

A Study on the Challenges faced by Management Students of GSFC University in English Language Learning through Online Education

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the challenges the students of management face during e-learning especially the subject like the English language. As we all know that Covid-19 has changed the situation of the world from the time it started in December. It became worsen during the March especially in India during the lockdown. That's the time the world of education also changed and initiated full swing online teaching. This study seeks to investigate the problems and challenges on the implementation of e-language learning to the management students of GSFC University. The data was obtained from questionnaires with the sample size of 50 management students of GSFCU. The findings revealed the following results: (1) Students are trying to adapt to online learning; (2) The students agree that e-learning gives them flexibility of time and place; (3) Students' familiarity with the technology; (4) Students' level of comfort with particular tools used by the teacher; (5) Student's abilities to express themselves through an online platform; and (6) Student's difficulties in getting aquatinted to all the four skills of the language. However, it has been perceived that the students are getting accustomed to the New Normal nevertheless the inclination is still towards traditional learning.

Keywords: E-learning; Language learning; English language learning; Communication tools in new normal.

1.0 Introduction

The year 2020 will always be in a haunted memory of all the people around the world. At the beginning of 2020, when COVID-19 hit the city of Wuhan, people in the rest of the world could not imagine in their weirdest dream that the virus would travel all over the world and transform the way we live, interrelate, converse, trade, work, teach and learn. COVID-19 is affecting almost every segment of the economy. And, the education sector is no exemption. Schools, colleges, and institutes are closed down and students are at home with the least contact with other fellow students, friends, teachers, and campus life. All thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic simmering over the world. Everything has become virtual, with no physical movement partially or as a whole. The repercussions and effects of the pandemic on education are yet to be known, but they will surely be more challenging, perplexing, and confounding for educators and as well as learners. The implications of the pandemic are more fragile and unstable in these perspectives. Most of the countries of the world experienced for the first time, an unprecedented entire or partial lockdown which headed to the immediate closure of universities and school. As a result, teachers and students had to learn instantaneously and promptly how to adapt to distant teaching.

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the closure of schools in more than 180 countries, affecting more than 1.8 billion students and above 65 million primary and secondary teachers worldwide [UNESCO, 2020]. The interference in the education system due to the continuous COVID-19 is a reminder that there is a need for transformation. This is the right time for the most awaited digital transformation.

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The main idea of revolution is the shift from 'thinking digital' to 'being digital'. The move to digital learning is difficult and taxing as no one was prepared until the COVID-19 clutched the whole world. In short, the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact have influenced our lives in all possible ways and that has elevated the prerequisite to accepting ground-breaking ways of getting education services at all levels. The scenario is changing from the traditional way of learning to virtual learning at a very fast pace and in a very unimaginable manner all over the globe.

The developing countries like India are also facing the same kind of situation which is quite difficult to cope up. Once the corona virus pandemic situation is observed thoroughly, the WHO [World Health Organization, 2020.] advised maintaining social distancing as the first prevention step. Hence, each and every country initiated the action of lockdown to separate the contaminated people [Jena, Pravat, 2020] and [Mohalik, Ramakanta & Sahoo, Sonali. 2020]. According to the authors, the lockdown has enforced the worldwide lockdown creating a very bad effect on the students' life. Around 35 crore learners stopped to move schools/colleges, all educational activities halted in India. The outbreak of COVID-19 has advised us that change is inevitable. All the education sectors including schools, colleges and universities closed down, all the classes suspended, and examinations and entrance tests were postponed for an indefinite period. Hence, the lockdown destroyed the schedules of the academia of every school, university, and institute. Many challenges and suggestions are documented in work of [Yuyun, Ignasia. 2013]. In the work documented in [Kusumo N. S. A. M., et al. 2012], [Aboagye, Emmanuel. 2020] and [Muilenburg LY, Berge ZL, 2005] also discuss the difficulties faced by the students while learning with technologies.

It is to be noted that such a pandemic has created many opportunities to design and implement effective classroom teaching model which suits the current demands in the field of education. The basic objectives of the proposed work are as follows.

