ASSESSING UNDERGRADUATES' RECEPTIVE SKILLS IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION ONLINE: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

With the commencement of online teaching since 2020, assessing English language skills at the Sri Lankan tertiary level has been conducted via diverse online platforms. In fact, this transit from face to face to online did not leave any alternative to teachers and students rather to adopt themselves into this new approach of online English language teaching and learning. Thus, as part of this learning, assessments play a key role where novel approaches are followed to assess undergraduates' receptive and productive skills in English. The present study, thus, aims to examine the online assessment of Sri Lankan undergraduates' receptive skills in the Sri Lankan tertiary level context. The research obtained data via an online survey which comprised of both quantitative and qualitative data given by a systematic random sample of 45 first year undergraduates, who follow a similar English language course, representing a government and private university. The results of the study revealed that the selected undergraduates consider assessing their reading and listening skills have positive impacts on their competency though majority prefer assessing reading skills physically rather than online which contrasts with assessing listening skills. Thus, educational practitioners should come up innovative strategies on how online reading can be assessed effectively since the universities in Sri Lanka seem to continue their delivery online till further notice.

Keywords: assessing, receptive skills, second language acquisition, perspective, undergraduates

INTRODUCTION

Language learning requires developing the competency of both receptive and productive skills, which are listening, reading, writing, and speaking respectively. In par with this learning, the level of competency reached is assessed as in formative and summative assessments. The result is utilized for focusing more on revising the lesson delivery accordingly and students' self-evaluation on developing their skills further. Similarly in Sri Lanka, English is taught as a second language from the primary grades and as being a language there should have been sufficient exposure of all the four skills to be competent in language. Though all skills are equally essential, reading and listening skills have been given less priority in the secondary and tertiary level (Jayasundara, 2014). These skills should mainly focus on the aim and type of the task, skills and strategies required for comprehension on the topic. Moreover, both these receptive skills can be developed with the context, for instance, the gist of a certain topic is not only to be found in the sentences or statements rather it can be understood from a learner's prior knowledge as well. Moreover, it has been discovered that having poor skills in reading and listening can cause due to the shortage of cognitive and comprehensive skills, or due to unawareness in vocabulary or curriculum (Blachowicz, 1999).

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With the approach of online teaching worldwide, Sri Lankan higher education sector also took the initiative in shifting to this online delivery. This includes English language course which is offered as a core module during the first year at both public and private universities. Subsequently, the assessing the mentioned four language skills in second language acquisition at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka, has had no other alternative rather to adopt into online assessments. Online assessments with regard to second language acquisition at the tertiary level vary from quizzes to games. Thus, a suitable e learning platform is incorporated based on the type of assignment given. An e learning platform is an online learning platform which has provided space for pedagogical content and instructions. Most of these can be used either by signing in or not without any charges (ID Tech, 2020). These assessments are being used for both formative and summative categories.

Though there are studies conducted on the incorporation of technology to assess undergraduates' online learning (Baleni, 2015; Ebrahimzadeh & Alavi, 2017; Johnston, 2004) less focus has been given on the students' perspectives on these assessments conducted to evaluate their receptive skills: reading and listening, especially in the Sri Lankan context. Thus, the present study inquired the students' perspective on assessing their receptive language skills. Specifically, they were inquired on the adoption of technology to assess their reading and listening skills in English and whether it affects their second language acquisition. Furthermore, assessing students' receptive skills effectively ascertains whether a learner who has scored a low has specific problems pertaining to these receptive skills. Online educators also need a systemic approach to address such problems once they have been identified. By having effective assessments on these skills will lead to their productive skills since how competent students become in comprehending a topic by reading and listening will facilitate them in putting forth that knowledge gained into their daily writing and speaking in English. The findings of the research will become feedback on the prevailing assessment strategies used which can be used to examine the effectiveness of those assessments, to prevent any hindrances students might be experiencing, and to see whether any revision is required to improve the selected student groups' reading and listening in the tertiary level education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The year 2020 brought with it many challenges in every area of life both locally and globally, including the education and higher education sectors, with the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing all operations and activities in schools and universities, to a grinding halt, and workplaces and educational institutions were closed to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to many challenges (Wijewardene, 2021). The pandemic has negatively affected the economy, social life, and educational facilities and services around the world (Cakin, & Kulekci Akyavuz, 2021; Farooq et al., 2020; Niemi & Kousa, 2020; Nnebedum, Obuegbe, & Nwafor, 2021; Paudel, 2021; Unger & Meiran, 2020). Learning and teaching processes have faced several challenges during this pandemic (Crawford et al., 2020). Hundreds of students have been affected because of nationwide lockdowns, which have taken place in the vast majority of the world's countries (UNESCO, 2020). Due to the severe effects of the pandemic, educational institutions were forced to shift their courses away from a face-to-face approach to online classes in a bid to restrict the spread of the coronavirus. As a result, the 'lecturing mode' pendulum swung from face-to-face delivery to the online platform causing decision makers as well as instructors, to initiate and explore aids and resources for transferring face-to-face courses to online teaching (Wijewardene, 2021).

