

## The Effectiveness of Internet and Mobile Applications in English Language Learning for Health Sciences' Students in a University in the United Arab Emirates

**Omnia Ibrahim Mohamed**

RAK Medical and Health Sciences University,  
Ras Al-Khaimah, United Arab Emirates

&

Faculty of Languages and Translation,  
Sadat Academy for Management Sciences,  
Cairo, Egypt

Received : 12/15/2020

Accepted 1/23/2021

Published :3/24/2021

### Abstract

This study investigates the impact of internet and mobile applications on enhancing students' language skills. It examines the students' opinion regarding English online learning using the different internet or mobile applications. The participants were approximately 80 students from RAK Medical and Health Sciences University located in Ras Al Khaimah in The United Arab Emirates. A closed-ended questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants. The results revealed that internet applications have a positive impact on learning English as a foreign language. Students' attitudes towards using internet applications for learning English scored very high in certain areas, while the impact was lower in some other areas that is related to speaking, listening or to group discussions. Based on these results, the researcher suggests that internet applications can be activated at all stages of English language learning and teaching. The implementation of mobile and internet applications is recommended together with the face-to-face learning as a sort of blended learning. It can be budget friendly for universities and at the same time effortless for the students as long as it gives the same impact as face-to-face learning. Therefore, the significance of the study is to try to utilize the best online technological method for teaching and learning English Language that is useful to instructors, institutions as well as students.

*Keywords:* Blended learning, English language teaching/learning, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Internet applications, online learning, WhatsApp, Health sciences students

**Cite as:** Mohamed , O. I. (2021). The Effectiveness of Internet and Mobile Applications in English Language Learning for Health Sciences' Students in a University in the United Arab Emirates. *Arab World English Journal*, 12 (1) 181-197.

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.13>

## Introduction

Internet and mobile technology has invaded nearly all aspects of our lives. Everyone is either viewing their mobile phones, tablets, or laptops especially students at the tertiary level. Technology has conquered the field of education a long time ago. Universities communicate with their students via emails, university management systems (UMS) and via WhatsApp. There are WhatsApp groups either for every subject or for students of the same academic year. Sometimes instructors also join these groups for ease of communication with their students. Nowadays, learners are exposed to information technology that shapes their learning styles and learning methods. Net Generation students consider that using technology in the learning environment is essential. Most of them have experience in using online tools in their education (Roberts, 2005).

At the beginning of 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, all educational organizations realized that everything was different than it used to be. The advantages of digital learning have come on top. Everyone was working remotely suddenly without warning. People involved in training, teaching, and higher education had to access materials that they did not create to use remotely. They started figuring out how to communicate even though they may all be in the same geographic location. All students, all over the world, were mandatorily exposed to online learning. Students, as well as instructors, had to adapt in the absence of live face-to-face lectures. They were all rapidly trained to online learning methods, like Google Classroom, Google Meet, Google Docs, Google Forms, plus the previously used communication methods like email and WhatsApp. As a result, the higher educational climate has shifted significantly; it was not local or national; it was a global phenomenon. Some subjects were a challenge to the students and the instructors because they were hard to teach without classroom interaction. One of these subjects was English, although many English courses were given online before, like the IGCSE, SAT, or even general English language courses. However, there are certain aspects in online teaching and learning that has to be evaluated and studied further to be able to decide the effectiveness of some online methods.

In this study, the curriculum delivered included Health Sciences Communication English, teaching the four skills (Reading, writing, listening, and speaking), English for specific purposes, and presentations. The methods used in teaching and communicating with students were WhatsApp, email, and mainly Google applications of education. Each one of these education applications has a fundamental function in the process of online teaching of English. Besides WhatsApp, email, and phone calls, the role of Google applications was the most prominent of all.

Google Docs is one of Google's applications used for education. It is free and can be easily accessed. They are secure web applications that save data automatically with minimal chances of losing them. It allows students to access, create, write, collaborate, and edit their documents from their computers, tablets, or smartphones. Moreover, students can add links, insert images and drawings, and then share their Google Document or save it as a Microsoft Word or a PDF file. With Google Docs, students can work together in the same document at the same time. Therefore, it is an easy way for communication (Zhou, Simpson, & Domizi, 2012).

With Google Forms, instructors can gather and organize material easily and can have various choices to design their forms, surveys, and quizzes. Once learners have responded to

Google form, their responses appear as a summary or in a separate spreadsheet to show details. Google forms and spreadsheets are always up-to-date and saved on the web.

Google applications comprise of other applications that benefit the teaching and learning processes. They offer a channel for sharing teachers' modules and activities. Google Drive is one of Google's essential applications for education. The teacher can upload large-sized files and insert links to be shared by the students. Teachers can also create a list of their students and distribute them into groups. Thus, Google Drive is an online storage device where learners and teachers can create folders to upload files and documents to view, comment, or edit with others. Besides, it saves all Google Docs created by them. Furthermore, all access to Google Docs and applications take place through Google Drive (Lamont, 2015).

The Google application that was of great importance in teaching was the Google Meet. This application opens a live channel between the teacher and the students. The instructors can meet the students in a live session and share a computer screen with them to see presentations, videos, files, pictures, etc. They can also record the session for the students to see later according to their preference. Once the recording is over, the instructors can easily share the recorded session in Google Drive with the students.

Google Classroom is also an educational application, which helps in online teaching. Instructors can create classes and invite students to join. After forming the class, the instructors can upload quizzes, assignments, and lectures in any format, like PowerPoint, an audio, or a video format. Automatically, when the instructor creates a class, a class Drive folder is also created to receive students' files. Instructors can also communicate with their students through the "stream", where they can share posts and schedule messages. Heggart and Yoo (2018), in a research, concluded that Google classroom improved students' participation and learning.

The participants of this study were approximately 80 students from RAK Medical and Health Sciences University located in The United Arab Emirates. A closed-ended questionnaire was used to collect data from them. The research questions can be summarized as follows:

1. Were the academic staff ready and able to use the online methods efficiently?
2. What are the attitudes of students towards specific internet applications used as a learning instrument?
3. What are the advantages and the difficulties encountered by English learners when using internet applications and online learning in general?
4. What are the skills that achieved their learning outcome and others that did not achieve their learning outcome?
5. What is the best medium for online teaching and communication that the instructor and the students frequently used and preferred?

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Investigate the impact of mobile/internet applications in teaching and learning English.
2. Identify students' attitudes towards some mobile/internet applications used as a learning tool.
3. Examine the advantages and the difficulties encountered when using mobile/internet applications.

4. Examine the impact of online learning, in general, on English learners.
5. Identify the English language skills that the instructors can fully give online, others that they can give partially online, and others that they cannot give online at all.

