

ONLINE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES FOR CLASS XII LEARNERS OF TAMIL NADU STATE BOARD CURRICULUM: A CASE STUDY

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Received: 14 March 2020 Revised and Accepted: 8 July 2020

ABSTRACT: The prevalent pandemic situation imprinted its affectations on all walks of life, especially in the field of education, affecting conventional classes in schools and colleges. However, the advancement of Internet Technology makes teaching, including language teaching, possible through “Online Classes”. Learning experiences, teaching methods and approaches used in Online Classes differ from that of a conventional classroom. It is possible for the language teacher to understand these individual differences in a conventional classroom. As the online scenario is very new and challenging for the teachers as well as the learners, it is all the most challenging in a rural region. This paper attempts to study the advantages and disadvantages of online English language classes taken for class XII learners of Tamil Nadu State Board Curriculum. It highlights the perspectives of the teachers and learners. The findings from the study will help in suggesting ways and means to make online classes fruitful.

KEYWORDS: Online teaching and learning, Education, English language.

Context

“The internet is becoming the town square for the global village of tomorrow.”

-Bill Gates.

The planet is facing an historical threat of pandemic Covid 19. People’s lifestyle have become more Internet Technology-oriented. Internet has become a part of routine for all; from toddlers to older adults. Gone are the days, when the wealthy alone afforded the access to internet. Now, even the poor and underprivileged also are pushed to access to internet and supporting devices; mainly for the studies of their children. In the present situation, people could earn sitting before a laptop; it is also true that people can learn sitting before the laptop or smart phone. In most fields, People are working from home using internet. Most of the educational institutes take online classes for their learners. With this background, the current study attempts to examine the effectiveness of online English classes taken for class XII learners of Tamil Nadu State board curriculum.

I. ONLINE LEARNING – AN OVERVIEW

Online learning, also known as e-learning or virtual learning is education that takes place over internet. Online learning became popular since 1999. There are several researches underway to study the effectiveness of such online teaching and learning. It enables the teacher and the learner to be connected from anywhere, anytime. Joshua Stern, in his article “Introduction to Online Teaching and Learning”, says “Online learning is catalysing a pedagogical shift in how we teach and learn. There is a shift away from top-down lecturing and passive students to a more interactive, collaborative approach in which students and instructor co-create the learning process. The Instructor’s role is changing from the “sage on the stage” to “the guide on the side”.”

Research Questions

Online learning and teaching have made considerable changes in the educational domain. In the past, teachers took efforts to use videos and PowerPoint presentations in the conventional classrooms. However, now, the entire class itself is a video presentation or PPT presentaion. This research aims to examine how effective the online class is for the target group. The following are the research questions for the present study:

1. What are the advantages of the online English language class for the target group?
2. What are the disadvantages of the online English language class for the target group?
3. Are the online English language classes effective for the target group?

4. What are the suggestions to make the online English language classes experiential like the conventional classes?

The researcher believes that finding answers for the above research questions could make the teachers and learners to optimize the language learning experiences.

Target group

The target group of the current study is XII standard learners of Tamil Nadu State Board Curriculum, English medium students of Private schools; because online classes are being taken mostly by these institutions. The researcher takes the samples from ten reputed schools in Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu, India. The type of sampling is random sampling method. Five learners from class XII and two English language teachers from each school are taken as samples. Thus the sample size of the learners is 50 and that of English language teachers is 20.