Online learning is more convenient since it permits students to learn at their own pace and in their own time (Sit et al., 2005) and post-COVID, online education would remain an important channel for the delivery of tertiary education. Several technological tools and materials have been used in online courses to activate learning and instructional processes during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Moodle, Blackboard, and Google Classrooms. The selection of the technological tools to be used was based on their convenience for the instructors or administrators and/or the availability of the tools (Kaur, 2020).

Online education enables continuous learning without spreading COVID-19, saves time and physical space in delivering course content, facilitates information sharing and on-demand learning, and provides flexibility in teaching delivery (Hayashi et al., 2020).

It is an imperative that educational institutions must persist in addressing several short-term online learning issues and challenges, such as those regarding pedagogical practice and long-term effects, such as budget cuts, the failure to meet students' basic needs, and mental health issues (Ajlouni & Almahaireh, 2020; Araújo et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2020). However, according to Rajab et al. (2020), other critics have expected a constructive (positive) influence of this pandemic. They anticipated that it would lead to wider online- and technology-based educational acceptance. The practices of online learning can significantly encourage educational equity through offering flexibility in terms of the learning place and time; enhancing administrative, communicative, and educational qualities; and supporting learning using limited resources and infrastructure (Isaac et al., 2019).

The speed of adaptation to online learning is specified by students' learning abilities in addition to different psychological and technological factors (Novikov, 2020). The efficiency of online learning varies between educational institutions around the world, and it will be more efficient in digitally advanced countries and less efficient in rural, marginalized communities and in countries that are used to handling academic and administrative activities with a more face-to-face approach (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Salam et al., 2017; Wains & Mahmood, 2008).

In online learning, technology is used as a tool to bridge the gap and acts as the medium of delivery for the teaching and learning experience to make it more interactive for learners, although teachers and their students are separated by a physical space. This new mode of instruction provides students with appropriate flexibility, and it can be performed at any time and in any place without the need to be on a campus (Jaradat & Ajlouni, 2021). However, there are many influences that impact the effectiveness of an online learning environment, including distractions and family obligations, time management skills, motivation, and the availability of resources (Kalman et al., 2020). In addition, several challenges exist regarding the development of learner-centered settings, such as those concerning academic staff members who progressively require higher levels of technological competency and proficiency in addition to their regular academic workloads (Gillett-Swan, 2017; Swan, 2005).

Though Wang (2015) finds that diverse methods of assessments develop learners' listening skills and provide a comprehensive awareness on the task in listening, the study has not focused on online assessments and the sample does not focus on first year students. Thus, the present study addresses these gaps with regard to the Sri Lankan context. Furthermore, the study conducted by Wang (2015) is not specified to English language teaching which is addressed in the present study.

Furthermore, listening assessments have to be realistic (Sevilla Morales and Chaves-Fernandez, 2019), so that they facilitate the learners by providing prospects for them to incorporate their listening skill. Consequently, such assessments become more consistent, valid, and realistic. The gap in the study is that it has addressed only learners following a listening comprehension class. However, this has been conducted in an international context. Thus, the conclusion cannot eb generalized. Thus, the present study examines this with a sample selected from the Sri Lankan student context representing the selected target population.

As per the research carried out on those who sat for Cambridge English Qualification in 2015 (Galaczi, 2022), the connection between listening and reading is 0.75, which means that a learner who scores high in the listening test has a tendency in scoring high in the reading test or vice versa. The study furthermore mentions that the communicative ability of one skill cannot be inferred either from the performance of another skill or assessing learners' awareness in grammar, and vocabulary. However, since the study has not been examined in the local context, the present study addresses the gap by focusing a government and private student cohort in the Western province following a similar language course in their respective faculties.

Megat-Abdul-Rahim et al (2021) have found out that undergraduates believe that online learning is advantageous and that learning via such a communicative mode is motivating and stimulates their learning to occur at their own pace. This conclusion has been arrived based on online listening and speaking and it does not apply for online reading. Thus, the present study addresses this gap with regard to the selected Sri Lankan cohort of private and public undergraduates. Megat-Abdul-Rahim et al (2021) further points out that in online learning the educator has to be adoptive to different learning styles and cater them using technology accurately. In fact, during online teaching, a lecturer plays the role of a facilitator who allows learners to be engaged in their work creatively and autonomously, provided that various strategies are designed for allowing learners' interaction, discussion, and thinking skills (Megat-Abdul-Rahim et al, 2021). Consequently, diverse cognitive strategies are enhanced which are significantly required in the professional field (Megat-Abdul-Rahim et al, 2021). Furthermore, Megat-Abdul-Rahim et al (2021) highlighted the importance in examining learners' perspective on this online learning and suggested that the students' interest can be stimulated by visual aids and narrative openers when commencing a lesson.