Therefore, the significance of the study is to examine the implementation of online learning to certain aspects of language teaching and the problems that may face the execution of online learning of English. It explores the skills that can be given online successfully and the skills that should be avoided online. Now that online teaching has become very popular than usual and students have got accustomed to it, certain aspects of language teaching have to be inspected to be able to use the online instrument in language teaching successfully.

## Literature Review

### *The Popularity of Researches about Online English Language Teaching/Learning*

A very recent study examined the trends and main findings of the studies concerning the flipped classroom method in English language teaching (ELT). For this purpose, databases including Web of Science, Eric, Taylor & Francis, and the Educational full-text EBSCO were reviewed, and 43 articles were analyzed. A systematic review was used as the research methodology. The articles were analyzed utilizing a content analysis method. The findings of the study revealed that the flipped classroom method in ELT gained popularity among researchers after 2014, and the number of studies in the field rapidly increased. Also, the most commonly used research methods in the flipped classroom in English Language Teaching (ELT) studies were found to be mixed and quantitative methods (Turan & Akdag-Cimen, 2020)

Online or E-learning is not a new topic for researchers, and it never lost its popularity. Online learning has enormous opportunities, as well as challenges, for individuals and organizations. It can save time, cost and effort, and enables remote access to the sources and contents. It can also satisfy the educational needs of learners, supports the learning process, and provides collaborative learning environments. However, these opportunities can turn into a big failure if the organization is not ready for online learning with all of its components (Soydal, Alir & Ünal, 2011)

### *The Readiness of Institutions, Instructors and Students for Online Learning*

As early as 2011, universities were taking a close interest in the topic of online learning. For most institutions, the critical element of migrating to online learning is budget. However, the initial concern should be the institution's readiness with all of its counterparts, such as faculty and students. It is vital to analyze all different aspects of online learning, determine the deficiencies, and close the gaps to be able to use online learning systems effectively. A Turkish study at Hacettepe University Faculty of Letters (HUFL) tested the readiness of the faculty members for online learning. The academic staff was tested with a questionnaire of 37 items that measured the participants' perception in terms of Readiness, Acceptance, and Training. The results showed that, for most of the items, there were statistically significant differences among the mean scores of the departments, and the majority of the departments were not ready for online learning except for one department (Unal, Alir & Soydal, 2014).

Akaslan and Law (2010) pointed out some barriers concerning the implementation of online learning in universities. They investigated the readiness and training needs for online

learning systems of teachers working in the higher education institutes. They examined the online learning readiness with a 41-item web-based survey. The results of the study showed that the academic staff had confidence and positive attitudes towards online learning. Akaslan and Law (2011) also applied their online learning readiness survey to the students of the same program. Although their findings showed that the students were ready enough for online learning, they need training on online learning related issues. The study also emphasized the need for training on online education for the instructors.

Another study conducted to examine students' readiness for online learning indicated that students were not fully ready to adopt online learning. The students were ready, but some improvements need to be implemented. Developing training programs for the students to help them to understand online learning better, making its benefits clearer, offering better internet infrastructures with more computer and mobile technology facilities can help students increase their readiness levels (Unal, et al , 2014). Moreover, Lin & Jou (2013) mentioned that previous studies concluded that most students have positive attitudes towards the learning that utilizes web applications.

Another study by Salloum, Al-Emran, Shaalan & Tarhini (2019) examined the factors affecting university students' acceptance of E-learning systems. Its objective was to investigate the impact of innovativeness, quality, trust, and knowledge sharing on E-learning acceptance. The outcomes revealed that knowledge sharing and quality in the universities have a positive influence on E-learning acceptance among the students. Innovativeness and trust were found not to significantly affect the E-learning system acceptance. They realized that by identifying the factors that influence E-learning acceptance, it would be more useful to provide better E-learning services.

Teachers were the fundamental elements for adapting and implementing the entire learning environment to an online platform since they were directly engaged with students and course contents. They played an essential role in curricular transformations, integrating online learning technologies and adapting individuals to lifelong learning in a networked world in which knowledge plays a critical role (Bonanno, 2011). Tezer & Bicen (2008) conducted a survey-based study in The Faculty of Education at Near East University . The results showed that almost half of the respondents used online learning systems before, and that the academic staff of the sample faculty were ready for online learning.

### ***Researchers' Attitudes towards Online Learning***

Many studies encouraged online learning, and others were neutral about it, indicating that there is absolutely no difference between E-learning and face-to-face interactive learning. Some studies also examined the rate of success to perceive whether there is a difference in the students' performance if online learning is applied.

### ***No Significant Difference between Online Education and Face-to-Face Education***

In the traditional teaching environment, face-to-face interaction with students is crucial for most teachers. However, Jahng, Krug, & Zhang (2007) compared online distance learning

and face-to-face learning in their study, and no significant differences were found in terms of student's success.

### ***Online Learning can be More Effective than Face-to-Face Education***

Another study compared two U.S. universities in terms of face-to-face and online learning, it concluded that if the technological elements were balanced, online learning would be more effective. (Bender, Wood & Vredevoogd, 2004). McNeely (2015) also mentioned that students learn best through interaction, and they need a particular use for technology to communicate quickly with each other. Moreover, they learn by creating, editing, commenting, and sharing documents and ideas.

### ***Challenges & Benefits of Online Teaching of Speaking and Writing Skills***

In the studies examined by Turan & Akdag-Cimen (2020), speaking and writing abilities were the most commonly studied language skills. Further analysis revealed challenges and benefits related to the use of the flipped classroom method in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. Additionally, in studies reviewed concerning the effectiveness of the flipped classroom methods, the findings mostly pointed to the benefits of the flipped classroom method. Based on the review, various suggestions are made for practitioners and future research.

### ***Some Reasons for the Failure of Online Learning***

Another case study was conducted in Indonesia during the pandemic of COVID-19 analyzed the students' perceptions of their online learning during the pandemic, which is quite similar to this current study. However, the approach and the results were different. Sixty-six students of the English Language Education Study Program were involved. But their perceptions of their online classroom that were recorded through a survey was in terms of students' participation, accessibility, material and assignment delivery, and the use of e-learning platforms. The result of the study suggested that accessibility was still the major factor influencing the success of online learning. Online learning for the English Language requires more friendly platforms so that students' participation can be increased. This is mainly for students who reside in rural areas with limited internet connections and other support systems. The study concluded that the shift from face-to-face to online teaching presented a significant challenge, especially for those who were in least-developed regions. Most English students were not ready for this rapid shift in terms of teaching and learning style. The study identified various reasons: the first was availability and sustainability of internet connection, the second was the accessibility of teaching media, and the last was compatibility of tools to access the media. The good news was that the students also reported that their IT literacy improved when doing the stressful- marathon task, though they also said that their gadgets were not ready for this sudden hi-tech change. (Agung, A., Surtikanti, M. & Quinones, C., 2020)

### ***Effectiveness of Google Applications for Teaching/Learning a Foreign Language***

As for using Google applications for language instruction and education, previous studies investigated the effectiveness of using Google applications in teaching and learning foreign languages. They have indicated the efficacy of these applications in improving the students' English language skills. Alakurt & Bardakci (2017) have administered a perception questionnaire that proved that using Google Apps and Docs improved students' English language learning and increased their motivation. Furthermore, students had positive perceptions of using Google Docs and Google + inside their classes. Similarly, Liu & Jou (2013) have conducted a motivation questionnaire that proved the same.

