language acquisition happens through social mediation, it is intriguing to know about the magnitude of students' language acquisition in the virtual learning environment. Therefore, the present study conducted a focused group discussion with undergraduate students to understand the phenomenon of online English language courses, especially related to the course instructors' methodology, material, and evaluation. The core themes of this research are whether the teachers/instructors are effective in the online mode of classes, to what extent the material is accelerating the learning process of the students, and how the evaluation practices are accurate and objective.

**Keywords:** Online English Courses, Teaching Methods, Evaluation, Online Language Instructors.

## I. INTRODUCTION

English as a Second Language (ESL), a subfield of teaching English is becoming more popular. The term extrasensory perception (ESP) refers to a method of teaching English as a second language that emphasizes the development of students' communicative ability in a variety of contexts such as academia, medicine, accounting, business, education, information technology, agronomy, and engineering. In this way, pupils' proficiency in the subject area is honed (Janks 2014).

Across the timeline, there have been multiple teaching methodologies from the Grammar Translation Method to the Eclectic method. Every methodology flourished in different phases of history due to varied learning objectives, contexts, and learners, and every

methodology had its significance. The teaching methodology is classified into two: the teacher-centered method, where the teacher gives instructions to the students, and the learner-centered method, where students take responsibility for their learning. The pandemic-induced environment offered challenges to all the existing methodologies. This dilemma either coerced or motivated the course instructors to adopt the methodology suitable for their classroom environment on one side, and on the other side, learners started heavily depending on the online courses for the acquisition of English language skills. It has become a norm everywhere for people to communicate using the English language. The teaching and learning of the English language for communication do not only happen in one

country but rather is happening all over the world (Chai et al .2020).

The material provided in virtual courses and applications is in several different forms like graphic, audio, video, and various combinations of the same. This can be done by drawing inspiration from the various methods of media integration practiced in the past and applying those same methods for teaching the modern forms of media into pedagogy Edmodo, Google Classroom, and other widely accessible learning tools are considered to make theoretical knowledge transfer simpler, according to the authors. It is also helpful to utilize video conferencing programs. Educators distribute educational content. In the field of vocational education, knowledge seems to be a lot more scarce. It's tough to use online learning tools effectively (Basari et al 2019). The following figure 1 shows the general representation of the Relationship between Online Education, E-Learning, and Distance Education.

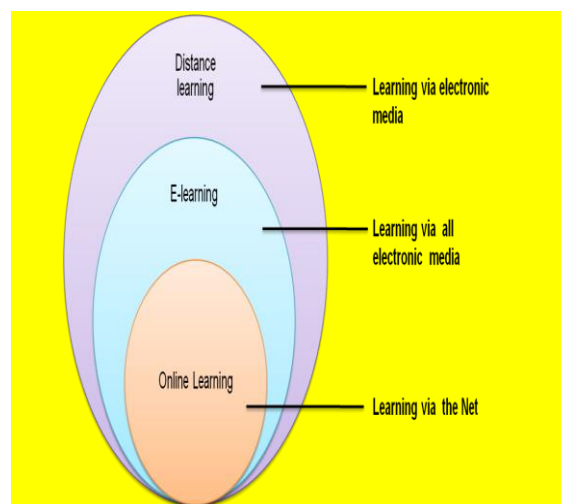


Figure 1: *General representation of Relationship between Online Education, E-Learning, and Distance Education*

The language courses demand some special pedagogical approach both for sharing ideas and testing the students' proficiency in the subject concerned. The following figure 2 shows the diagrammatic representation of the model of online English Education.