Moreover, the study conducted by Jaehan Park et al (2014) examine undergraduates' attempt to comprehend meaning during online reading in second language acquisition. Their objective has been to study the modes followed by learners for obtaining information during online reading in (Jaehan Park et al, 2014). As per their conclusion, undergraduates comprehend meaning of a particular online reading text mainly via their prior knowledge on diverse online and offline resources. Additionally, it has been concluded that students follow their own strategies to construct meaning during online reading (Jaehan Park et al, 2014). However, since the said study has not been examined in the Sri Lankan context, the present study addressed that with regard to the selected faculties.

Another study (ManonReiber-Kuijpers et al, 2020) on online reading in second language acquisition, evaluated literature as the research methodology and presented some features of second language online reading approach. The first feature is the accessibility and selection of original texts and online tools (ManonReiber-Kuijpers et al, 2020). As the second feature it is concluded that online reading activities evolve around diverse objectives, texts and student interaction (ManonReiber-Kuijpers et al, 2020). As the final feature, ManonReiber-Kuijpers et al (2020) conclude that online readers in second language acquisition include learners' language competency and their prior knowledge on the lesson, and vocabulary. According to the said researchers (2020), all these features develop students' interaction and comprehension though extra skills, and strategies relate to retention and intensity are required.

Moreover, according to Kujipers et al (2020), when students engage more in online reading they tend to follow and prepare for online reading strategies, which causes better comprehension. However, the study (ManonReiber-Kuijpers et al, 2020) also discovered that the strategies used by the students differ from the strategy expected by the teacher. Thus, the researchers suggest that more focus should be given for special features on online reading in second language acquisition with regard to teachers' viewpoint. Thus, the conclusion arrived is not locally examined, which is addressed from the present study.

In research from Esnara (2021), listening competency of undergraduates in a state university is examined, in order to discover errors that occur frequently as well as complexities confronted in listening online. The findings depicted that those learners have a sound competency in listening. However, it is also concluded that sometimes learners become complexed with some listening activities which is due to the issue they had pertaining to concentration and the retention capacity Esnara (2021). Furthermore, Esnara (2021) identifies that the transition from face to face to online learning due to the pandemic affects learning strategies which have not been recognized earlier. However, since the research has not been conducted in the local context and has only focused on online listening, the present study addresses those gaps by selecting a sample from the local higher educational sector and focusing on online reading as well.

According to Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016), listening is one of the significant skills in second language learning. As per the perspective of Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016), undergraduates lack this skill since it is not much prioritized compared to the other three skills. Thus, it is presumed that when teachers are mindful on the issues learners are experiencing, they can assist the learners in enhancing productive approaches to listening and then resolve the listening challenges to develop the listening comprehension skills Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016). However, the said study has certain gaps has not focused on the undergraduates' perspective on the topic, and the context is not Sri Lankan, which causes the present study to address these gaps by selecting the sample following a similar English language course at the Sri Lankan context, Business Management faculties representing two government and private universities (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

Mahapatra (2021) in his research examines online formative evaluations at three universities in India, Bangladesh and Nepal and how feedback is provided. Based on the data gathered from observing classes, conducting interviews, and analyzing documents, it is concluded that teachers facilitated the learners by conducting diverse formative assessment methods, although they did not incorporate the results obtained from those assessments accurately which left certain areas unresearched (Mahapatra, 2021). In fact, the study concluded that the strategies followed to provide feedback with the incorporation of technological tools are consistent and benefit the learners (Mahapatra, 2021). However, these findings have to be verified whether they are applicable in the local tertiary level context as well, which is why the present study focuses on a group of students who follow a similar language course during their first year in two state and non-state sector universities at the Western province.

Sands (2018) conducted the study to examine the effect of learning online from home has on learners' reading skills. The study's conclusion is that learners developed their reading skills in online learning due to the usage of technological devices (Sands, 2018). However, the study focused only on school learners, not with undergraduates, and that is also in the international context. In addition, the research does not focus on online listening, thus, all these gaps are addressed in the present study.

According to Hyosang (2013) there are diverse styles of online reading followed by graduates in several Chinese universities. Data collection takes place as a result of two reading activities along with pre and post interviews (Hyosang, 2013). Based on the analysis, the study concludes that following modes are utilized by competent learners: sources which is linked with background knowledge, analytical approaches, autonomous and significant reading (Hyosang, 2013). In addition, leaners are noticed to be code switching during online reading comprehension activities (Hyosang, 2013). However, it has to be examined whether these findings apply for a Sri Lankan context as well, which is addressed in the present study.

