

## **Evaluating the Impact of Online Applications: An Exploratory Study of Online English Language Learning at the University Level in Faisalabad**

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### **Abstract**



*This research endeavors to investigate the utilization of contemporary online applications for the acquisition of English as a second language at the university level in Faisalabad, Pakistan. The study aims to achieve the following objectives: (a) to examine the prevalent online applications employed for English language learning, and (b) to assess the influence of these online applications on students' learning strategies concerning the English language. An exploratory research design has been employed for this study, involving the random selection of undergraduate English language learners from four prominent universities in Faisalabad. To collect data, a structured online questionnaire consisting of 15 closed-ended questions was administered to a sample of 50 participants, encompassing both male and female students. These participants, who are pursuing English as a second language at the National University of Modern Languages, The University of Faisalabad, Riphah International University, and Government College University Faisalabad, were selected through convenient sampling. Quantitative data analysis methods are employed to derive findings that have been visually presented in the form of pie charts. The results indicate that online applications exhibit a predominantly positive impact on students' English language proficiency while there are also certain negative influences associated with their usage. This research provides valuable insights for students, facilitating their informed and effective use of online applications for English language learning, considering both the advantages and disadvantages. Additionally, it offers educational institutions a deeper understanding of the implications of incorporating online applications into their English language learning programs.*

**Keywords:** Online applications, Online English language learning

### **Introduction**

The English language assumes a profoundly significant role in the lives of individuals, compelling them to undertake its study for a multitude of reasons. In the contemporary global landscape, English has garnered recognition as the second language in Pakistan and holds the status of a foreign language in numerous regions across the world. Some different methods and processes have been designed to facilitate students' learning of the English language. Traditional learning and teaching practices regarding the English language have been proven to be less effective, but the role of online applications and the technology related to the Internet can be considered essential in educational institutions, especially in English language fields, and many parts of the globe have recognized the value of internet apps in English education, which have greatly eased and enhanced English learning. Though different universities do not always provide adequate online learning facilities to learners and teachers, the teachers try to integrate online applications on their own. Besides this, students at universities also use online applications for educational purposes. These students are mostly "Digital Natives" (Prensky, 2001).

The Internet has vast importance because it plays a central role as a source of information all over the world and because it is changing the styles of teaching, learning, and communication. The way people learn English has also shifted from the traditional classroom to the online system. Net

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Generation students consider that using online applications in the learning environment is essential. Most of them have experience using them in their education (Roberts, 2005).

Several online applications were developed for the open use of students, including Google apps, LMSs (learning management systems), online dictionaries, etc. Chinnery (2008) introduced the acronym GALL (Google-assisted language learning). Examples of Google apps are Google Scholar, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Google Translate, Google Docs, Gmail, Google Drive, and YouTube. Learning the English language has such importance that it is undeniable. When online dictionaries have emerged, it has appreciably affected the strategies that students use to learn a foreign language (FL). It is considered that most students who learn English as a foreign language believe that online dictionaries are necessary components of their English language learning process.

According to Rahayu (2020), the Zoom application has many benefits in both the learning and teaching processes. His research disclosed that over 60% of university students who participated in the survey were able to easily communicate through speech or writing by using Zoom. Using online applications to support online learning has a long history, but the developments in ICT (Information, Communications, and Technology) have come to a level of innovation due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is noteworthy that research about the utilization of online applications for educational purposes, particularly in the context of English language learning, has been a relatively neglected area within Pakistan. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by delving into the extent to which online applications influence the attitudes of undergraduate English language learners toward their overall learning effectiveness.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The global impact of COVID-19 has compelled nearly every nation to undergo significant transformations in both their way of life and educational frameworks. This transition has seen a shift from conventional face-to-face learning to an increasingly prevalent mode of online interaction. English language learning, characterized by its unique attributes, has not remained untouched by this transformative wave, as it too has become readily accessible through online platforms.

In light of these developments, a pertinent inquiry arises: To what extent does the utilization of online applications for English language learning prove efficacious, and what ramifications does it hold for students striving to acquire English as a second language? To address these pressing questions, the ensuing research endeavor has been undertaken:

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this research are:

1. To explore which online applications are being used for learning the English language.
2. To identify the impact of online applications on students' learning strategies towards the English language.

### **Significance of the Study**

The COVID-19 epidemic has necessitated the adoption of online learning by Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC) and educational institutions globally. This study holds significant importance as it evaluates the efficacy of diverse online educational platforms, elucidating their respective merits and limitations. This study offers significant information for educational institutions seeking to optimize their online learning environments. Additionally, it gives students an informed understanding of the advantages and disadvantages associated with utilizing online resources for English language acquisition.

### **Delimitations**

The scope of this study is limited to a relatively small sample size consisting of fifty participants selected from four universities located in Faisalabad. Furthermore, this research is restricted to utilizing questionnaires as the sole primary source for data collection. The acquisition of data through comprehensive interviews has the potential to generate outcomes that are both more precise and significant. Moreover, this investigation is conducted on a limited scale.

### **Research Questions**

1. Which online applications are frequently being used for learning English as a second language by undergraduate learners at the university level in Faisalabad?
2. To what extent, do online applications have positive and negative impacts on students' abilities during online English language learning at the university level in Faisalabad?