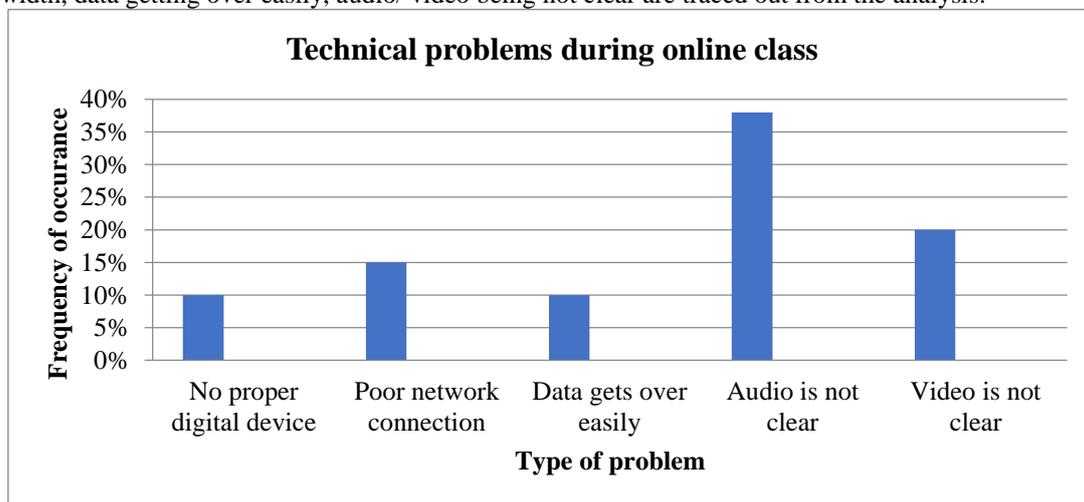
II. METHODOLOGY

This paper is a case study of experiences of learners and teachers in online English class. The researcher adopted Questionnaire Survey method for this research; to collect the opinion of the learners and teachers from the target area. The tool used in this methodology is Questionnaire survey tool. Questionnaire survey tool for the learners consists 13 question items and the Questionnaire survey tool for the teachers consists 14 question items. The data was collected online through Whatsapp and email. The results were analysed using computer.

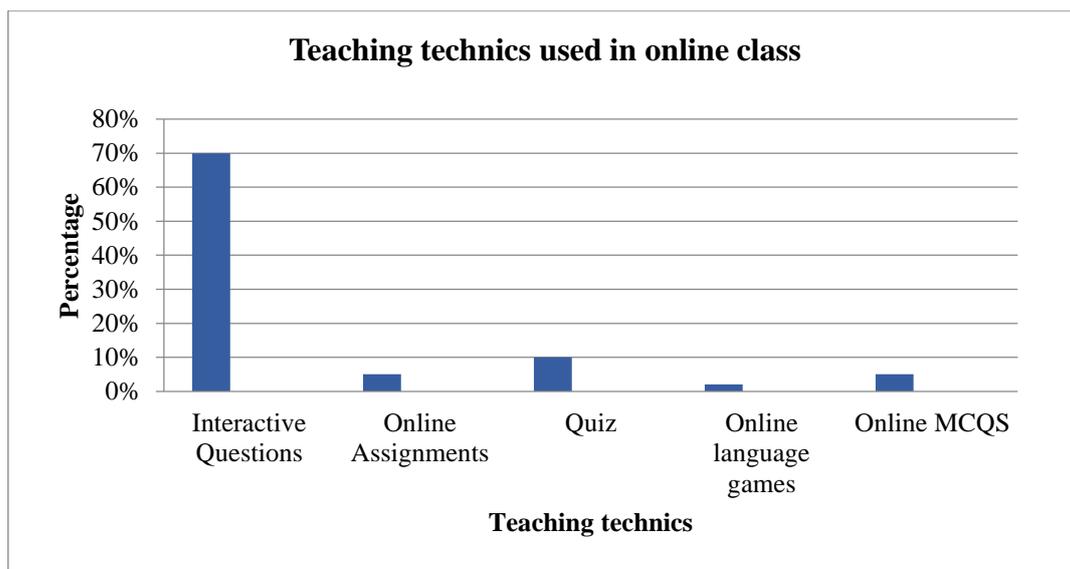
Analysis of the data

Online learning is an offshoot of blended learning. It is a blend of conventional learning and technology. In the present scenario, due to online teaching the idea of classroom, classroom environment, teaching materials, teaching methods and learning behaviour have changed. These changes are revealed in the findings of the current study. The findings are given below:

1. All the learners are interested in listening to online English language class. The teachers are also interested to teach online, as it is a new experience for both the learners and teachers.
2. All the learners pay complete attention to online English language class, from the beginning till the end. The Average percentage of concentration of learners in online class, ranges from 80% - 85% and that in a conventional classroom it ranges from 90% - 98%.
3. There are some technical problems like no proper digital device, poor network connection with low bandwidth, data getting over easily, audio/ video being not clear are traced out from the analysis.



4. 40% of the students learn completely, 50% of the samples say that they could learn half of the teaching and 10% say they could not understand the lessons in online teaching.
5. The survey reveals that only 30% teachers use multimedia contents like audio files, videos, PPTs and pictures during online class. The usual way of taking class online seems lecturing method. Including multimedia contents in online teaching could enable the learners to pay continuous attention to the class.
6. It is found that the teachers do not use other techniques like giving online assignments, online MCQs and quiz. Carrying out these activities could make learning better and interesting.