Alibakhshi, G., & Sharakipour, H. (2014) further examines how self-assessment affects learners' performance in their receptive skills. Data collection occurs from an experimental and controlled group of Iranian students, in which the experimental group is allowed to assess their own learning, followed by a posttest (Alibakhshi, G., & Sharakipour, H., 2014). The conclusion is that self-assessment substantially developed writing and listening skills of the learners, though, self-assessment affects listening skills lesser compared to reading skills (Alibakhshi, G., & Sharakipour, H., 2014). Alibakhshi & Sharakipour (2014) further suggest that self-assessment can be utilized replacing regular assessments conducted by the teacher and this would assist second language learners to facilitate their reading and speaking skills. However, the sample of the study is not from a Sri Lankan context which creates a gap in the study and the focus has only been given for assessing autonomously, thus, these gaps are addressed in the present study.

Jehma & Methakunavudhi (2021) in their study on competency of undergraduates' English language listening and reading skills examined the factors which affect the said skills. As per the key findings Jehma & Methakunavudhi (2021) mention that all variables: institute, gender, academic year) affect the receptive skills of the leaners.

With regard to the effect Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) has on English language receptive skills, Asad (2021) examines the perspectives and practices of the undergraduates, from which it is concluded that the selected learners are in favor for practicing their English language reading and listening skills via their mobile devices. In fact, out of the two skills, the undergraduates mentioned that they tend to use their mobile devices more for practicing reading skills compared to listening skills (Asad, 2021). Since the study analyzed data specifying the gender, it is discovered that female learners do not engage much in using MALL to develop their reading and listening skills' competency unlike male undergraduates (Asad, 2021). Nevertheless, the study has had an international sample and the attention has been given into only MALL, thus these gaps are addressed by the present study, where it is examined how much can these findings be applicable to the Sri Lakan context and what are the other platforms or devices which are used by students to develop their English language receptive skills.

(McIntyre et al., 2017) It has, in fact, been emphasized that it is essential in recognizing and choosing suitable assessment strategy and approach, which would facilitate learners' receptive skills. According to McIntyre et al (2017), an assessment has to be planned, implemented, used to examine the development of interferences assisting the development of reading and listening skills in leaners, specially when they possess various learning styles. However, this study has not been focused on online learning, thus, it is important to examine whether these findings are similar in online mode as well, which has been addressed from the present study. In addition, since McIntyre et al have arrived the said conclusion based on the data collected from secondary school learners in the international context, whereas the present study examines this with a local group of undergraduates selected from a state and non-state university in the Western province, following a common English language course online.

Fitriyah, I. & Jannah, M. (2021)’s study on how online assessments affect for English language learning, according to the viewpoint of students and teachers, concludes that assessing online has both pros and cons. However, learners prefer online assessments compared to teachers, though this entire mode of learning has been a novel approach for these learners and teachers (Fitriyah, & Jannah, 2021). Fitriyah and Jannah (2021) have further identified that online assessments mainly affect the suppleness, knowledge development in preparation of the assessment, level of language enhancement and self-learning, level of building up the student teacher rapport of the language evaluation. Furthermore, it has been emphasized that teachers should plan these evaluations after considering possible benefits and drawbacks of these evaluations and design assessments which facilitate language learning. However, the study has focused on both productive and receptive skills in general, but that is only on Indonesian undergraduates which does not allow the conclusion to be generalized. Thus, the present study addresses this gap by examining on assessing receptive skills online regarding a group of Sri Lankan sample of state and non-state sector undergraduates following a similar language course in their first year.

Yu et al (2021) in their study concludes that teachers rely on listening tasks given in the textbook as assessments, though students’ competency is evaluated based on those learners’ skill pertaining for effective communication, rather assessing learners’ capability in answering the tasks with comprehension. Consequently, learners note a difference between how they are assessed, and the way instructions are given, and the language utilized during evaluations and the one used in real life (Yu et al, 2021). Even though, the study has arrived at several significant conclusions, they are based on an international context, which makes the findings uncertain, and the study has not specified online assessments as well. Furthermore, then study has followed a qualitative method via observations and interviews. Thus, these gaps have been addressed in the present study.

When evaluating literature conducted on assessment modes followed for listening comprehension, Kartal & Simsek (2017) discover that usage of audiobooks benefit leaners’ listening competency along with the accurate pronunciation and stimulation. However, the study focuses on the perspective of a sample who learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at a Turkish university. Though the research methodology has been followed both qualitatively and quantitatively via test scores and a survey, the study only examines the competency in listening at face-to-face lectures, unlike the present study which examines the assessment strategies used for online listening. Since the study conducted by Kartal and Simsek (2017) is based on an international context, the present research evaluated how the conclusion reached from the previous study is similar to the Sri Lankan context and expands the research for students’ opinion on assessing their reading skills as well.