Moreover, Dourda, Bratitsis, Griva, & Papadopoulou (2018) administered a reading and writing test that proved the same improvement of language skills. The results affirmed the effectiveness of Google Docs and the Google search engines in improving students' writing performance. Therefore, with little training, Google tools run most activities inside and outside classes. Thus, they are suitable for project-based and online, or blended learning.

### ***Effectiveness of Other Internet Applications in Language Learning***

Besides the Google applications, some individual internet applications were examined in learning in general and English learning in particular. WhatsApp, for example, has been studied as an English language-learning tool from various perspectives (Çam & Can, 2019). In fact, WhatsApp is one of the most popular subjects for research papers and surveys. Furthermore, mobiles or smartphones as a technological tool that helps in accessing all the applications anywhere anytime were also discussed in several contexts. All the internet applications used in this research, as a method of online English language teaching, have been a subject for several researches. In these studies, the overall impact of these applications on Education in general and Language learning, in particular, is positive.

### **Methods**

The study is a quantitative study using an online questionnaire. It was conducted after finishing an online course that was the first online experience for the instructor and most of the students. The course consisted of a Health Sciences Communication course, English for Specific Purposes, intended for medical professions, as well as an English language online course targeting all the skills including reading, writing, speaking, listening as well as presentations. This content was not intended to be delivered online. But the whole course content was rapidly transformed into an online course. This was the first time that the university had an online teaching-learning experience. Most of the faculties had a minimal idea about the online methods or how to use them. Moreover, most of the students were never exposed to online courses except for three students, who were exposed to other online courses than English.

### ***Participants***

The sample was a non-random quota that initially consisted of 120 students from the first-year, batch 2019-2020, studying English at RAK Medical and Health Sciences University in the U.A.E. The researcher distributed the questionnaire online among the students, but only 80 students responded. All the participants had either smartphones, tablets, iPads, laptops, or desktops that they used for online learning purposes. The participants were first year students whose English ranged from basic users to proficient English users. All were exposed to online learning for the first time except for three students who had previous online experiences. The instructors were also experiencing online teaching for the first time. They did not have sufficient experience using the internet or mobile applications used in online education. Moreover, the transition to online learning was sudden due to the Covid-19 outbreak, and the topics delivered were not intended for online learning.

### ***Instruments***

The researcher administered a closed-ended questionnaire to collect data from the participants. The questionnaire consisted of 35 questions. The items of the questionnaire were

categorized into seven sections, that is, demographic information, faculty and the quality of instruction, methods used in online teaching, learning outcomes and course requirements, communication methods, methods of online assessment, and the informed consent section. The questionnaire was sent online using Google Forms to the participants.

### Results (Data Analyses)

The first section of the questionnaire is the demographic details of the students as their names, native language, and whether they were exposed to online learning before. The participants who filled the questionnaire were all Arabs, three Nigerians and one Pakistani. All of them were never exposed to academic or non-academic online learning before, except for three students were exposed to online education in subjects other than English. All the resulting figures in this study were rounded to a significant figure.

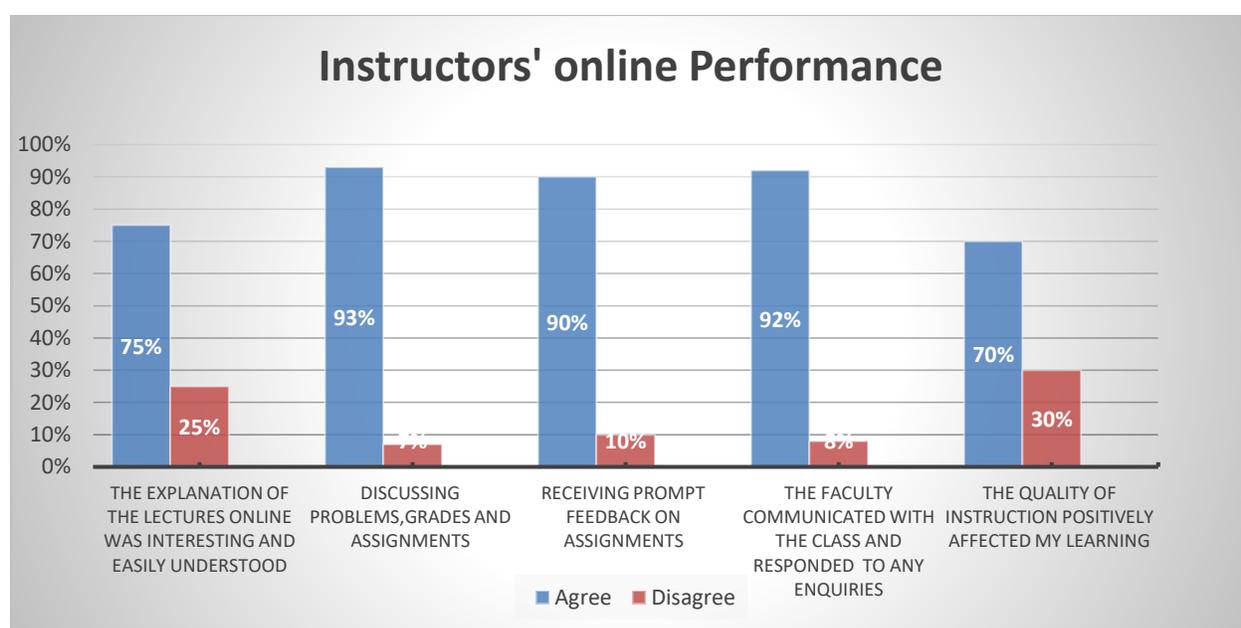


Figure 1. Instructors' online performance

The second section, as shown in the above graph, illustrates the instructors' online performance. This section indicates whether the academic staff was ready for online teaching or not. 75% of the participants agreed that the explanation of the lectures online was interesting and easily understood. 93% of the participants could discuss any problem like their grades or assignments with the instructor. 90% of the students agreed that they received prompt feedback from the instructor on assignments via Internet or mobile applications. 92% agreed that the instructor communicated with the class and responded to any inquiries at all times through the internet and mobile applications. Yet as an overall opinion, only 70% agreed that the quality of instruction affected their learning.