### **Review of Literature**

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature. A group of academics conducted a study on web activities and found that Internet technology offers numerous benefits, such as enhancing student facilitation, promoting collaboration with peers, and creating an authentic learning environment for learners. (Kennedy, 1998; Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1999; Deacon et al., 2000) have been cited in the literature. In the contemporary era of technological advancements, numerous educational institutions are increasingly advocating for the utilization of online platforms to augment the learning experience of students. The utilization of online resources by students is of paramount importance as it enables them to effectively track their academic progress, submit assignments, and engage in communication with both peers and instructors (Strain-Moritz, 2016).

Online platforms, such as the Learning Management System (LMS), have facilitated the implementation of online learning and other web-based systems. These platforms enable teachers and students to collaborate by sharing instructional materials, receiving class alerts, submitting and receiving course assignments, and engaging in online communication.

In a study conducted by Firat (2016), the objective was to investigate the impact of Learning Management Systems (LMS) on the learning behavior and capabilities of university students, as well as its implications for their academic performance. The research employed a mixed-methods strategy to gather data. The study found that, based on student feedback, the Learning Management System (LMS) served as a facilitative element that reinforces the notion of face-to-face instruction being more immersive on days when courses are held. According to the study's findings, the utilization of a Learning Management System (LMS) has the potential to enhance students' academic performance, provided that it has favorable elements such as support for social media, an aesthetically pleasing design, interactive features, reinforcement mechanisms, and accessibility.

To advocate for the implementation of online education, the utilization of Learning Management Systems (LMS) offers the capacity to document students' academic data, hence facilitating diverse and complete avenues for analytical learning. Furthermore, Emelyanova and Voronina (2014) asserted that the utilization of Learning Management Systems (LMS) has the potential to establish an effective learning milieu for individuals who frequently engage with LMS, such as assessors, students, and instructors. Filippidi et al. (2010) discovered in a separate investigation that the incorporation of additional features within the Learning Management System (LMS), such as assignment submission, questionnaire completion, forum participation, and access to glossaries, holds the potential for enhancing learners' academic performance.

According to Sun (2003), there is additional evidence supporting the notion that learners exhibit a preference for utilizing online programs, such as Google apps, as a means of facilitating their learning experiences, as opposed to relying solely on traditional instructional techniques. Google Documents is a web-based word-processing platform that facilitates collaborative efforts in formatting texts and paragraphs. Furthermore, Conner (2008); Oishi (2007) have both highlighted the collaborative nature of Google Documents, emphasizing that learners can simultaneously collaborate on a shared document. According to Abdelmalak (2015), Google Docs serves as an exemplary online tool for collaborative group work, which significantly enhances learners' perception of a learning community. Google Slides encompass a range of functionalities akin to those found in Microsoft PowerPoint, facilitating the ability of learners to effectively convey their specific topics and subjects through the utilization of numerous presentation styles, themes, distinctive typefaces, embedded videos, animations, and other related elements.

The suite of Google applications encompasses more software programs, namely Google Drive, Gmail, and Google Classroom. According to Lamont (2015), the utilization of Google Drive enables users to access these applications. Google Classroom is an auspicious educational platform that facilitates the implementation of online learning. Additionally, the study conducted by Heggart and Yoo (2018) explored the impact of Google Classroom on students' engagement and academic achievement. The researchers concluded that the use of Google Classroom resulted in enhanced student participation and improved learning outcomes. The study conducted by Alim et al. (2019) employed a qualitative research methodology. The data was obtained through the process of conducting interviews. The findings indicated that Google Classroom demonstrated a high level of effectiveness; nonetheless, it exhibited several disadvantages and constraints. The research also proposed the need for future actions to address the obstacles and issues with the pricing and

connectivity of Google Classroom, as well as its accessibility for students (Alim et al., 2019). The effectiveness of communication skills is associated with the attainment and accomplishment of educational endeavors (O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015).

Several scholarly researches have examined the efficacy of incorporating Google applications in foreign language instruction and learning (Gunn, 2005; Geiller, 2014; Leh, 2014; Lin & Yang, 2013; Starsma, 2010). The researchers investigated the effectiveness of these applications in enhancing the English language proficiency of trainees. According to Izenstark and Leahy (2015), Google Classroom offers numerous advantages, with the Learning Management System (LMS) being among them.

Furthermore, the utilization of videoconferencing has the potential to enhance the motivation of English as foreign language learners in utilizing and engaging in English conversations with their peers. However, it should be noted that videoconferencing does not significantly influence the confidence levels or overall improvement of students, nor does it have a substantial impact on their perceived language learning abilities (Wu et al., 2011). In her study, Rahayu (2020) examined the experiences of students in the context of online learning facilitated by the Zoom web conferencing technology. The researcher concluded that the utilization of the Zoom application facilitates the establishment of synchronous connections between educators and learners. The synchronous interactions have a striking resemblance to the interactions observed in a conventional classroom setting. In the current online educational environment, students employ various tools such as microphones and webcams to engage in interactive discussions and real-time communication (Rahayu, 2020).