Not only assessing, but it is also essential to examine how learners are provided with feedback for the development of their receptive skills. Thus, Pérez-Segura et al (2020) evaluate the effect of using Audience Response Systems (ARS) in English lessons compared to lessons which do not incorporate such systems. The conclusion they have reached is that when learners are provided with individual feedback, following the assignment, that aids to develop their reading and listening skills. Since the study has been conducted with school learners, and in the international context, the present study examines this topic with a group of Sri Lankan undergraduates who have adopted themselves for online learning as result of the pandemic.

Overall, after evaluating both international and local literature, it is evident that examining students' perspective on assessing their receptive skills in online English language learning has not been sufficiently conducted with regard to the Sri Lankan tertiary level context. Thus, the present study is conducted to address the existing research gap in the field.

METHODOLOGY

McMillan (2004) claims that a questionnaire is mainly used in pedagogical research. In fact, an effectively designed questionnaire examines the sample's opinions, values, and other aspects to obtain the overview of the phenomenon which leads to reach a conclusion on the research problem. Therefore, the present study utilizes an online questionnaire survey to examine the students' perspectives on assessing their receptive skills during online English language teaching. The questionnaire was created online, and the link was emailed to the participants.

Overall, there were 29 close and open-ended questions: multiple choice, Lickert scale and short answer type questions which aimed in obtaining both quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire was divided into two topics as reading and listening. The questions mainly inquired on the most preferred online resource to acquire the specific skills, types of activities and assessments conducted during synchronous and asynchronous learning, most preferred assessment style: collaborative or individual, types of reading and listening comprehensions used in class, instructed or self-regulated strategies used to assist learners in constructing meaning and comprehension during online reading, having prior knowledge on computer skills, information accumulation, verification and knowledge construction, difference seen in online reading vs traditional or in class reading and the most preferred mode along with the reasoning, difficulties or challenges faced, and finally the impact of online tasks have towards the development of their receptive skills.

The sample for this study was selected via convenience sampling. In fact, first year undergraduates following a similar English language course at the Faculty of Business Management in a government and private university in the Western province. The prior approval was obtained from the respective Deans before contacting the students via email. In fact, the sample was selected systematically which represented half of the target population. In total, 24 participants provided their data for the analysis of this study. Prior answering the questions, they were informed of the purpose of the study and their responses were taken only for data analysis purpose. The average time participants have taken to fill the form is approximately 13 minutes.

DATA ANALYSIS

As per depicted, majority of the students prefer e books to read while with regard to listening the majority prefers watching films. These findings let the teacher decide on selecting these types of resources when assessing these receptive skills. It has been revealed that reading online books as one of the best strategies to develop students' reading skills (Jayasundara, J. M. P. V. K., 2014).

Most preferred online source for acquiring reading and listening skills

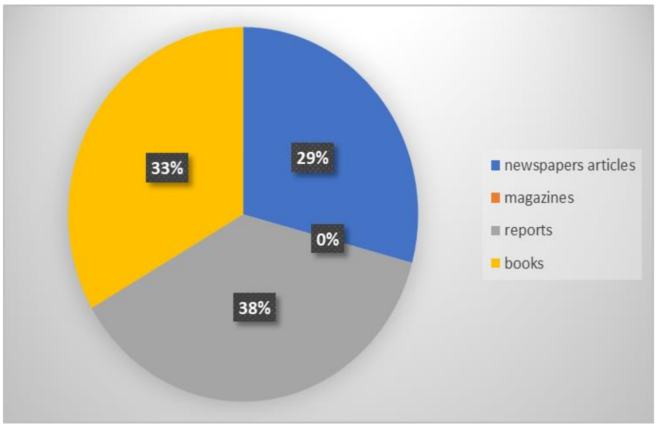


Figure 01

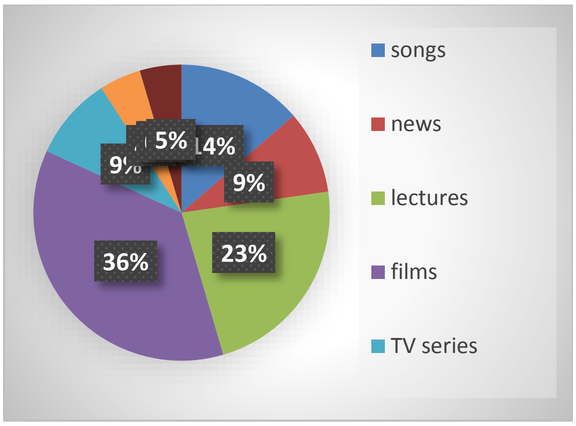


Figure 02

Then, the study examined the types of online assessments used to evaluate the said skills and the following figures illustrate how often these methods are used in synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Assessment types used to evaluate reading and listening skills in synchronous and asynchronous learning