The third section of the questionnaire discusses the methods used in online teaching, course organizing, and planning. Instructors prepared PowerPoint presentations for the new online course; some of them also had an audio explanation. They uploaded the lectures in the Google Classrooms. The lectures were alternating between recorded lectures and live Google

Meet lectures. When the instructors recorded the lecture, they followed it with a quiz or an assignment to ensure that the students have seen the lecture. They also created a WhatsApp group to use in clarifying some points, to answer any queries by the students, or for announcements. Besides, they used email to send some small-sized files for study to the students and opened the mobile channel for any student who needs to contact.

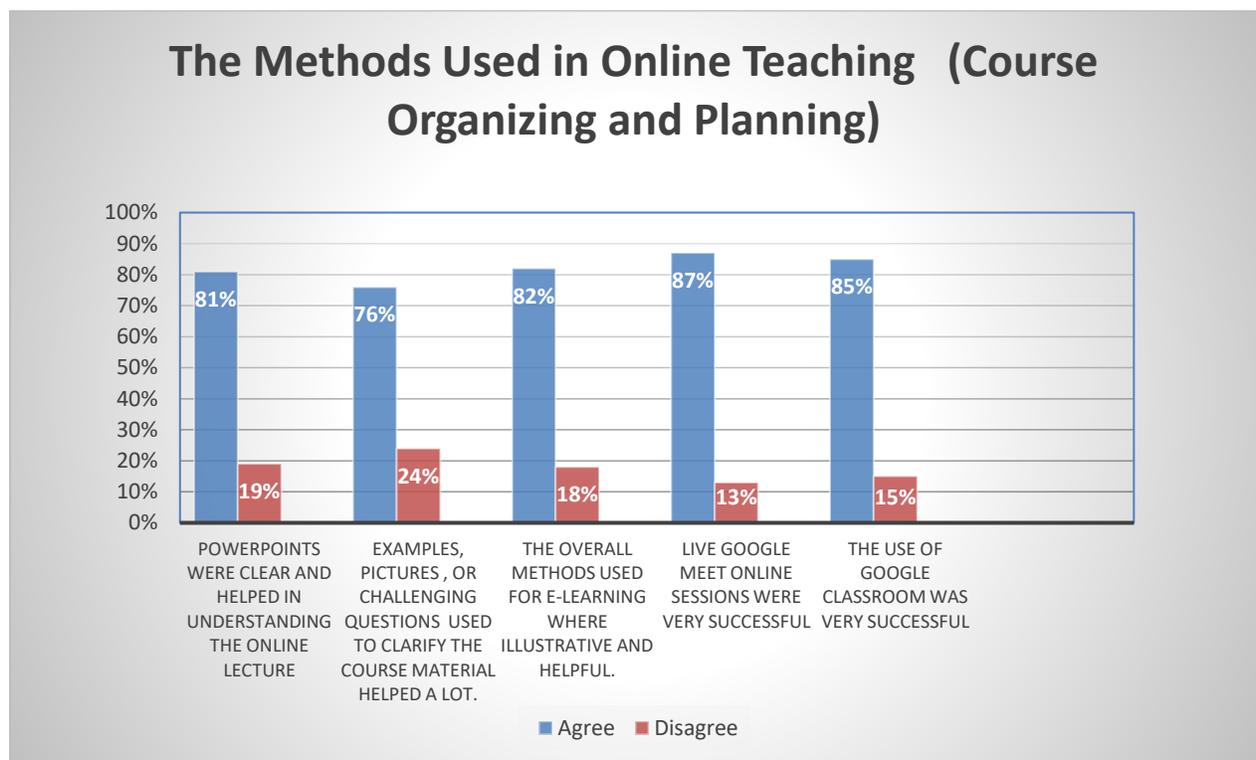


Figure 2. The methods used in online teaching (course organizing and planning)

The analysis of this section of the questionnaire, which evaluates the online teaching methods, shows that 81% of the students agreed that the PowerPoints were clear and helped them understand the online lecture. 76% agreed that the examples, pictures, or challenging questions used to clarify the course material helped them. 82% agreed that the overall methods used for online learning were illustrative and helpful. That included Google meet, Google classroom, and illustrative PowerPoints. 87% agreed that live Google meet sessions were very successful. 85% agreed that the use of Google classroom was very successful.

The third section of the questionnaire included questions about the learning outcomes and course requirements. The learning outcomes are shown in more than one graph. The first set of learning outcomes that have to be learned by students at the end of the course is shown in the chart below.

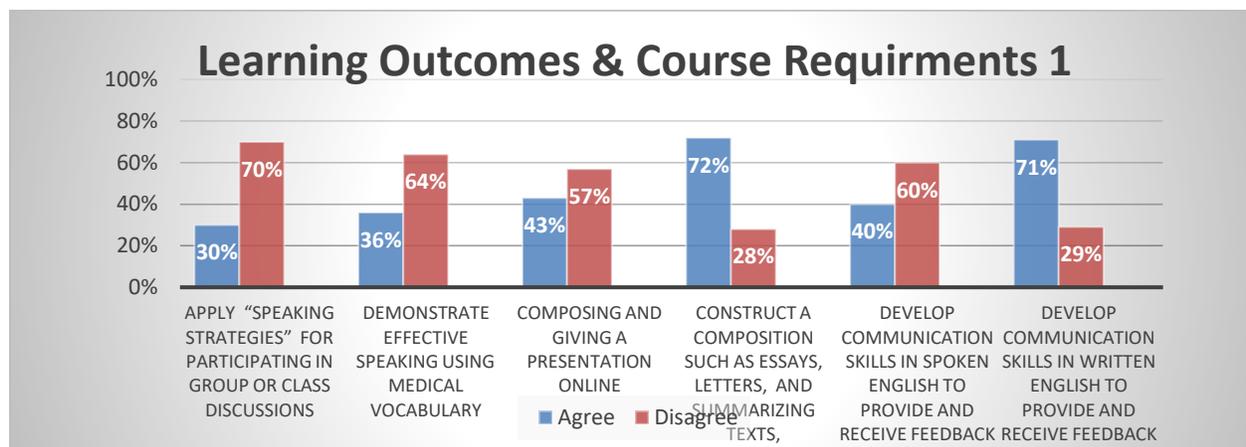


Figure 3. Learning outcomes and course requirements one

It is evident from the above graph that there is a massive decline in the achievement of some learning outcomes. Compared to the previous two sections of the questionnaire, this section shows a significant drop in the percentages of agreement of the students. The participants who agree that they could apply the learning outcome of “speaking strategies” for participating in group or class discussions’ are only 30%. Another learning outcome that showed a decline in the agreement was “to demonstrate effective speaking using medical vocabulary,” as only 36% agree that the course achieved this learning outcome. As for the learning outcome of “composing and giving presentations,” the experience of making an online presentation, and the online evaluation for ideas presented in slides, 43% agree that it was very successful, which compose less than half of the students. Another learning outcome was constructing a composition such as essays, letters, and summarizing texts. The agreement that this learning outcome was achieved was satisfactory as 72% agreed that this learning outcome was achieved. After finishing the course, 40% strongly agreed that they could develop communication skills in spoken English to provide and receive feedback, which is also less than half the number of the students. Finally, 71% of the participants agreed that they could develop communication skills in written English to provide and receive feedback. Therefore, the fluctuations in this set of learning outcomes can be easily noticed.