Several research studies have indicated that YouTube offers a range of settings and chances for language learning. Learners can acquire and employ novel or revised lexicon through the consumption of many spoken genres, encompassing both informal and formal contexts, such as debates, films, songs, and video clips. In a study conducted by Bardakci (2019), the research findings revealed that learners exhibit a propensity to utilize YouTube as a means to enhance their academic achievements. The study indicates that social influence is also a significant factor in shaping their intentions. According to Alwehaibi (2015), the utilization of YouTube in foreign language classrooms has been found to enhance students' acquisition of content knowledge. The study further proposes that YouTube should be regarded as a valuable and informative resource for enhancing the learning experience of college students studying English as a foreign language. Additionally, YouTube is recognized as a significant instructional tool within classroom settings. The results of the research study indicate that the utilization of videoconferencing technology for instructional purposes yields beneficial effects on students' development. Hence, YouTube serves as a valuable resource for students, granting them access to authentic written texts and facilitating the acquisition of spoken English skills by exposing them to many cultural perspectives. The integration of slang terms and accents facilitates the improvement of both the academic and practical utilization of the English language in various real-life contexts (Ghasemi, 2011; Derewianka, 2008).

According to Barhoumi (2015), students' mobile learning activities were impacted by WhatsApp. She also talked about how these mobile technologies were very successful since they facilitated the combination of learning courses in the information sciences known as Scientific Research Methods. The study employed an experimental design to compare two groups: the experimental group, comprising 34 students, and the control group, also comprising 34 students. This study proved to be highly valuable in investigating the effectiveness of mobile technology in the context of learning, hence providing support for the integration of blended learning approaches. Based on the results of the study, it was determined that the utilization of WhatsApp for mobile learning activities yielded positive outcomes in terms of learners' academic performance and their perceptions of mobile learning and teaching.

In their study, Demir and Akpınar (2018) examined the potential impact of mobile learning applications on the academic performance of undergraduate university students. Additionally, the researchers explored the attitudes of these students toward animation, skill development, and mobile learning applications. The present study employed an experimental methodology to evaluate students' attitudes toward mobile learning and its impact on their academic achievement. To measure these attitudes, a specialized instrument known as the attitude scale was employed. To obtain an approximation of the animation produced by students, interviews were performed as a means of doing

exploratory analysis. The study's results revealed that mobile learning had a positive impact on student's academic progress, as evidenced by the good attitude scores pupils had towards mobile learning. Furthermore, students placed significance on mobile learning due to its ability to boost their levels of motivation. According to reports, mobile learning has been purported to offer several benefits in terms of enhancing students' motivation levels and academic success. The findings of the study indicate that the utilization of mobile learning technologies yielded significant and favorable effects on students' behavior, and abilities, particularly in the domain of animation, and their academic performance. This study encompassed a comprehensive analysis of several dimensions, revealing that the utilization of mobile learning technology yielded more favorable outcomes for undergraduate students in comparison to conventional learning methodologies.

Darko-Adjei (2019) conducted a study examining the impact of smartphones on students' learning activities, revealing that smartphones are highly effective tools for distance education. The researcher employed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in this study to investigate the utility of mobile phones and students' perspectives regarding the ease of incorporating smartphones into their learning processes. A survey was undertaken wherein questionnaires were distributed to ascertain the influence of smartphone usage on the academic accomplishment of learners and its resultant impact. This study also investigated many elements that indicate the utilization of smartphones as an impediment to the educational process and the academic abilities of pupils. The findings of the study demonstrated that the utilization of smartphones significantly facilitated the students' engagement with online education. The influence of smartphones in enhancing pupils' academic achievement is highly significant. However, it has been shown that smartphones have also presented certain adverse consequences that hinder the online learning experience for students. For instance, the occurrence of smartphone freezing during crucial learning conversations has disrupted the smooth progression of learning. In addition, the presence of poor internet connections and disruptions during online sessions has been identified as discomforting aspects that hinder students' learning process. In general, the results suggested that the utilization of smartphones facilitated the integration of online learning for students. The results strongly suggested that the utilization of smartphones positively influenced learners' perception of the utility of these devices in their academic pursuits. One of the advantages was the ability for learners to conveniently share educational resources online and readily access lecture materials. The utilization of smartphones offers the benefit of portability, allowing them to be carried and accessed at any location and moment.

In their study, Gupta and Pathania (2021) examined the functionality of Google Classroom as an online platform for teaching and learning, focusing on its application among educators in the field of education. This study was undertaken to evaluate and investigate the influence of Google Classroom on the academic performance of both teachers and students. Based on the results of the study, it was observed that students exhibited a favorable disposition toward the utilization of Google Classrooms. This was primarily attributed to the ease with which they could access educational resources and engage in subject-related discussions through online technological means. The findings indicated that students demonstrated a high level of proficiency in utilizing Internet resources as a regular part of their everyday academic activities. The students expressed high levels of satisfaction due to the ease with which they were able to work at their speed. The participants exhibited a higher level of comfort while engaging in collaborative activities with both teachers and fellow learners. The survey findings about the evaluation of Google Classroom revealed a range of benefits, one of which was the cultivation of a sense of social cohesion among students inside the classroom environment. The study's findings indicated that students perceived Google Classroom to be a more engaging platform for educational purposes, as it did not elicit feelings of boredom. Additionally, students perceived Google Classroom to be an efficacious medium for facilitating learning. Consequently, the findings indicated that students had a favorable disposition towards Google Classroom in their educational processes. Additionally, it was discovered that there were no discernible variations depending on gender in the utilization of Google Classroom, a component of the educational experience.