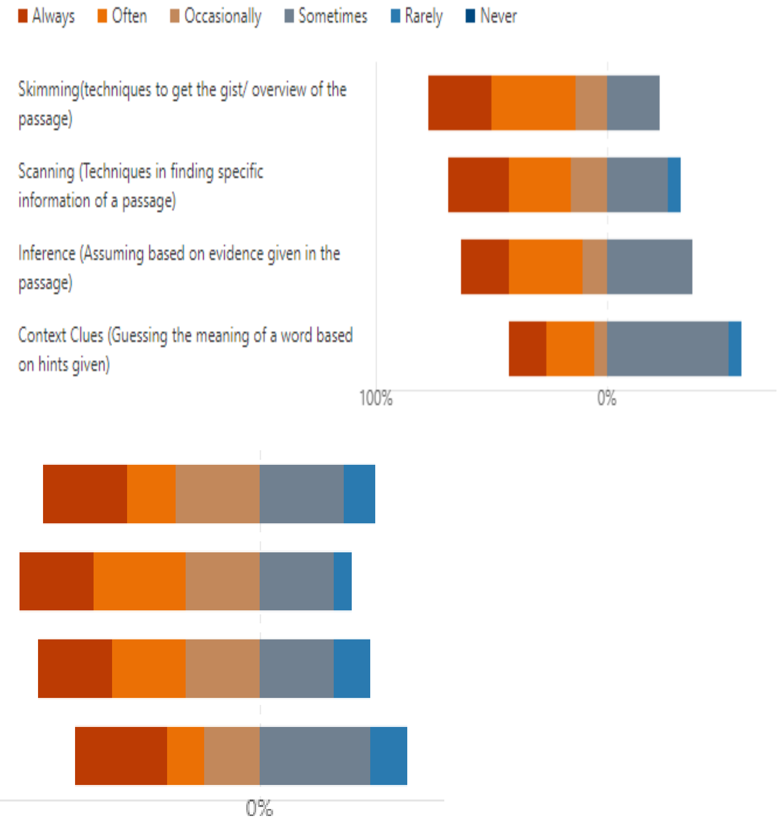


Figure 04

During the class time, reading skill is mostly assessed via skimming whereas outside the class time the skill is assessed in skimming,scanning and inference. However, lesser concern is given for context clues in both synchronous and asynchronous leaarning assessments.

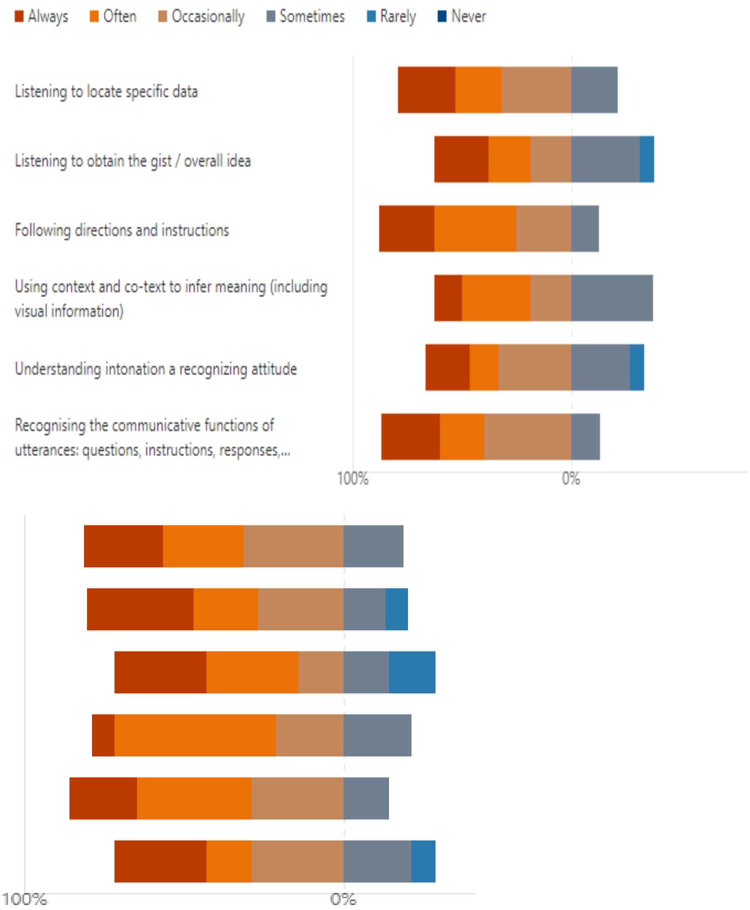
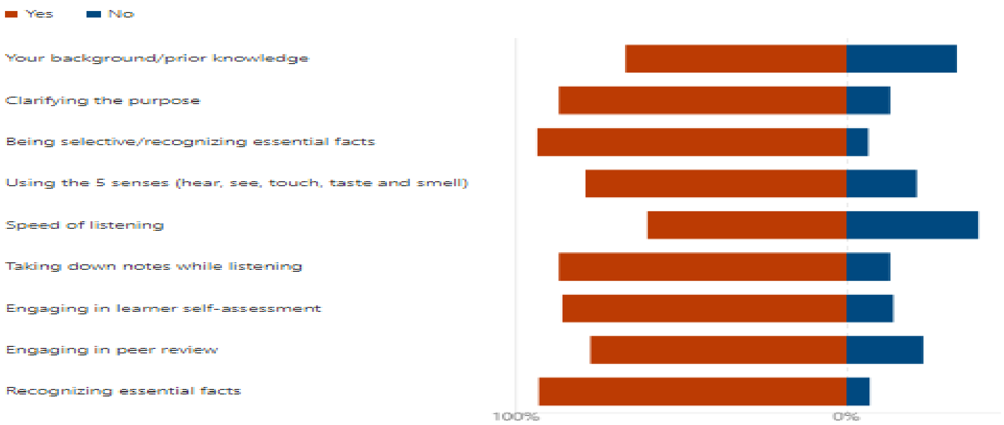