2.0 Objectives

The present research paper focused on the following objectives:

- To highlight the various impacts of COVID-19 on education.
- To identify the challenges faced by the students in studying the subject like the English language
- To check the convenience of the students in e-learning

3.0 Methodology

As we wanted to study the impact of Covid-19 on students of management we decided to take a sample group from GSFCU. A questionnaire was designed in a structured manner that contains Personal Information, Perceived Usefulness of E-Learning, Perceived Ease of Use of E-Learning, and Language learning through the online platform.

3.1 About GSFCU

GSFC University¹ is recognized under the Gujarat Private University (Second Amendment) Act, 2014 and is established by the GSFC Education Society - an initiative of Gujarat State Fertilizers and Chemicals Ltd, six decades-old industrial giants to continue the tradition of serving the community in multiple ways.

GSFC University has B Tech program in Chemical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Science Engineering and Fire & Environment, Health, Safety. It also has a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) (Hons.) program in Chemistry and Biotechnology. GSFCU also has a Bachelor

of Business Administration (BBA) in General (HR/Marketing/Finance), Information Technology Management and Accounting and Finance. It also offers Masters in Science (M.Sc.) in Chemistry (Organic Chemistry), Chemistry (Analytical Chemistry) and Bio Technology. It also offers a doctorate program Ph.D. in Chemistry and Bio Technology.

When the first lockdown announced in India, in Gujrat, it was a time of chaos and confusion for all education institutes including GSFC University. The journey of empowering a full-scale digital transformation at short notice was not a cakewalk. GSFCU promptly recognized during the mid-March that sudden closure of the campus might lead to a paralytic situation where students are deprived of their academics when they are on their mid-way to complete the academic year, and teachers are losing the time to finish the curriculum. So, it was decided that it's time to embrace the *New Normal*. As a result, GSFCU started with Online Teaching Initiative (ONTI-2020) and followed by Online Exam Initiative (ONEI-2020) to maintain the academic continuity.

3.2 E-tools used to teach the English language

3.2.1 Google classroom

Google classroom² has been created for every subject with the proper title and theme of the subject. Classroom code has been generated for all the students as well as co-teachers and asked them to join the classroom. Every material and presentation have been shared through the classroom. Every assignment has to be generated in the classroom.

3.2.2 Google meet

The proper complete time table has been prepared and followed diligently and persistently in the Google meet³. The teacher will create the meet and share the code with the students and students would be present online and join the meet during that particular time. The subject teacher will come and explain the topic, concept, and subject matter through power point presentation, white board, online lecture, discussion, case study, videos, animations, demonstration, quiz, students' activities, jam board, podcast, etc.

3.2.3 Google form

Google forms⁴ are used to create assignments and weekly quizzes to assess their development in regular intervals. Google forms are also used to collect feedback on the activities or concepts taught.

3.3 White board and digital pen & Pad

White board is used to write and explain the concept especially mathematics and formulas of other subjects.

3.3.1 Jam board

Google jam board⁵ is used to engage students for the smaller quizzes and explaining creative aspects of the language specially to impart the images from online sources and mark it with the sticky notes. It can be shared just like google sheet where anyone can edit and comment.

3.3.2 Podcast & multimedia

Podcast⁶ has been used to teach listening skills to the students. The teacher will make them listen to the podcast and ask a couple of questions at the end of the podcast and that's how the students have been judged. Animation, GIFs and videos have been used to make the explanation of the complex theories easy and comfortable.

Along with these, the teachers have also used e-tools like Socrative⁷, Infogram⁸, Funbrian⁹, Weebly¹⁰, Kahoot¹¹, Quizzes¹², Hot potatoes¹³, Prezi¹⁴, Meta MoJi Note¹⁵, OBS Studio¹⁶, Piktochart¹⁷, etc.