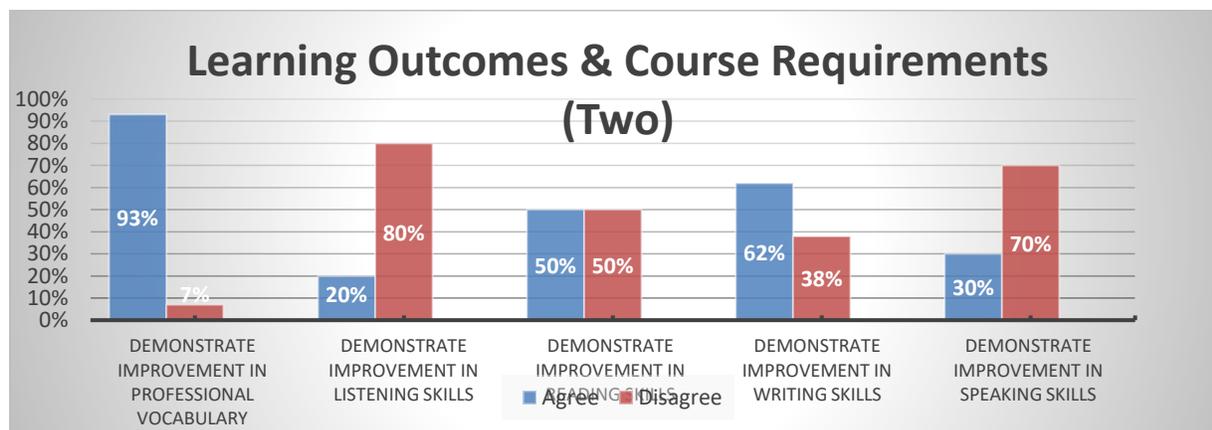


Figure 4. Learning outcomes and course requirements two

The above graph illustrates the second set of learning outcomes. Same fluctuations can be observed in the achievement of the learning outcomes. Some of the learning outcomes suffer a massive drop in the agreement of the participants, yet other learning outcomes are high in the rate of agreement. 93% agreed that this course had improved their professional vocabulary, which was one of the most essential learning outcomes, as medical terminology constitutes about 40% of the curriculum.

As for the learning outcome of ‘improving the four language skills; listening, reading, writing, and speaking,’ the percentage has dramatically dropped in listening skills. Only 20% of the students agreed that this course improved the listening skills. However, 50% of the students agreed that it improved their reading skills, and 62% agreed that it improved their writing skills, whereas only 30% agreed that it improved their speaking skills. Therefore, there were variations in the achievement of the learning outcomes of the four skills, where speaking and listening got a very low percentage of agreement from the students.

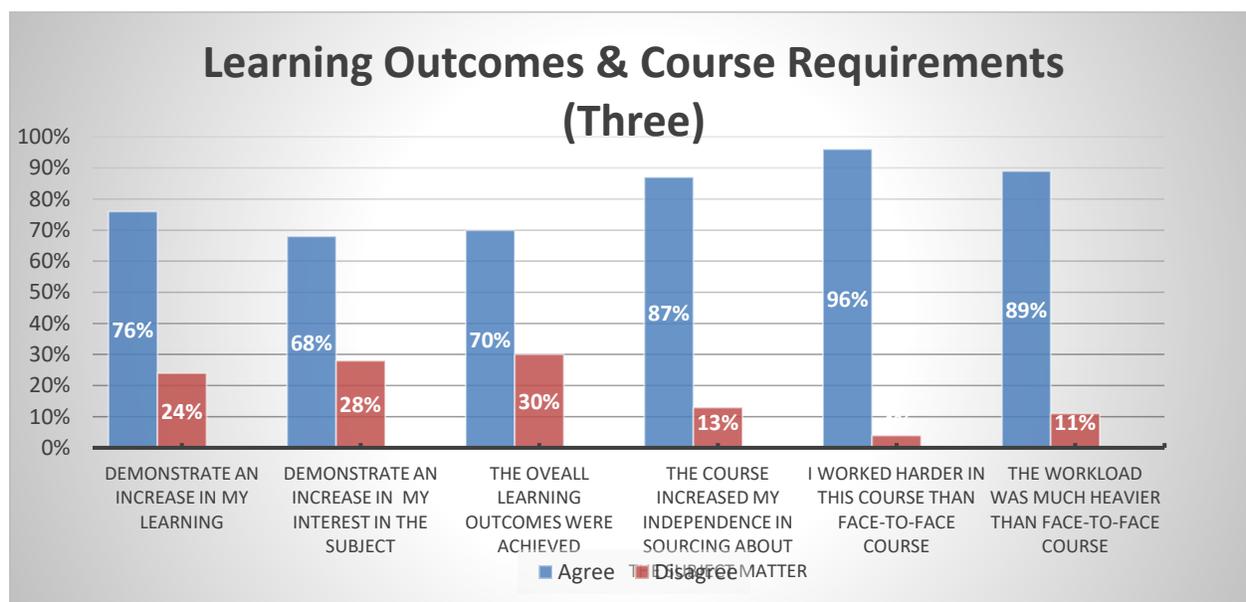


Figure 5. Learning outcomes and course requirements three

At the end of this section, we asked the students to give a general evaluation of the online course in achieving the learning outcomes and whether it increased their learning. 76% of the participants agreed that the course had improved their knowledge. 68% agreed that the course increased their interest in the subject. Yet, the percentage of the overall agreement that the course achieved its learning outcomes was 70%. When students evaluated whether the online course ‘increased their independence in sourcing about the subject matter,’ 87% agreed that it increased their independence. 96% strongly agreed that they worked harder in the online course than in the interactive face-to-face courses. 89% agreed that the workload was much heavier than interactive face-to-face classes.