Based on an analysis of the existing literature, certain gaps in knowledge have also been identified. The evaluation of the impact of online apps on English language learning in Pakistan, particularly in Faisalabad, is an underexplored domain in academic research. Hence, the present study aims to investigate the prevalence of online applications among English language learners and assess

the extent to which online learning influences undergraduate English language learners, both positively and negatively.

### Methodology

#### Research Design and Research Method

An exploratory research design was employed to investigate the prevalent online applications frequently utilized by university-level English language learners in Faisalabad. This study sought to explore the potential effects of these online applications on the aforementioned learners. To achieve this objective, a quantitative research approach was chosen which involved the administration of an online survey. In the realm of quantitative research, this method entails the analysis of diverse numerical data through a statistical approach, as outlined by Creswell (1994).

#### Population and Sampling

The target population of this research was four universities in Faisalabad, including the National University of Modern Languages, The University of Faisalabad, Riphah International University, and Government College University Faisalabad. Based on convenience sampling, the sample size was comprised of fifty undergraduate participants enrolled in departments of English.

#### Data collection procedures and instruments

Data was collected by randomly selecting undergraduate English language students through an online survey on Google Forms. In this study, an online structured questionnaire was the primary source for collecting the data. A questionnaire was distributed online to fifty undergraduate students (who were enrolled in departments of English at selected universities in Faisalabad) through WhatsApp. At the very start of the questionnaire, students were asked to mention their university names. The questionnaire was comprised of 15 close-ended questions to achieve the objectives. It was divided into two sections. In the first section, two questions were concerned with the use of online applications, and the second section, which consisted of 13 questions, collected responses regarding the impacts of online applications. A five-point Likert scale format (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, strongly agree, and agree) was used to measure to what extent online applications have positive and negative impacts.

#### Data Analysis Method

By utilizing the quantitative data analysis method, the collected data was analyzed through Google Forms by using pie charts to evaluate the numerical data. Pie charts were used to get the exact findings related to the research questions.

### Results and Discussion

This section comprises the primary findings derived from the research questions posed in this study. Firstly, students were queried regarding their utilization of online applications for English language learning purposes. Secondly, the study presents a compilation of online applications most commonly employed by English language learners. Thirdly, it delineates the extent to which these online applications exert positive and negative influences on the English language learning experience. The subsequent graphical representations illustrate the results, which have been meticulously analyzed based on the responses obtained from the online questionnaire administered to the students.

#### Frequently-used Online Applications by Undergraduate English Language Learners

It was revealed that 84% of students agreed on the aspect that they use online applications at their undergraduate level for learning English. However, 16% of students did not use online applications for online English language learning. The most frequently used online applications were explored in the survey and participants had to choose which application they had used most:

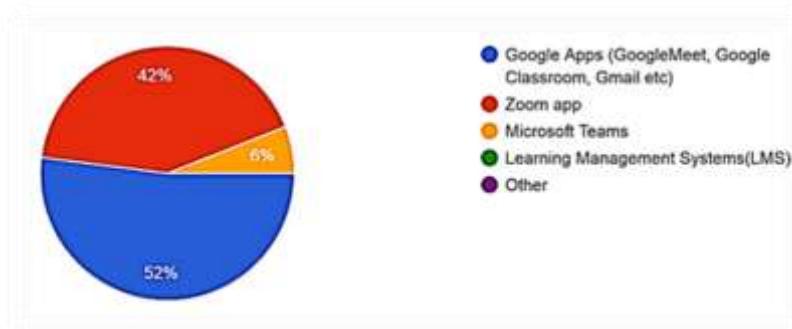
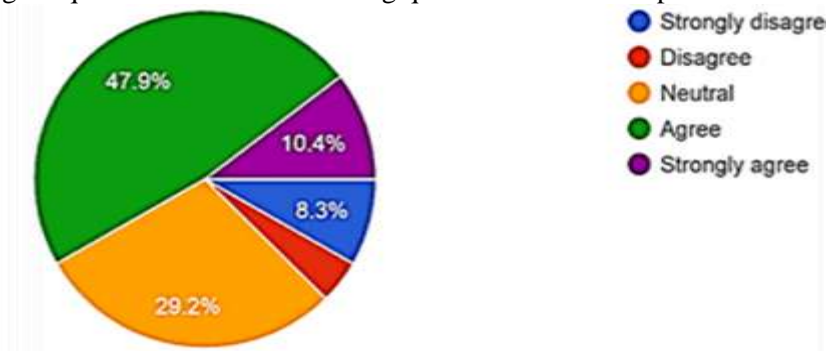


Figure 1: Frequently used online application by English language learners

The results of the findings show that the most frequently used online applications accessed by undergraduate English language learners were Google Apps. 52% of students responded that Google apps, including Google Meet, Google Classroom, Gmail, etc., were best for them to interact with other students and teachers during online English language learning. 42% of students were of the view that the Zoom app was best because they had better interaction through this application. Due to COVID-19, only 6% of students considered Microsoft Teams to be the best and most frequently used during online English language learning. Results also revealed that students were not interested in using LMS.