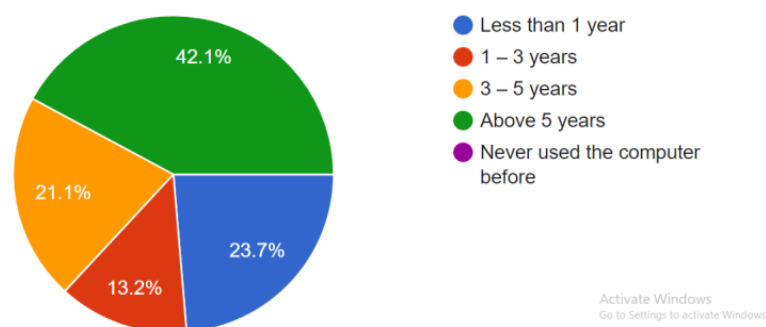
3.2.3 Interpretation of the data collection

The questionnaire has been prepared for the management students who are learning the English language through online education mode in the form of google form. A questionnaire was designed in a structured manner that question no 1 to 9 focuses on Personal Information, question no 10 to 14 concentrates on Perceived Usefulness of E-Learning, question no 15 to 20 Perceived Ease of Use of E-Learning and question no 21 to 31 emphasizes on Language learning through the online platform are covered.

A. Personal information

Out of 50 samples we got from GSFCU management students, 52.6% are the male students and 47.4% are the female students. 18.4% of students are 18 years old, 63.2% are 20 years old, 13.2% are 21 years old and 2.6% are 23 and 24 years each. 94.7% of students are from the fifth semester and 5.3% of students are from the third semester of BBA. 42.1% of students are from HR, 39.5% of students are from marketing and 18.4% of students are from finance specialization. 82.4% of students agreed that they have a personal computer or desktop at home and 15.8% of students said that they do not have a personal computer or desktop at their home. 42.1% of students said that they have been using the computer for more than 5 years, 21.1% of students declared that they have been using the computer for 3 to 5 years, 13.2% of students said that they have been using the computer for 1 to 3 years and 23.7% of students have declared that they started using the computer only in recent times, less than 1 year. This personal information says that the survey has been divided into both genders almost equally. The majority of the students are 20 years old and from the fifth semester of Bachelor in Business Administration who are having the three major specialization – HR, Finance and Marketing. The majority of the students accepted that they have a personal computer or desktop at home so for those familiarity with computer device may not be the problem but 15.8% of students said that they don't have a personal computer or desktop at home so this leads to the logical dilemma whether they are familiar with the device to use it for online learning. Online learning needs basic knowledge of the device and the common software used in the device. If the students are not comfortable with the device, they are using then it will lead to the chaos and complexity in online learning. 63.2% of the students are well versed with the personal computer or desktop as they have been using the computer for more than 3 years that makes the students aware of the usage and makes them familiar about it and the same will lead to comfort level in the e-learning.

Figure 1 – Familiarity with Computer



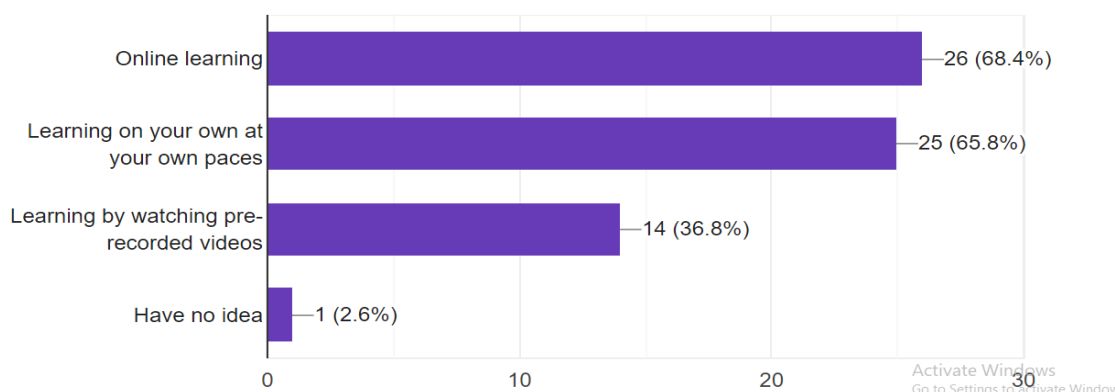
B. Perceived usefulness of E-learning

E-Learning is learning utilizing electronic technologies to access educational curriculum outside of a traditional classroom. In most cases, it refers to a course, program or degree delivered completely online.