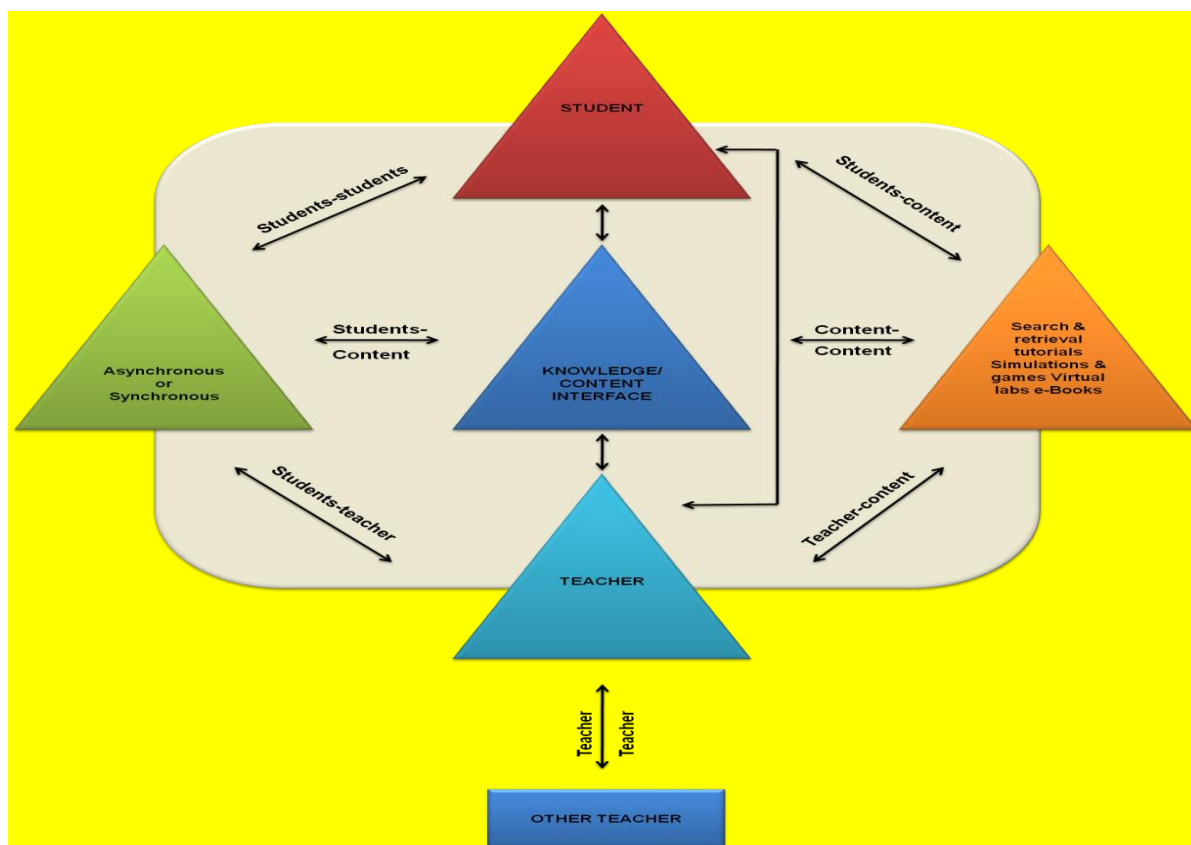


Figure 2: *Diagrammatic representation of the model of online English Education*

Based on figure 2, there are several characteristics of online education, including a) the delivery method between teachers and students (community of inquiry), b) the relationship between students and students (paced, collaborative learning), c) the learning media independently obtained by the students (independent study) and d) learning media prepared by the teacher (structured learning resources). Thus, problems about evaluating proficiency in language courses in an online mode of learning become more serious. In this paper, we analyzed the perception of the student's on the online English course.

Further part of this paper contains part(II) Literature review and problem statement, part (III) Methodology, part(IV) Analyses the performance of a system, and part(V) Conclusion.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

As Nunan (2004) has suggested, ESP (English for specific purposes) is a key sub-component in the overall strategy, an ESP approach to learning English is centered on the goals of students who desire to improve their English proficiency. With its approach to curriculum and material design, language education. Pedagogy, testing, and research. ESP might be interpreted as again from the use of English as a language for oral and written communication. Therefore, ESP is a strategy, philosophy, and methodology distinct from that of Standard American English (S.A.E.).