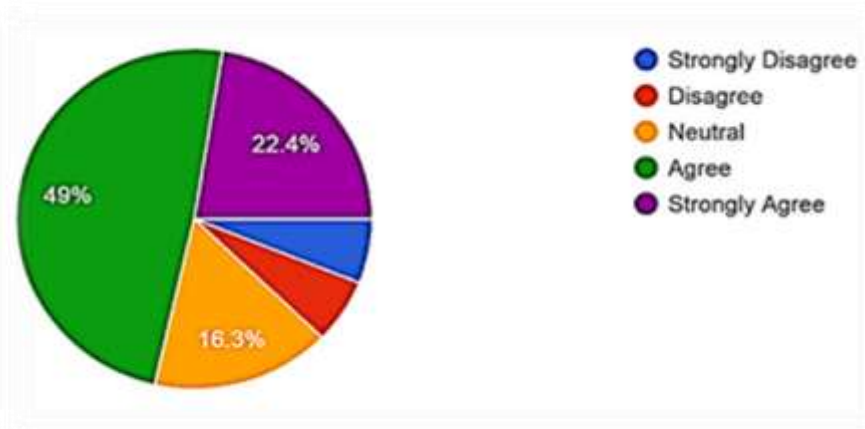
**Impact of Online Applications on Undergraduate English Language Learners**

The degree to which the use of online applications has positive and negative effects on their online English language acquisition was assessed using questions with a five-point Likert scale.



**Figure 2:** Impact on students' learning abilities by the usage of online applications

47.9% of students agreed that the usability and expertise of online applications had positive impacts on their English language learning skills and abilities. 29.2% of students' responses were neutral regarding the positive impacts of online apps. 10.4% of students strongly agreed on this point. However, a few students also disagreed that online applications did not ensure positive impacts on their abilities. 8.3% strongly disagreed, and 4.2% of learners disagreed with this question. Different related responses from students also investigated the extent to which online applications ensure positive impacts on students' learning strategies toward the English language.

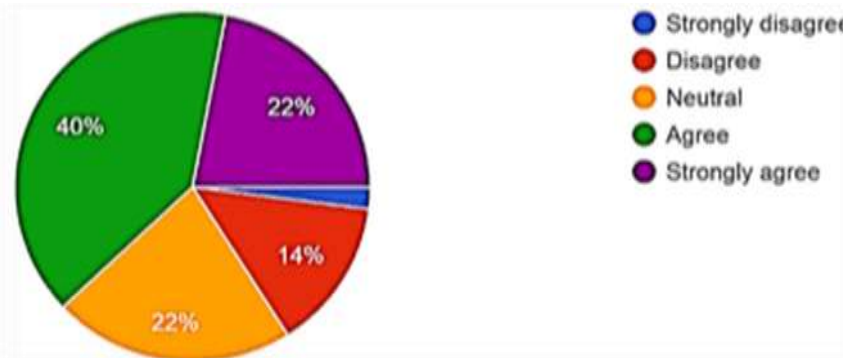


**Figure 3:** Enhancement of capability of students through online applications

The results indicate that online applications have significantly enhanced students' English language learning capabilities. Nearly half of the students (49%) strongly agreed that these applications improved their skills in using internet resources, emails, documents, dictionaries, and related tools. Another 22.4% agreed with this statement. However, 16.3% were neutral, and a small percentage (6.1%) strongly disagreed, while another 6.1% disagreed with the idea that online applications had a positive impact on their abilities in these areas. This demonstrates a range of opinions among students regarding the influence of online applications on their English learning process.

Results showed the very positive attitude of students that usage of online applications encouraged them to promote learning on the internet by themselves. It is shown in Figure 4:

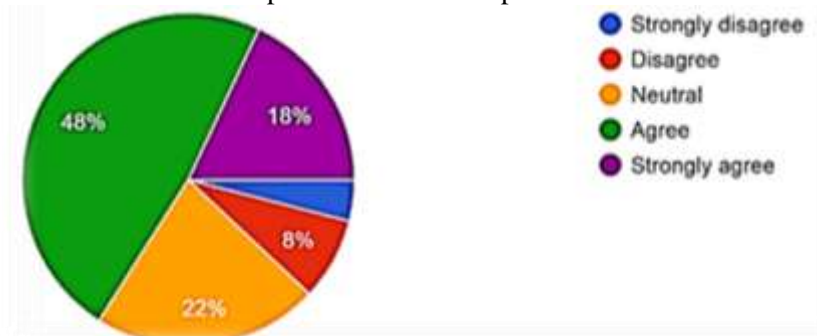




**Figure 4:** Self-learning through the Internet (online applications)

The findings of the study strongly support the assertion that online applications have made a substantial positive impact on English language learners. Notably, a combined 62% of students were in agreement with this notion, with 40% agreeing and 22% strongly concurring with the statement, as indicated in the online questionnaire. Conversely, a segment of participants, comprising 22%, adopted a neutral stance, neither affirming nor opposing the idea that online applications fostered self-directed learning on the internet. A minority of students, totaling 14%, disagreed with this statement, while a mere 2% of respondents strongly disagreed, asserting that online applications did not encourage self-learning.