There are many terms used to describe learning that is delivered online, via the internet, ranging from Distance Education, to computerized electronic learning, online learning, internet learning and many others. We define eLearning as courses that are specifically delivered via the internet to somewhere other than the classroom where the professor is teaching. It is not a course delivered via a DVD or CD-ROM, videotape, or over a television channel. It is interactive in that you can also communicate with your teachers, professors, or other students in your class. Sometimes it is delivered live, where you can “electronically” raise your hand and interact in real-time and sometimes it is a lecture that has been prerecorded. There is always a teacher or professor interacting /communicating with you and grading your participation, your assignments and your tests¹⁸.

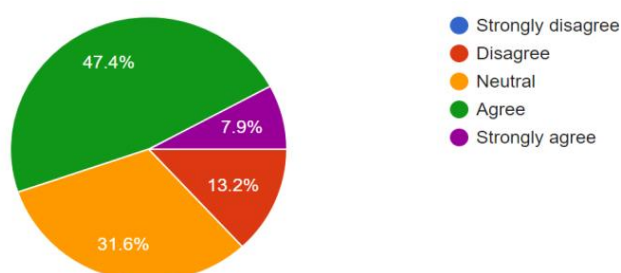
E-learning has many aspects and there should be clarity in the mind of the users about this relative term. When asked what do the students mean by e-learning 68.4% of the students answered that they considered both online learning and learning on your own at your own paces as e-learning, 36.8% also considered the choice of learning through recorded video as e-learning but 2.6% of the students have accepted that they have no idea what e-learning means. Hence, there is an imbalance here regarding the clarity of the concept of e-learning in the mind of the students.

Figure 2 – Concept of E-learning



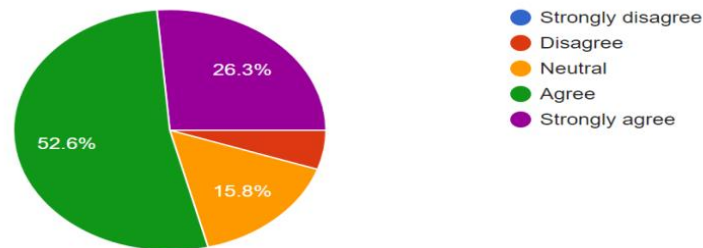
When asked about the flexibility of the learning 47.4% agreed with the flexibility of time, 31.6% remained neutral and 13.2% did not agree that e-learning is flexible. But 7.9% was strongly seeing to the fact that e-learning gives them the freedom of learning at their own convenient time and pace.

Figure 3- Flexibility of Time



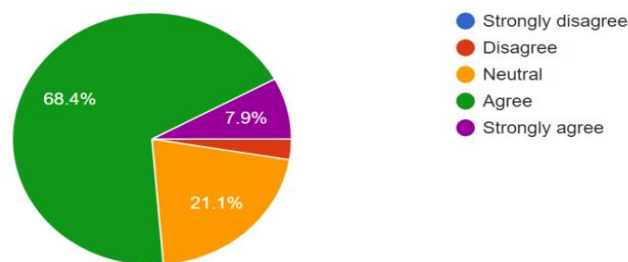
Similarly, when asked about the freedom of flexibility of location 52.6% of students agreed and 26.3% of the students strongly agreed to the point whereas 15.8% of the students were neutral and 5.3% disagreed with the statement. This shows that majority agreed to the point that e-learning enables people to study irrespective of where they are located in the world.

Figure 4 – Flexibility of Location



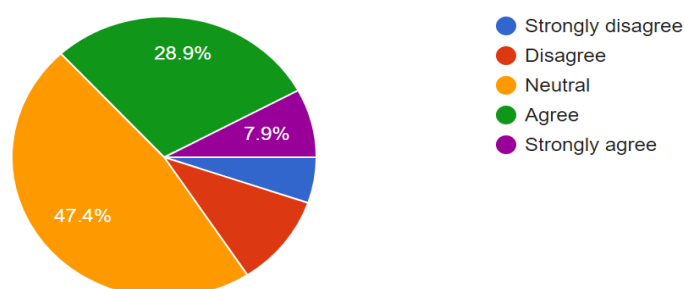
When asked about the technologies that enable one to submit the assignments and take the test by electronic means, 68.4% of students agreed and 7.9% of students strongly agreed to the idea but at the same time 21.1% of students remained neutral and 2.6% of students disagreed with the statements. This shows that the majority found that technology and electrical means enable them to submit the assignment and test either by supporting the statement or by being neutral very few of them had difficulty submitting the test.