The fifth section of the questionnaire is about the communication methods used in the English online course and their efficiency. By communication methods, we mean the way or the

media that the instructor chose to communicate with the students and vice versa. It also includes the channels that the students used to communicate with their peers. As a general evaluation, 91% agreed that generally the online applications were successful and that they could use them efficiently. Moreover, 87% agree that performing any group work or working with other students online was successful. They could use electronic media to discuss or complete an assignment with their colleagues in any group work. The rest of the questions in this section are about the participants' preferences. The questions have the names of specific applications for the participants to select among them or mention 'Other' applications if they prefer to choose an application that is not mentioned in the choices.

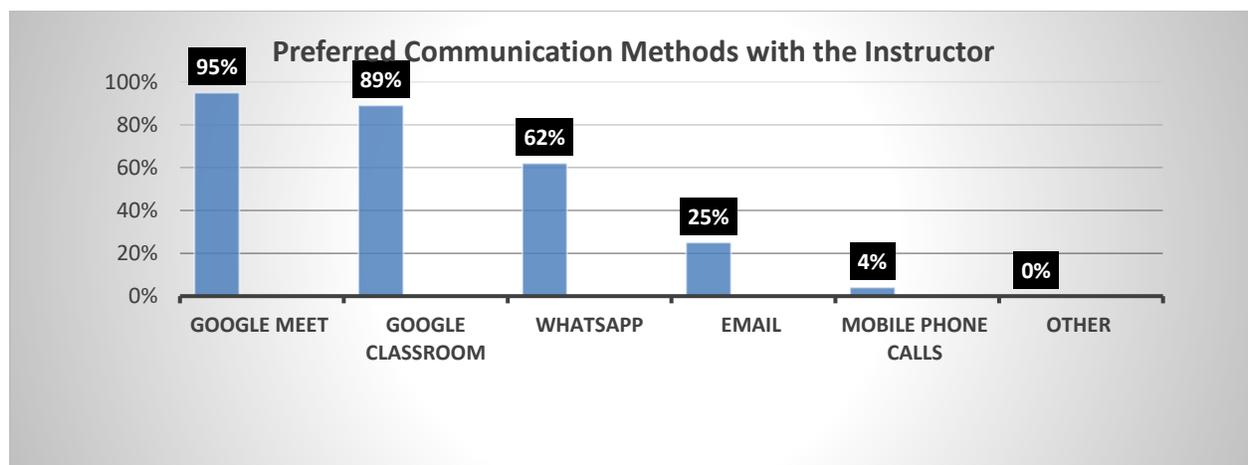


Figure 6. Preferred communication methods with the instructor in the English online course

The above graph shows the participants' preferred applications to be used in the English online course as a medium of communication with the instructor. According to the students, the preference was in the following order: Google Meet 95%, Google Classroom 89%, WhatsApp 62%, Email 25%, then mobile phones calls only 4%. None of the students mentioned another media when they were asked to mention other media of communication with their instructor.

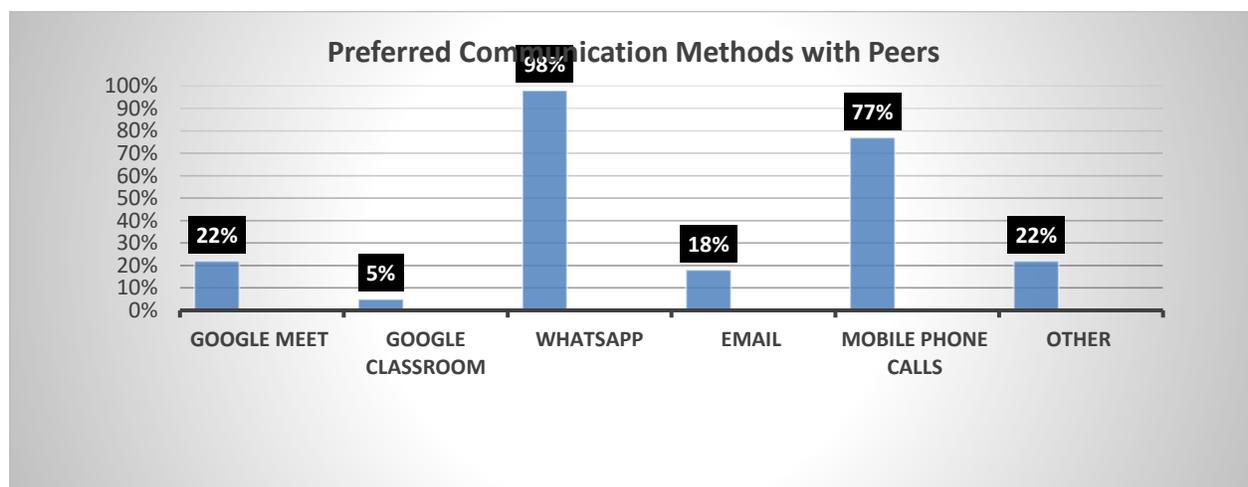


Figure 7. Preferred communication methods with peers in the English online course

The above graph shows the methods of communication that the participants prefer to communicate with their peers. WhatsApp comes first with a percentage of 98%, followed by mobile phones with a rate of 77%, then Google Meet with a lower percentage of 22%, and then Google Classroom with only 5% and only 18% for email. 22% of the participants mentioned that they used Zoom and House party applications to communicate with their peers and to discuss group work when we asked them to mention ‘Other’ applications used to communicate with their peers.

The Sixth section of the questionnaire examines the methods of online assessments. At RAK Medical and Health Sciences University, the TBL (Team-Based Learning) is one of the methods of assessments. They divide TBL assessment into two parts. The I-Rat (Individual Readiness Assurance Test) where every student is tested alone, and the second part of the assessment is the T-Rat (Team Readiness Assurance Test) , where the students are divided into teams. Other assessments are Presentations assessment, quizzes, written tests, CA (Continuous assessment), and the final exam. The instructor conducted all of the assessments using google forms except for the CA and final exam; that the university conducted using software with camera supervision to watch the students through the exams.