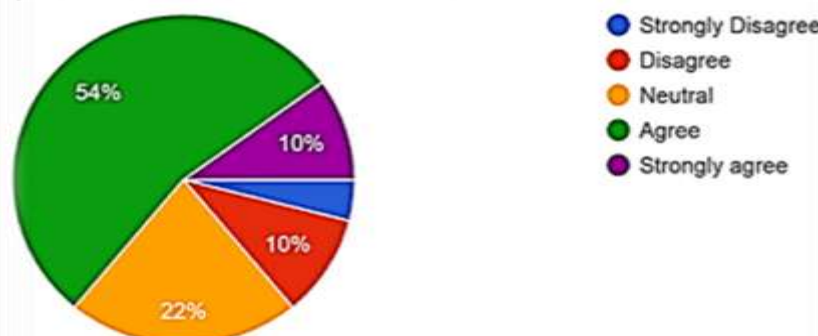
The research further unveiled that students exhibited high productivity when employing a variety of online applications, including Google apps (such as Google Scholar and Google Translate), online dictionaries, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint slides, and other similar tools to enhance their English language skills. These findings are visually represented in Figure 4.5 through a pie chart, showcasing the distribution of student responses about this aspect.



**Figure 5:** Strengthening of students' productivity through online applications

The results were so overwhelming that 48% of students agreed and 18% of students confirmed that they strongly agreed that their English language skills had been strengthened by using online applications. The responses of 22% of participants were neutral. 8% of respondents disagreed with this statement, and 4% of students strongly believed that online applications could not make them more productive regarding online English language learning.

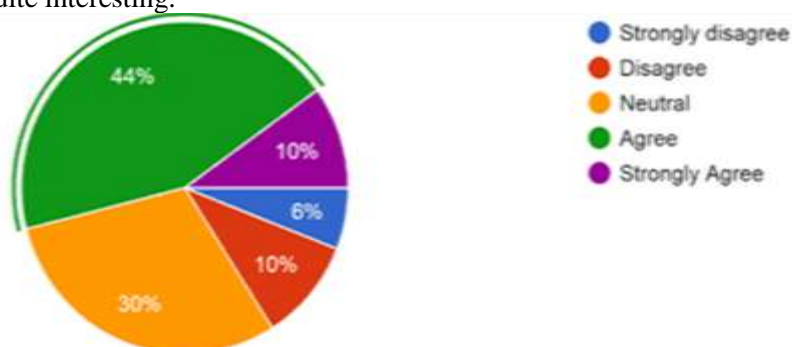
Moreover, results disclosed that online applications proved very helpful for the students regarding their English language subjects to gain extra knowledge and information.



**Figure 6:** Enhancement of knowledge regarding English language subjects



Results indicated that 54% of students agreed and 10% strongly agreed that online learning through online applications helped the learners gain previous and updated knowledge regarding English language subjects. 22% of students were neutral in their responses. Others disagreed and disapproved of the statement. Concerning the next survey question, results revealed that students' responses were quite interesting.

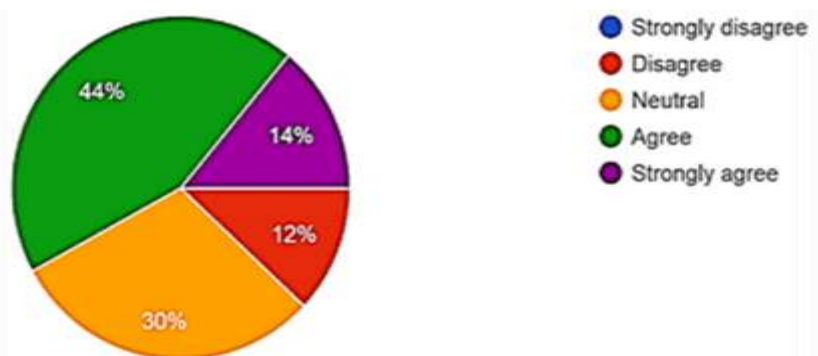


**Figure 7:** Disciplined behavior of students due to the task's deadlines and time limits.

Findings demonstrated that 44% of students agreed that during online English language learning, time limits for quizzes and deadlines for assignments worked as great tools to make them more disciplined. 10% of students strongly approved of this question. Some students completely disagreed with the fact that they are becoming more disciplined due to the deadlines of assignments during online English language learning. 10% disagreed, and 6% of students strongly disagreed with it. It was also found that 10% of participants were neutral in their responses to this question.

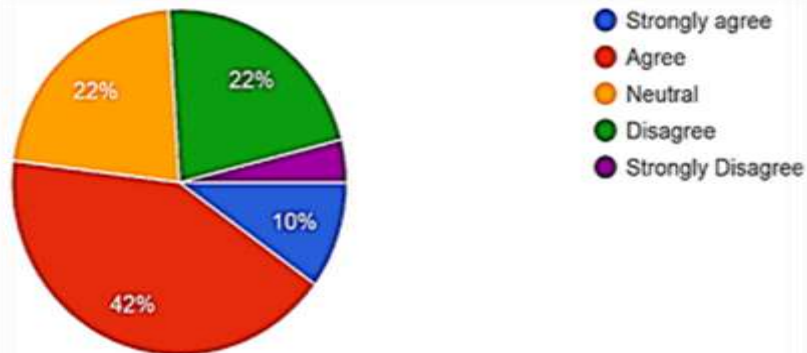
Finally, the analysis of the responses of undergraduate English language learners in Faisalabad examined that online applications have a positive impact to a great extent on English language learners during online learning at the university level in Faisalabad. According to the results, most students agreed and strongly agreed that online applications ensure positive impacts on their English language skills during online learning. After examining the responses, it was also revealed that the use of online applications had some negative impacts on students' abilities during online English language learning at the university level in Faisalabad.