Figure 5 – Submitting the Assignments through Electronic Media



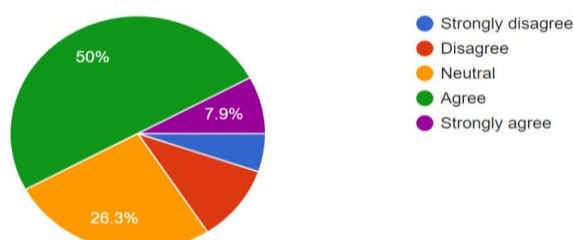
Regarding the communication amongst the students themselves or to the teacher or instructor, 28.9% of the students agreed and 7.9% of students strongly agreed to the statement whereas 47.4% remained neutral and 10.5% of the students disagreed with the statement. The surprise factor was when 5.3% of the students strongly disagree with the statement. This shows that few of the students are not very comfortable with the way communication occurs during online classes but majority of them do not find much difference.

Figure 6 – Ease of Communication



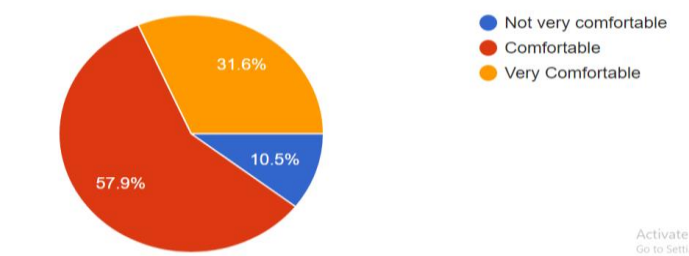
When asked about the user-friendliness of the e-learning platform, 50% of the students agreed and 7.9% of students strongly agreed and on the other hand 26.3% of the students remained neutral and 10.5% of students disagreed and 5.3% of students strongly disagreed with the statement. Again, this shows that a few of them are still not very comfortable with the e-learning platform.

Figure 7 – Convenience of the E-learning Platform



As decided by the system every teacher takes the online classes through Google meet at GSFCU. Hence, to check out how contented the students are with Google meet we asked them how comfortable they are with this platform and 31.6% of the students said they are very comfortable, 57.9% students said they are comfortable and 10.5% of the students said they are not comfortable with the Google Meet platform at all. This shows that the majority of the students are comfortable with the Google meet platform that is used for e-learning.

Figure 8 – Competencies with Google Meet



Google Classroom is the place where the students and teachers share their material, assignments, and comments. When asked about how comfortable they are with Google classroom 57.9% of students said that they are very comfortable, 36.8% said that they are comfortable and 5.3% of students said that they are not at all comfortable with the Google class platform. At the same time for Google form, almost all the students have responded that they are quite comfortable with the platform.

Figure 9 – Conveniences with Google Classroom

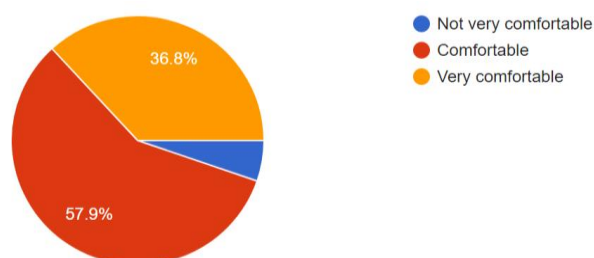
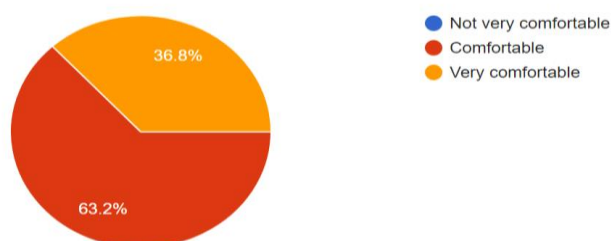