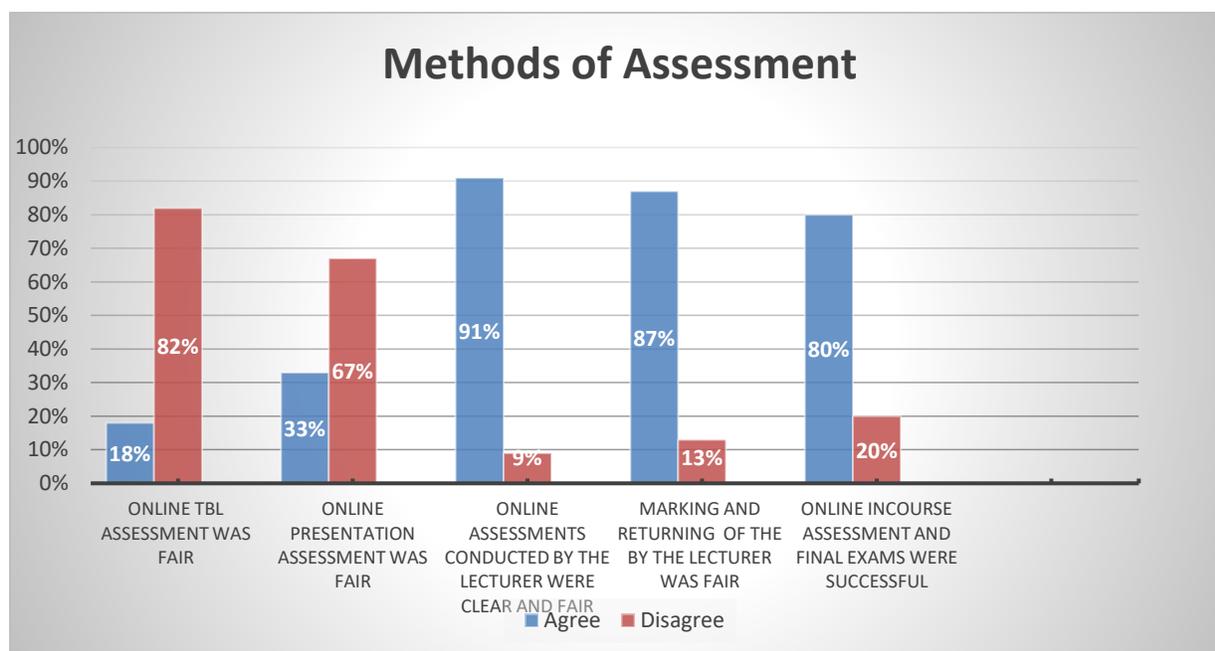


Figure 8. Methods of assessment

From the above graph, it is evident that the TBL assessment had a massive drop in the percentage of agreement that it was successful, as only 18% of the students agreed that this method of assessment was successful online. As for presentation assessment, only 33% agreed that the presentation assessment was successful and fair. Yet, 91% agree that the class assessment activities conducted by the instructor were clear and fair. Moreover, 87% agreed that the marking and returning of assignments online were very useful and fair and 80% agreed that in-course assessments and final exams conducted online were successful.

## Discussion

The findings of the study showed the significance of Google Applications as educational methods of teaching and learning the English language. These Applications can be used as online learning instruments and can be implemented rapidly to enhance blended learning. Using Google meet, Google classroom, Google Docs, and other supporting internet applications like WhatsApp, email, and mobile phones, had significant effects on delivering a quality English language course and achieving the learning outcomes required. The language skills examined were generally writing, reading, speaking, and listening in addition to English for Specific purposes that included medical vocabulary needed for the medical profession. There was a focus on professional vocabulary, error correction, collaborative writing, and engagement in reading topics.

The analysis of the results regarding the methods used in the English online course revealed that the students preferred Google Meet as the best method of communication with their instructor, followed by Google Classroom, then WhatsApp, email, and finally mobile phones. Yet, when the students want to communicate with their peers, the methods level of preference changes. The students prefer WhatsApp to communicate with each other as most classes create groups to exchange information. The second method used is mobile phone calls followed by Google Meet, where they open live sessions to discuss group work and sometimes to help each other with assignments. As for Google Classroom and email, they are not much used among the students, as it is mainly the instructor's method of uploading lectures, assignments, or quizzes. The students can only comment on what the instructor writes in the stream. Email plays the same role as it is mostly the instructors' medium and the students tend to use WhatsApp, which is more manageable and format less. The students also use additional applications together like Zoom and House Party to open live sessions together. The study indicated a positive attitude towards the Google applications used. Among the advantages of Google Applications is that it is easy to use, useful and affordable. This is close to what McNeely (2015) mentioned that students could use technology to communicate quickly with each other.

The analyses of the questionnaires showed that the participants were satisfied with the instructors' performance, as all the percentages ranged from 70% to 93%. Similarly, the participants were very much satisfied with course organizing and planning and the methods used in online teaching. The percentage of satisfaction ranged from 76% to 87%. It is worth mentioning that even though the instructors were new to online learning yet, it seems that they demonstrated good performance. As it is mentioned above in the study by Unal, Alır & Soydal (2014), where it proved that faculty were ready for teaching online effectively

As for the learning outcomes achieved and the course requirements, the level of agreement of the participants was fluctuating. It was noticed from the graphs that the students feel that the learning outcomes did not fully achieve their purpose when it is related to the speaking skill. The percentage of agreement was very low compared to other skills. The agreement of the students that the learning outcome of the speaking skill was achieved ranged from 30% to 40% only. Therefore, it is evident from the results that most of the participants were not able to apply speaking strategies or participate in group or class discussions properly. The participants were not also able to demonstrate effective speaking using medical vocabulary, nor were they able to develop their communication skills of spoken English to provide and receive

feedback. Moreover, most of the participants were not satisfied with the presentation skills learning outcome, as the percentage of the agreement did not exceed 43%.

Similarly, the learning outcomes related to developing the listening skill were not met by great satisfaction from the participants. Only 20% of the participants felt that they demonstrated improvement in their listening skills. As for the reading skills, the agreement was halved between the students as 50% of the students felt that they showed improvement in their reading skills, whereas the other 50% did not.

Yet, the learning outcomes related to the writing skills were satisfactorily ranging from 62% to 72% of the participants, who agree that it was achieved, which shows that almost three-quarters of the participants could construct a composition such as essays, letters and summarizing texts. They were also able to develop their communication skills in written English to receive feedback. Most of the participants also agree that their writing skills have improved.

The learning outcomes that most of the participants agree it has been achieved with a very high percentage was the improvement of the professional vocabulary, which reached 93% of the participants. Yet, as an overall opinion of the whole achievement of the learning outcomes of the online English course, the results were satisfactory, ranging from 68% to 96%, which means that more than half of the participants had a positive attitude towards the delivery of the course.

As for the assessment methods, it is noticed that the assessments that involved groups were not very satisfactory for the participants. In the TBL, they felt that the assessments were not fair. Only 18% of the participants agreed that the TBL assessment was fair. Similarly, they were not satisfied with the online assessments of their presentations as only 33% mentioned that it was fair. Yet, in all other assessments, including the assessments administered by their instructor, as well as the in-course assessment and the final exam administered by the university, the satisfaction level ranged from 80 to 91, which means that the majority of the participants were satisfied with these exams.

## Conclusion

There are multiple avenues to deliver the same content, and the way it is deployed is changed according to circumstances. What is required is the best delivery possible and the best learning situation for the students taking into consideration the content and the audience and their constraints. The results of this study indicate that blended learning is the best method for teaching English. Blended learning is a combination of face-to-face and online learning or distance learning assisted by computers or smartphones. Most of the English skills and English for specific purposes can be delivered online effectively and efficiently except for the skills related to listening, speaking and presentation. They have to be delivered face-to-face in an interactive class.