England, L. (2007) The researchers examined the access to technology in the specific contexts of public and private universities, and the results are expected. The scarce, abundantly funded private universities in Egypt benefit from the expensive fees and are equipped with fast, wireless internet connections, laboratories, and smart classrooms; all form the foundations for the English medium academic courses taught almost exclusively in these private universities.

Ostenson, J. (2009) The author Jonathan Ostenson conducts Quantitative research among his students to analyze their ability to judge the credibility of information provided online. The internet is open-source, has no filter, and encompasses all kinds of information. Hence, it is necessary to train the students to search for information without falling prey to duplicitous websites critically.

The author incorporates three critical criteria to learn the website's legitimacy. Firstly, he discusses the "Initial markers" which include the format and layout of the website, the validity of reference links provided, and the author's authenticity. Also, if there are any advertisements or commercials, it is plausible that the information provided is for personal gains and not impart knowledge. But, sometimes, it may seem that the website's layout is not professional, but the content is credible. So common sense and knowledge are key. Second, he discusses "Corroboration". It means to compare and contrast the information with trustworthy and legitimate sites. If any inconsistencies are found, then the website is bogus. Third, "Detecting author bias/agenda"- he formulates five questions: who is the author, the author's intention (benefits), the purpose of publishing the information, the tone of the information, and whether the content is opinionated. Answering these questions would suggest if the author is altruistic or inward-looking.

He then provides his students with a topic to research to test them on these skills. It was observed that while a few played it safe and resorted to legitimate websites, the others preferred general search and further described the credibility of their sources. While the author cross-verified the websites, he found that the students had corroborated the information and had made purposeful choices.

The author's initiative to teach critical research had come to fruition, and the student's realized the intricacies of the internet and how to cite credible resources. (Ostenson, May 2009). As Ko. M.N(2010) states that any teachers, especially in some Asian countries where English is often used as a foreign language, are

still lacking knowledge on its implementation in the class. In addition to teachers' formal education, several participants thought that educators should have attended short courses or professional development to improve them strengthen their professionalism in English teaching and learning in general, and especially in critical literacy.

Ware, P., & Benschoter, J. (2011) The article revolves around the idea of revolutionizing the way online teaching is taught. It talks explicitly about an ELL program, an English language learners program. This program provides insight into what goes in the mind of the teachers and the students. Even though the students' point of view is not provided clearly, it can be concluded from their writings. In the initial days of online classes, it was felt difficult to make the students interact more with their teachers through online forums. They adopted one on one interactive exchanges of writings between the teachers and students. For example, the teacher would give a theme, and the student had to complete the story. One study mentioned in the article also suggested that adults did not leave the space for two-way conversation while exchanging writings with children. When teachers interacted with their respective students, they realized that without building any connections and just critically analyzing their answers, they were not helping them. As a result, the students started quitting the chain of communication with the teachers. Teachers then realized that they needed to make a connection and put the writer first before their writings. This method proved to be fruitful, and they started to interact again.

And the second problem was to make them acknowledge or reflect on their mistakes. The teachers or mentors started practicing different methods to make them reflect on their mistakes. Some tried to point out specific errors, while others praised them for their skills but were ambiguous about their mistakes. Ultimately they started to promote noticing of their mistakes which helped them immensely.

Wen-chi Vivian Wu, Ling Ling Yen, & Michael Marek. (2011) critiqued the teachers' methodology in teaching English. Therefore the

present study argued the importance of facilitating the learners with virtual interactions with English speakers across the globe, dubbing this method as CMC (Computer-Mediated Communication). Sherry, M. B., & Tremmel, R. (2012) this study has unveiled debate on using virtual sources to teach English. The contention presented in this study was to what extent it could be viable in providing online platforms to accelerate their learning process. This article emphasized a website called Edutopia which also helped the teachers with the methodology.