The results of students' responses regarding the difficulty that they faced in learning English online are shown in Figure 8.



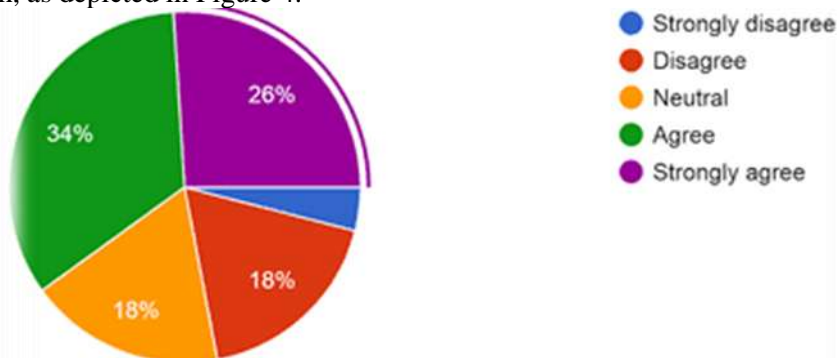
**Figure 8:** Difficulty faced by students in understanding the topics

A substantial portion of students, constituting 44%, agreed with the notion that comprehending English subjects and related topics posed a challenge during online English language learning. Moreover, 14% of the participants strongly concurred with this statement, underscoring the difficulties encountered in grasping these subjects. A noteworthy proportion of English language learners, comprising 30%, maintained a neutral stance, neither affirming nor opposing the idea that online English learning presented challenges. In contrast, only 12% of students disagreed with this statement, suggesting that a minority found online English learning less challenging in terms of subject comprehension. The study also elicited varied responses from students regarding the assertion that undergraduate English language learners became overly dependent on online applications due to the shift to online learning. The detailed analysis of these responses is presented in Figure 9.



**Figure 9:** Students as more bound to online applications due to online learning

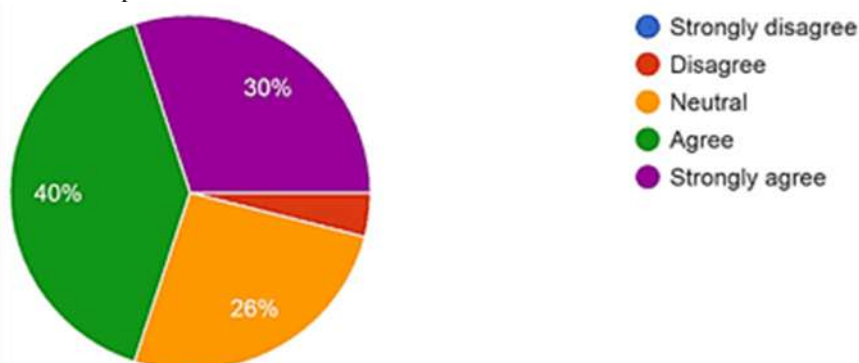
A significant proportion of participants (42%) agreed that online learning had negative consequences, making students overly dependent on online technology, with 10% strongly endorsing this view. Meanwhile, 22% remained neutral, and another 22% disagreed with the statement. Additionally, the study found that online English language learning had some negative impacts on students' health, as depicted in Figure 4.



**Figure 10:** Impact of increased screen time usage on students' health during online learning

The analysis revealed that 60% of students were negatively influenced by increased screen time usage during online English language learning because 34% agreed and 26% strongly agreed that online English language learning resulted in depression, anxiety, and perceived attention problems. There were also 18% of students who disagreed and a few who strongly disagreed with that statement. Just 18% of students were neutral because they neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement that online applications had negative impacts.

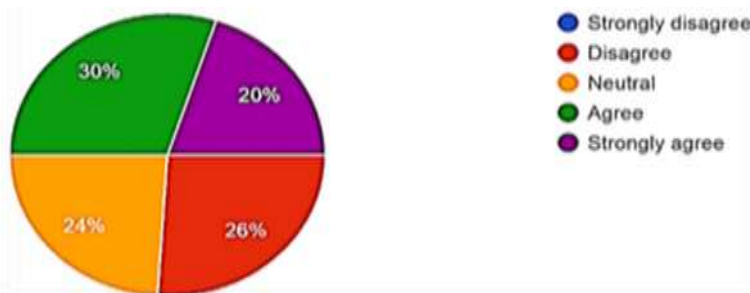
The feedback from the students was very interesting; low confidence and less motivation in them were the result of poor interaction.



**Figure 11:** Lack of communication skills and poor self-confidence in students

The findings prominently highlighted that a substantial majority of students, accounting for 70%, attributed their reduced self-confidence and motivation to the negative impact of online applications. In contrast, 26% of participants maintained a neutral stance on this matter. Interestingly, only a minority of students expressed disagreement with the idea that diminished self-confidence and motivation were linked to weak interaction caused by online applications.