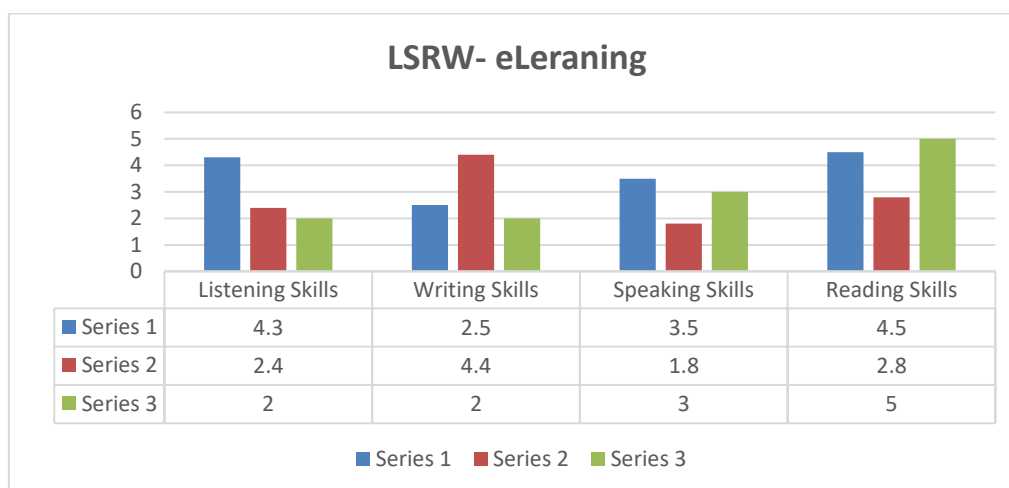
Figure 10 – Conveniences with Google Form



When it comes to learning a language, it's a not an easy task considering the students are not native speakers. To learn any language, one needs to concentrate on 4 aspects of the language – Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Learning all these aspects of language online is definitely a complex job. When we asked the students regarding how comfortable they are in learning the language concepts 13.2% of the students said they are very comfortable, 60.5% of the students said they are comfortable whereas 26.3% of the students say they are not comfortable. When asked regarding learning grammar also 13.2 % of students strongly agree with the statement that they are finding it easy to learn the grammar through an online platform, 36.8% of the students agreed to the statement and 42.1% of the students were neutral and 7.9% of the students disagree with the statement.

While answering the question regarding e-learning is the better platform for practicing the listening skills 15.8% of the students said they strongly agree and 39.5% said they agree with the statement whereas 34.2% of the students were neutral and 10.5% of the students disagreed with the statement. When asked about the writing skills 7.9% of the students said they strongly agree and 15.8% said they agree with the statement whereas 47.4% of the students were neutral and 26.3% of the students disagreed and 2.6% of the students strongly disagreed with the statement. While answering the question regarding e-learning is the better platform for practicing the spoken skills 7.9% of the students said they strongly agree and 31.6% said they agree with the statement whereas 36.8% of the students were neutral and 21.1% of the students disagreed and 2.6% strongly disagreed with the statement. At the same time when we asked the students regarding the reading, comprehending, and summarizing the concepts through online mode 10.5% of students said that they strongly agree that virtual form is an easy way, 31.6% of students agreed, 44.7% of students were neutral and 13.2% of the students disagree with the statement.

Figure 11 – LSRW – E-learning



To the answer to the question like effective communication is possible through an online platform 2.6% of the students said they strongly agree and 39.5% said they agree with the statement whereas 34.2% of the students were neutral and 18.4% of the students disagreed and 5.3% of the students strongly disagreed with the statement. When asked about the interpreting and replying through online mode is easy, 10.5% of the students said they strongly agree and 36.8% said they agree with the statement whereas 31.6% of the students were neutral and 15.8% of the students disagreed and 5.3% of the students strongly disagreed with the statement.