Figure 05

With regard to assessing listening skills, listening for gist, context for meaning and intonation are used less though in asynchronous listening assessments it is following directions and recognizing communicative functions of utterances. However, in both the learning modes, listening for specific information is used mostly as an assessment type.

Moreover, the study inquired how these assessments are mostly conducted and as per the responses given by majority of students assessing reading mostly happens as a collaborative work while listening is mostly assessed individually.

Strategies used to help in constructing the comprehension during online reading and listening. (Figure 06)



Assessments not only evaluate the competency rather they have to be used to facilitate students in constructing the comprehension on the respective topic as well. Therefore, as presented in Figure 06, students are then inquired on strategies used by the teacher to help them in constructing meaning from the online assessments. For that, many have mentioned that being selective and recognizing essential facts frequently used though the speed of listening and using prior knowledge are not practiced.

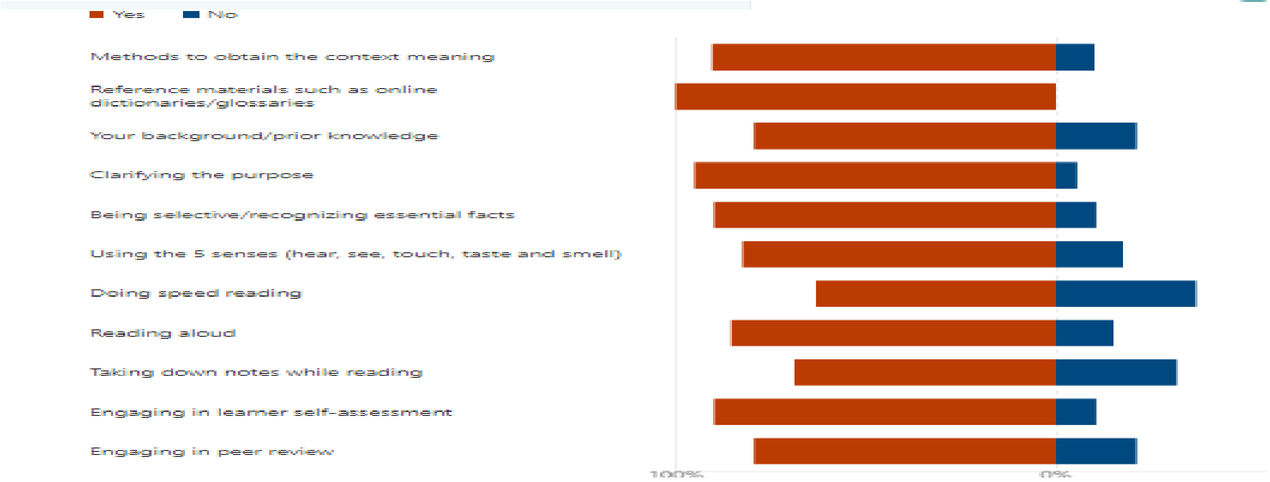


Figure 07

With regard to reading assessments, as depicted in Figure 07 the strategies which are practiced less are speed reading and note taking while reading.

Difference in online and face to face learning of the receptive skills

Since these transformation from face to face to online delivery occurred suddenly, the present study inquired on the difference students see in these assessments now being conducted online. Following is a common response given by the sample: “Concentration is distracted in online classes as a result of power cut and network issues” Thus, it is evident that these technological distractions mainly affect the online assessment of these receptive skills.