7. All the learners are given homework, assignments and projects regularly. Extra reading and accessing other internet resources are practised less.
8. With regard to the preference, whether the samples prefer conventional classroom learning or online learning, 90% of the learners opt for classroom learning and only 10% of total learners prefer online learning. 80% of the learners prefer interactive online class and 20% of the learners prefer non-interactive online class or mere video presentation.
9. Interactions take place only with 60% of the samples' online classes and with 40% of the samples, interactive sessions in online class is lacking.
10. Only 60% of the samples could recharge internet for their mobile phones or laptops regularly and 40% could not recharge, or their recharge could easily be drained easily.
11. 60% of samples have proper digital device and 10% of the samples use moderate device and 30% of the samples do not have proper device for participating in online class.
12. 80% of doubts are clarified during online class and 10% say that they moderately could clarify the doubts during online class and 10% say that they could not clarify the doubts at all.
13. The average attendance of learners in online English language class of sample teachers is 83%. The lack of attendance reveals both lack of interest and lack of facility among the learners.

Advantages of online English classes

As conventional classroom teaching and learning could not be conducted in this pandemic situation, online class serves as a fine alternative for the stakeholders of educational domain. "Online learners benefit greatly from online learning communities in the following ways: (1) because of their connectivity with one another, they are able to share knowledge and fulfill common goals, which can reduce students' dropout rates; (2) the relationship and interaction between the instructor and learners and among peer learners can increase student performances and their satisfaction of the course; and (3) learners can receive supports and help from their peers, and at the same time they can add their knowledge base through their interactive actions" say Yuan & Kim (228). The following are the advantages found out from the present study:

1. Online class helps to complete the syllabus, though the schools are not opened.
2. Online class enables the teachers and learners to be connected anywhere, anytime, particularly during the lockdown period.
3. It is very useful for widening the knowledge and skills using various resources over internet.

Disadvantages of Online English Class

Online teaching and learning experience is new to both learners and teachers. Both learners and teachers need training and practice to get maximum benefit of online class. Crawford-Ferre in his research on online higher education, stresses on adequate training for online the online instructors. The following are few disadvantages of online class traced out from the survey:

1. There is sound distraction, interruptions by so many students at the same time which makes the class inaudible.
2. Some of the learners do not have proper device to make use of online class.

3. Network problem is also a major disadvantage of online class.
4. One main disadvantage is that doubts could not be clarified properly in online classes.
5. Some say that they could not concentrate for longer time looking at mobile phones or laptops and so they feel that their eyes are getting some vision problems.

III. RESULT AND FINDINGS

Education is the backbone of every community. Keeping it alive among the dependents of it is a crucial task. The present study, as an attempt to figure out the effectiveness of online English language class, presents the following findings:

1. Online English class is not as effective as conventional class.
2. Inaudibility, network problem and straining of eyes are the major disadvantages.
3. In this pandemic situation, online teaching is an alternative for conventional teaching. Though online teaching is a poor alternative for conventional teaching, it is a way to keep the students in the learning mood.

IV. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings, the following are suggested for better learning.

1. Videos can be played in between the lectures.
2. All students' audio can be muted by the host and should be controlled by the host.
3. Doubt clarifying session can be given at the end of the class.
4. The class can be uploaded in YouTube channel so that the learners can watch it at any time.
5. Language games can be conducted during the class to prevent boredom.

V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The samples taken are very few; therefore it cannot be taken that this is the opinion of the majority.
2. It is restricted to limited geographical area of Tirupattur district.
3. Samples are taken only from private schools undertaking state board curriculum, and not CBSE curriculum.

VI. CONCLUSION

“The digital revolution is a key force that innovates an emerging landscape for online learning, or eLearning within a virtual environment” says Lay Huah (65). Online learning can be an alternative for tradition and its worthiness is suitable for an area like Tirupattur district, where learners of rural background are predominant. The findings from the result study show that even in private sector online class seem to be less effective and less accessible for rural students. Government should take necessary steps to enable better alternative choices of teaching and learning. Television, a common gadget can be used as a common media for teaching and learning, as far as school education is concerned. Language teachers can be given proper training to conduct online classes effectively.

VII. REFERENCE

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