Similarly, the assessments that involve groups have to be administered in the examination hall. Online learning creates flexibility when we have to rapidly switch the methods of delivery

due to certain sudden circumstances. It is also budget-friendly for many institutions, as it requires less preparation for equipment or space and less teaching budget.

Further studies can investigate other online learning applications. Researches can be done to figure out better applications for teaching online speaking and listening skills in English. Moreover, other methods should be sought for presentation assessment or group assessments than the Google platform used in this study. Moreover, more researches can be done on web 2.0 tools, including Google Applications like Google translate and Google speech recognition. Studies can investigate the impact of the Google search engines and Google scholar in enhancing the production of researches related to the English language. Other Studies are needed to examine instructors' perception of using Google Meet or Google Classroom in English language learning. Finally, online or blended learning can be a fertile platform for researches. Researchers can examine new methods and applications that can enhance English language learning. Studies can also be administered based on pre-test and post-test scores to evaluate online learning from a different angle.

### About the Author

**Dr. Omnia Ibrahim Mohamed Hassanein** is an assistant professor in the academic field since 1993. Had Masters of English Literature in 1996 and PhD of English Literature in 2003. Have been teaching English language and English for specific purposes from 1993 until now. Interested in English language researches as well as English literature. Currently an Assistant Professor of English at The Faculty of language and Translation - Sadat Academy for Management Sciences, Cairo- Egypt & RAK Medical and Health Sciences University in the United Arab Emirates. **ORCID ID** : <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0494-4482>

### References

- Agung,A, Surtikanti,M. &Quinones,C. (2020) , Students' Perception of Online Learning during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study on the English Students of STKIP Pamane Talino. **Soshum: Jurnal Sosial dan Humaniora**, 10 (2), 225-235.  
<http://ojs.pnb.ac.id/index.php/SOSHUM/article/view/1316/1456>  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.31940/soshum.v10i2.1316>.
- Akaslan, D., & Law, E.L. (2010). Measuring teachers' readiness for E-learning in higher education institutions associated with the subject of electricity in Turkey. *Proceedings of the IEEE Global Engineering Education Conference (EDUCON) – Learning Environments and Ecosystems in Engineering Education*, Amman, 481–490. DOI: 10.1109/EDUCON.2011.5773180
- Akaslan, D. & Law, E.L. (2011). Measuring student e-learning readiness: a case about the subject of electricity in higher education institutions in Turkey. *Proceedings of the 10th International Conference on Advances in Web Based Learning- ICWL 2011*, Hong Kong, China, LNCS, 7048, 209–218. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-642-25813-8\_22
- Alakurt, T., & Bardakci, S. (2017). Seeing Google through the Eyes of Turkish Academicians. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 18(3), 105-119. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17718/tojde.328940>
- Bender, D. M., Wood, B. J., & Vredevoogd, J. D. (2004), Teaching time: distance education versus classroom instruction, *American Journal of Distance Education*. 18(2), 103–114. DOI: 10.1207/s15389286ajde1802\_4
- Bonanno, P. (2011). Developing an Instrument to Assess Teachers' Readiness for Technology- Enhanced Learning. *14<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Interactive Collaborative Learning (ICL2011) Piešťany, Slovakia*, 438-443, DOI: 10.1109/ICL.2011.6059622

- Dourda, K., Bratitsis, T., Griva, E., & Papadopoulou, P. (2018). Content and Language Integrated Learning through an Online Game in Primary School: A Case Study. *Electronic Journal of e-Learning*, 12 (3), 243-258. Retrieved from [www.ejel.org/issue/download.html?idArticle=285](http://www.ejel.org/issue/download.html?idArticle=285)
- Heggart, K. R., & Yoo, J. (2018). Getting the Most from Google Classroom: A Pedagogical Framework for Tertiary Educators. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(3), 140-153. <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2018v43n3.9>
- Jahng, N., Krug, D., & Zhang, Z. (2007) Student Achievement in Online Distance Education Compared to Face-to-Face Education. *European Journal of Open, Distance and E-Learning*, p.10. Retrieved from: <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.433.6715&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Lamont, I. (2015). *Google Drive and Docs in 30 Minutes: The unofficial guide to Google's free online office and storage suite* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Newton: Massachusetts, i30 Media Corporation.
- Lin, Y., & Jou, M. (2013). Integrating Popular Web Applications In Classroom Learning Environments and Its Effects on Teaching, Student Learning Motivation, and Performance. *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 12 (2), 157-165. Retrieved from: <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1015422>
- McNeely, B. (2015). Using technology as a learning tool, not just a cool new thing. In D.G Oblinger & J. L. Oblinger, (Eds.), *Educating the Net Generation* (pp.29-30). Retrieved from: <https://www.educause.edu/ir/library/PDF/pub7101.PDF>
- Roberts, G. (2005). Technology and learning expectations of the net generation. In D.G Oblinger, & J.L. Oblinger (Eds.), *Educating the Net Generation* (pp.21-28). E-book Retrieved from <https://www.educause.edu/ir/library/PDF/pub7101.PDF>
- Salloum, S.A., Al-Emran, M., Shaalan, Tarhini, A. (2019). Factors Affecting the E-learning Acceptance: A Case Study from UAE. *Education & Information Technologies*, 24(1), 509–530. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-018-9786-3>
- Soydal, İ., Alır, G., & Ünal, Y. (2011). Are Turkish Universities Ready for E-learning: A Case of Hacettepe University Faculty of Letters. *Information Services & Use*, 31(4), 281–291. DOI: 10.3233/ISU-2012-0659
- Tezer, M., & Bicen, H. (2008). Üniversite Öğretim Elemanlarının E-öğretim Sistemlerine Yönelik Hazır Bulunuşluğu. *International Educational Technology Conference*, 137-147. Anadolu University, Turkey.
- Turan, Z & Akdag-Cimen, B. (2020) Flipped classroom in English language teaching: a systematic review, *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 33:5-6, 590-606, DOI: 10.1080/09588221.2019.1584117
- Ünal Y., Alır G., & Soydal İ. (2014) Students Readiness for E-Learning: An Assessment on Hacettepe University Department of Information Management. In Gathegi, Tonta, Kurbanoglu, Taskın, (eds), *Challenges of Information Management Beyond the Cloud* (Vol. 423, p.145). IMCW 2013. Communications in Computer and Information Science. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-44412-2\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-44412-2_13)
- Zhou, W., Simpson, E., & Domizi, D. (2012). Google Docs in an Out-of-Class Collaborative Writing Activity. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 24(3), 359-375. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1000688.pdf>