Impact on the said skills

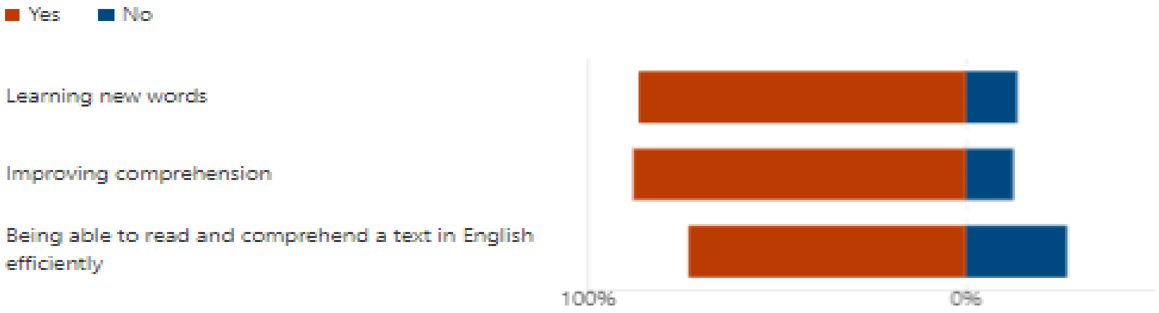


Figure 08

Finally, the study inquired how these online assessments impact on developing these receptive skills, to which majority has responded saying that there is a positive impact. When examined in depth, concerning the reading skills, majority of the students believe that online assessments on reading skills have benefitted learning new words and improving the comprehension (Figure 08). On the other hand, by assessing listening skills online students have benefitted mostly to focus on the sounds, distinguish words, learn new words and improve the accent (Figure 09).

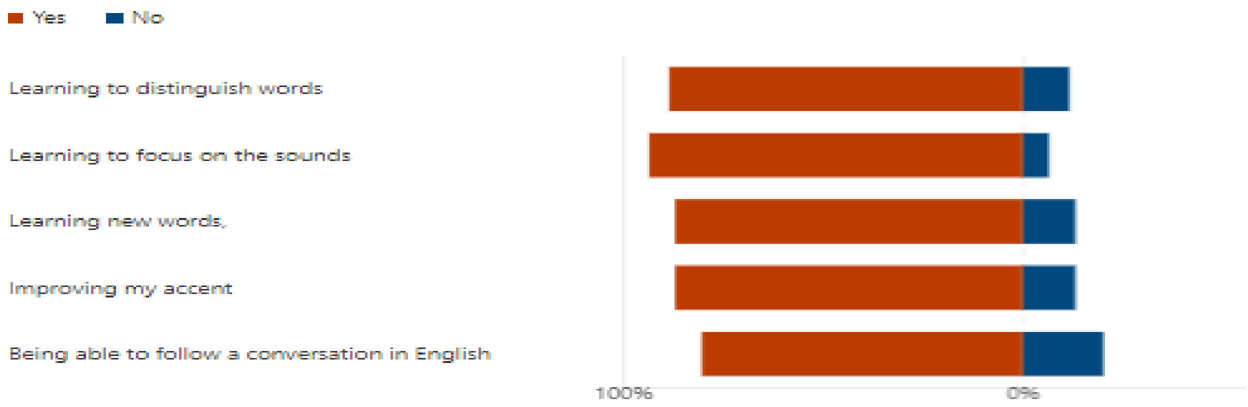


Figure 09

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

When analyzing the results, the study discovered several key findings. One such finding is the less encouragement given in using context clues which is crucial for effective reading comprehension. These diverse types of assessment and instructional strategies are required to develop the reading skills of the undergraduates (Dissanayake, 2018). Same has occurred in listening assessments as well. In addition, students mention that they are not much tested on understanding the gist of the topic when evaluating their listening skills. Rather they mostly test on listening for specific information.

Another key finding is that the difference in the frequent mode of conducting the online assessments of the two skills: when reading skills are assessed mostly as a collaborative work, listening skills are assessed based on the individual performance.

It is known that online assessments have to facilitate students in constructing knowledge and when that is inquired, many have responded saying that their reading assessments do not encourage speed reading while listening assessments do not facilitate speed listening as well as incorporating students' prior knowledge. Apparently, second language learners utilize their prior knowledge of offline and online reading resources to develop their online reading skills (Park, J., et al. 2014). Moreover, Lim and Khalifa (2013) have concluded that the link between the assessments and 'external realities' is necessary because these realities provide context for these assessments, which develops the comprehensibility of the assessments (Papageorgiou et al., 2019).

The difficulty these students experience in these online reading and listening assessments is the network hindrance which causes them to concentrate on the task.

However, to sum up it can be concluded that both online reading and listening assessments are considered as beneficial though their learning is hindered due to network connectivity issue. In fact, it has been discovered that online reading comprehension has more benefits compared to physical reading which occur in traditional classroom atmosphere (Zidat, Samir & Djoudi, Mahieddine, 2010). This is further emphasized by Yulia et al where they have concluded that online assessments improve learners' competency in these receptive skills in addition to speaking (2019). Kiili et al. (2018) also discovered that assessing online reading skills are important for effective analysis skills which are required in online reading.

The conclusion of this study cannot be generalized since it focused only on the selected group of students at the two universities. Thus, future research is required with a more diverse sample and teachers' perspective on these assessments as well.

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