Figure 12 – Efficacy of Communication

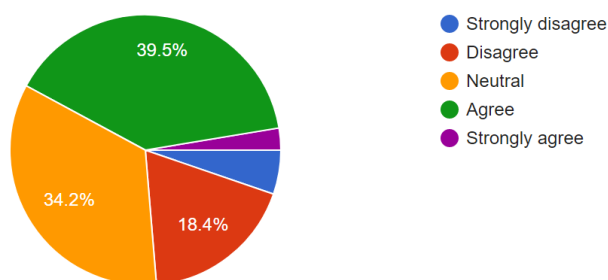
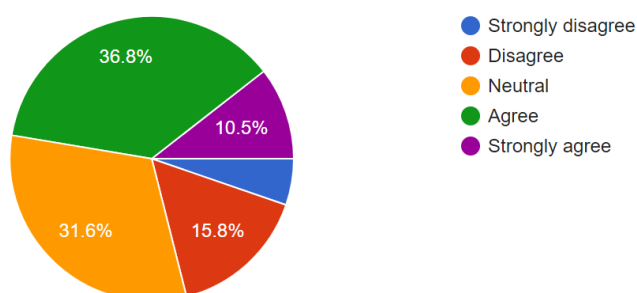
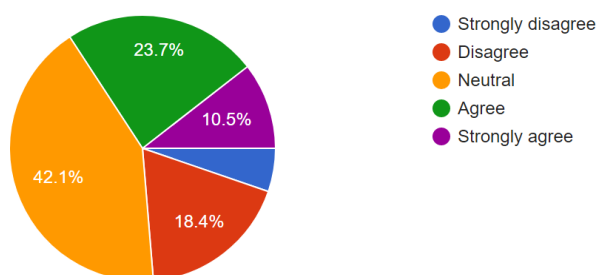


Figure 13 – Convenience in feedback



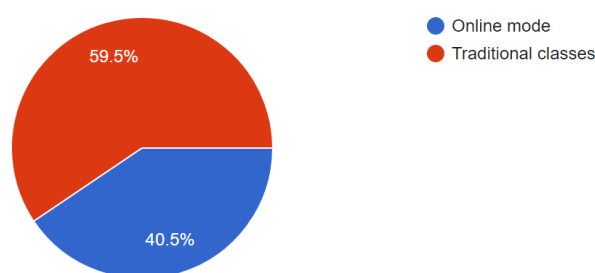
The 10.5% of the students strongly agreed when asked that e-learning makes them a confident speaker and user of language, 23.7% of students agreed to the statements, 42.1% of the students were neutral about the statement whereas 18.4% of the students disagreed and 5.3% of the students were in total disagreement of the statement.

Figure 14 – Confident Speaker through e-learning



Finally, when we checked the preference of the students regarding online teaching and traditional teaching 40.5% of the students opted for online teaching and 59.5% opted for traditional teaching. Therefore, we can conclude that though the students are trying to coop up with the online teaching during the pandemic but given a choice they would prefer to learn a language through traditional classes.

Figure 15 – Final Preferences



4.0 Conclusion

Covid-19 forced us to adapt to the *New Normal* in every aspect of life that also changed the scenario of the traditional education sector. As an advanced and progressive institution, GSFCU always believed in blended education. Yet, going full-fledged virtual was not a piece of cake. A lot of effort from the management, faculties and students as well has been put across to make online learning more effective and convenient, particularly, in the case of language learning where all four skills are required to be learnt in a virtual environment. As perceived by students, although there are some drawbacks, it attempts to emphasize a certain number of advantages, for example, the flexibility of time and place, still the students are facing few challenges to get accustomed to e-learning. Some of them are not familiar with the technology, some of them are not comfortable with particular tools used by the teacher, some are feeling discomfort to express themselves through an online platform and some of them find difficulties in getting aquatinted with all the four skills of the language. Even though it has been observed that the students are trying to adjust to the *New Normal* yet the preference is still the traditional learning or what we would suggest is blended learning.

Endnotes

1. <https://www.gsfcuni.edu.in>
2. <https://edu.google.com/products/classroom>
3. <https://meet.google.com/>
4. <https://www.google.com/forms/about/>
5. <https://edu.google.com/products/jamboard/>
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