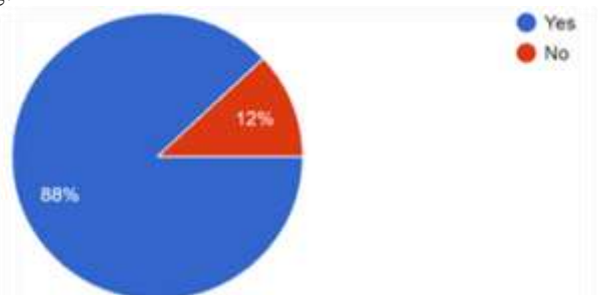
The investigation into the adverse effects of online applications on students' academic pursuits unveiled the following results:



**Figure 12:** Rise of plagiarism and decline of critical thinking in students

Results showed that online applications had negative impacts on the students' abilities and English language skills during online English language learning, especially for undergraduate learners. There were contradictory responses regarding this statement that online applications were negatively promoting plagiarism and cheating, but critical thinking and analysis had declined in students. 30% agreed, 20% strongly agreed, and 26% disagreed, but only 24% of students were neutral regarding this statement.

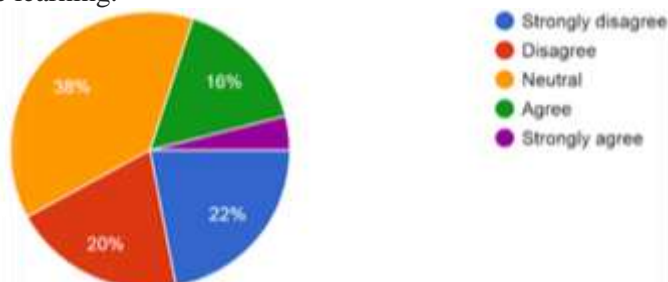
Analysis has revealed that online applications do have negative impacts on undergraduate learners' abilities and skills to some extent during online English language learning in Faisalabad. Results have shown that most students have agreed and disagreed with the statements, which indicate that the use of online applications is negatively impacting students' learning strategies toward the English language results indicated the students' acceptability of online applications during their online English language learning.



**Figure 13:** Acceptability of online applications with their positive and negative impacts on students

According to the findings, 88% of students were very comfortable using online applications, and these were acceptable for them with their positive or negative impacts on learning and enhancing their English language. Only 12% of students negatively responded to this question.

At last, results revealed to what extent students believed that online learning was better than traditional face-to-face learning.



**Figure 14:** Students' preference towards online learning or traditional face-to-face learning

The responses of 38% of students were neutral regarding this statement. Many students—20% disagreed and 22% strongly disagreed—did not prefer online learning over traditional face-to-face interaction. Only 6% of students agreed with this statement.

### Discussion on Results

The research findings, aligned with our research questions, unveil significant insights into the preferences and impacts of online applications among undergraduate English language learners in Faisalabad.

First and foremost, the results underscore that Google applications are the most frequently utilized tools by students during their online English language learning endeavors at the

undergraduate level in Faisalabad. Additionally, Zoom and Microsoft Teams applications also find use among some undergraduate English language learners during online learning sessions.

Moreover, the data indicates that online applications play a pivotal role in positively impacting English language learners to a considerable extent. They contribute to students' discipline, foster self-directed learning, and stimulate creative thinking. These applications empower learners to navigate the internet independently, thereby enhancing their capacity for English language acquisition.

However, it's crucial to acknowledge that online applications also exert certain negative effects to some degree. They can induce stress and adversely affect students' health due to increased screen time during online sessions. Furthermore, the virtual environment may inhibit students' interaction with peers and teachers, which, in turn, hinders their active participation in online learning sessions. This can lead to a dearth of communication skills and erode students' self-confidence. Additionally, online applications may inadvertently facilitate plagiarism and cheating. Consequently, a significant portion of students may harbor reservations about online English language learning through applications, favoring traditional learning methods. Nevertheless, it's worth noting that some students remain enthusiastic about online English language learning due to the positive aspects offered by these applications.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this research has effectively achieved its objectives of examining the utilization of online applications and assessing their positive and negative impacts within the context of online English language learning through a quantitative research approach.

Based on the survey conducted among undergraduate English language students from four prominent universities in Faisalabad, namely the National University of Modern Languages, The University of Faisalabad, Riphah International University, and Government College University Faisalabad, it is evident that virtually all undergraduate students incorporate online applications into their learning strategies. The research findings underscore the strong preference of students for online applications as valuable tools for enhancing productivity and proficiency in English language subjects. These applications have a profoundly positive and influential impact on students' learning strategies during their online English language learning journey.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the pervasive use of online applications in education also introduces some adverse effects. The study reveals that English language learners are not immune to these negative consequences during their online language learning experiences. In the contemporary digital era, online applications wield significant transformative power over students' learning styles, yielding both positive and negative outcomes. To summarize, while online applications undeniably deliver substantial positive impacts on students, they also exert some adverse effects on undergraduate students' capabilities, and these drawbacks cannot be disregarded.

### **Implementation**

Given the exploratory nature of this research, its applicability extends to educational institutions worldwide, spanning schools, colleges, and universities. This research serves as a valuable model for exploring the multifaceted positive and negative impacts of online applications on students at various educational levels, especially in the context of distance learning, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic. Its widespread implementation can bring substantial benefits to students, educators, and researchers alike, offering valuable insights into the evolving landscape of digital education.

### **Recommendations**

The research findings suggest several avenues for future investigation. Researchers should explore strategies at the university level that combine online and traditional learning to mitigate negative online application impacts. Future studies can involve larger, diverse samples from various universities in Pakistan and extend to different cities. Comparative research between genders regarding online application impacts can provide insights into gender-specific educational needs. These areas offer the potential for enhancing digital education and its effectiveness.

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