Hicks, T., & Turner, K. H. (2013) TECHNOLOGY IS NOT luxury, but an essential aspect primarily focuses on digital literacy. The article opens up with the comparison of two schools at the extreme ends of rich and poor, where the rich school has everything. Still, he is not effectively using it, and the poor school is struggling to teach the students in a new way because the portions have evolved in such a manner that it requires the technological aspects to move forward and compete with the new aged schools.

Now why technology is not effectively used is the central aspect. The thing is, students have easy ways to deal with today's education, but those easy ways are not effective and won't have any use on the children to create a change. The steps that were initiated started giving positive results where they break the conventional ways of what teachers and students used to follow. Indeed, many teachers and students are still at the beginning stage of handling online education. Rodesiler, L., Rami, M., Anderson, G., Minnich, C., Kelley, B., & Andersen, S. (2014) the present article vividly presented how the teachers of English word depending on online platforms like blogs and social media to explore new teaching methodologies. 5 English teachers were interviewed at the pot of the present study in which teachers confirmed that the online platforms were beneficial in enhancing their teaching methodologies.

West, J. A., & Williams, C. (2015) The present study informs that any field cannot be offered to ignore technological development in the

present-day world. Even the education sector, especially the process of teaching foreign languages, more specifically English, can explore technological platforms to improve the teaching methodology to get more positive results. The study also strongly suggests that students dependent on technology for learning a language should not be criticized. English language teaching (ELT) has been of significant importance and top priority worldwide, the advances in technology have led to changes in student profiles and instructors, and researchers have been searching for new educational methods that suit the new student profile (Chen Hsieh, Wu, & Marek, 2017).

Time, patience, and practice are critical to learning any new language. Students should be permitted to participate in as many activities as possible to better understand the new target language in foreign language classrooms. However, instructors may be obliged to miss important parts of efficient foreign language teaching since of short class time and, as a result, limited practice opportunities. Restricting teaching outside of the classroom and allowing for extra practice and activities inside of the classroom may help students learn language more effectively. When it comes to language instruction, the flipped classroom model is often recognized as useful since it emphasizes two critical elements (Han, 2015).

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on the focus group discussion among the students who are pursuing their graduation in different institutes affiliated with different universities in India. These students were selected through the network method with the common characteristics of their interest in seeking online English language courses, and being graduate students. The researchers moderated this group discussion by focusing on the trainers in the online English course, the material provided in online courses, and the evaluation procedure and its effectiveness on the learning process. The inputs shared by the students were

analyzed with interpretive and inferential methods

#### a. Focused group discussion

Online sources have become an inevitable platform for teaching-learning purposes, and they are also widely accepted as part of pedagogy. Online sources facilitate the educators and learners with the custom option as per their requirements. On the other hand, there are many online sources to simplify teaching-learning practices. Online education is a form of distance education that uses computers and the internet in networks as a medium for delivering educational material. It was noticed in this discussion that many students were using software applications like Duolingo, Cambridge Communication, etc., to improve their English language proficiency. It was highlighted in this discussion that these apps are offering English language courses from the basic level to the advanced level. The essential advantage of online courses is the learner concept. The learner is at one's own pace as per their comfort, which reduces the psychological anxiety among the students. If notes are disseminated through the internet, handwritten notes may also be used as an instructional tool. The use of electronic media for learning (computers, television, radio, etc.) is also known as e-learning. Students need to be subjected to teaching materials through the internet also (Larassati et al. 2019). Furthermore, a wide spectrum of material available online will enable the learner to explore more options that are very close to their interest for enhancing their language proficiency. In the offline classes, classroom cars consisting of 30 students cannot be given 30 different materials since it is difficult for the teacher to monitor all 30 students and 30 kinds of materials.

Most of the online applications provide provisions for self-evaluation. With the help of these provisions, students can have a fundamental estimation of the progress of the learning. This aspect is a viable advantage compared to the offline classes, where the evaluation is considered to be stressful due to competition. Another advantage of the

evaluation provisions in online applications is that they can be rated more objectively since the human interaction between the students and teachers is found to be minimal. The aspect of intelligibility in learning language can be greatly achieved with the help of these applications since these applications are made up of inputs taken from more authentic sources.

Learners can have an approach and clarify the doubts since this approach does not seem to be viable in offline classes due to overcrowded classes or the Fear Factor of the learners. Students can also be encouraged to participate in various kinds of online competitions based on spoken abilities.

Another side when it comes to enhancing once spoken abilities, one has to have a platform or forum to perform is the spoken abilities. Nevertheless, online classes are more restricted by curtailing the learner's opportunities to exhibit their public speaking skills. It was expressed in this discussion that online platforms and the invisible barrier are strongly felt where there is no organic relationship between the trainer and the trainee are between the educator or the trainee teacher or teacher and students. In most educational philosophies, the relationship between teacher and student, however to what extent the virtual classrooms are allowing this relationship to be established between the students and teachers, is an essential question. This discussion also identified that most of the applications were not interactive; they were mere software functions with a bunch of information. Essentially, in teaching spoken skills, the student's learning experience at times felt monotonous with repeated exercises almost similar examples. The software applications do not acknowledge the essential psychological aspects such as motivation, needs, and gaps. Since the learning is customized to buy the learners, the sustained motivation of the learners will be questionable, and since motivational factors are absent from the trainers, learners may end up detracting from learning. Another important observation is that the aspects of the nonverbal communication of the learner are not paid much attention. Many studies prove that nonverbal communication such as gestures,

postures, and paralanguage greatly complement persons' speaking. However, online platforms do not facilitate the learners with suggestions for improving nonverbal communication.

#### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, we investigated the three parameters such as student's satisfaction ratio, student's interaction ratio, and student's performance ratio by using the MATLAB simulation tool. The existing methods are Flipped classroom method (Turan and Akdag 2020), the Artificial classroom method (Umezawa et al, 2022), and Inquiry-based learning (Levy et al, 2013).

##### a. Student's satisfaction level

The percentage of students who complete their English courses and get good grades are linked together beneficially. Figure 3 shows the comparison of students' satisfaction levels. In this comparative analysis, we have compared three existing methods with the proposed method. From the figure, it is displayed that the proposed method has a higher level of student satisfaction level when compared to the existing three methods. Technology has evolved and penetrated our classrooms, a new learning model has arisen that shifts away from a teacher-centered space and toward a more collaborative, student-centered learning environment, via the use of a flipped classroom model but there is a lot of work being done on the front end. In artificial classroom methods, emotional intelligence is lacking. An inquiry-based group discussion may be difficult for students who aren't able to think rapidly. So the proposed method is more effective than the existing methods.

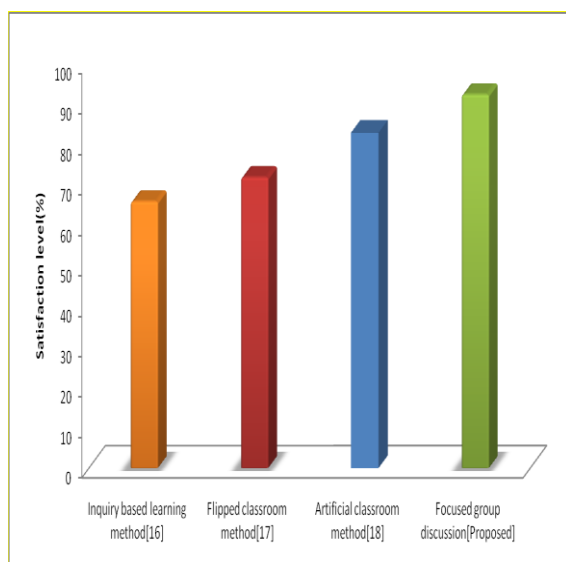


Figure 3: Comparison of student's satisfaction level

#### b. Student's interaction ratio

It is advised to behave three times as many encounters with students who are behaving effectively towards the English courses. The teacher's actions have no bearing on whether or not an encounter is judged helpful or bad. Students are evaluated based on their actions during that given interaction, not their education quality as a whole. Figure 4 shows the comparison of students' interaction levels. From the figure, it is displayed that the suggested proposed method has a higher level of student interaction level when compared to the existing three methods. Some students with special needs may need extra support at home—support that might not always be available in flipped classroom method. In artificial classroom methods, computerized reasoning is lacking. Inquiry-based group discussion may be difficult for students who aren't able to comprehend and learning difficulties might be an issue. So the proposed method is more effective than the existing methods.

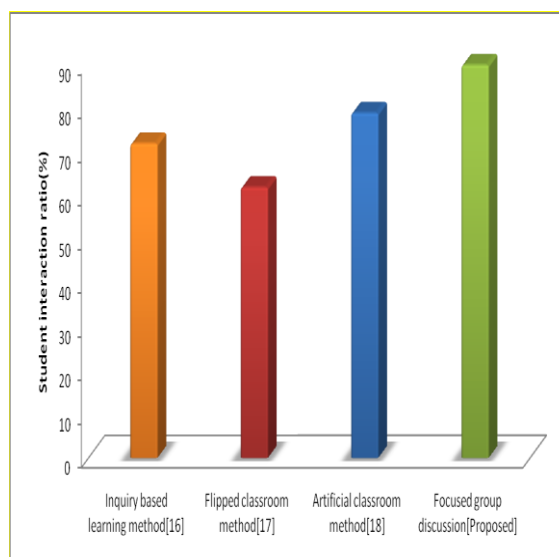


Figure 4: Comparison of student's interaction ratio

#### c. Student's performance ratio

Figure 5 shows the comparison of student performance ratios. From the figure, it is displayed that the proposed method has a higher level of student performance level when compared to the existing three methods. Flipped classroom method lacks students from low-income areas and is particularly vulnerable since they already have fewer resources at their disposal. The artificial classroom method decreases the thinking level of students and in the case of the inquiry method, students will be unable to acquire a solid foundation in critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

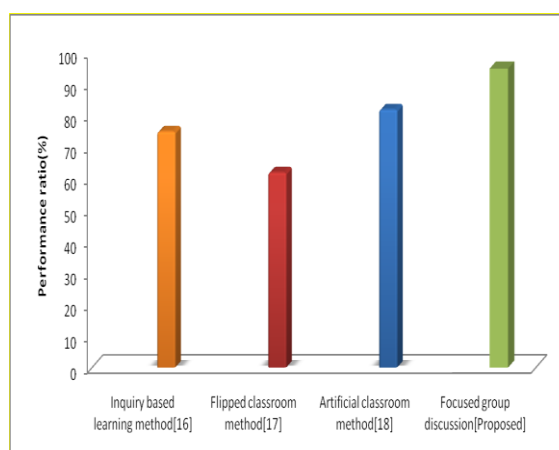


Figure 5: Comparison of student's performance ratio

## V. CONCLUSION

There is a possibility that online learning might boost student reactions to the learning materials. Students' self-confidence, literacy, and motivation are all factors that contribute to their success. There is some evidence that learning is more successful when students are involved in real-life activities and work together to create items of work that the professional world expects. In this paper, we have discussed focused group discussion and compared it with the existing methods. From the analysis it's more effective in the proposed method than existing methods. A lot more study is needed to fully understand the advantages and disadvantages of online programmes for educating mainstream instructors to teach English language learners (ELLs).

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