

Impact of Online vs. On-Campus Classes on Academic Performance of EFL Learners' Speaking Skills

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Abstract—Academic performance is an essential component of assessing the success of educational programs. During the coronavirus lockdown, educational institutions worldwide changed their methods of teaching to suit the new online mode of teaching. Consequently, many students, particularly EFL learners' academic performance have been affected. This study reports the findings of online teaching's impact on learners' academic performance in the speaking course at the English Department, Najran University. This is mainly attempted through a comparison of students' academic performance in online teaching mode in speaking courses during the Coronavirus lockdown with that of on-campus teaching mode before the Covid-19 lockdown. Data for the study were collected from the scores of the students in speaking skills, which included grades for the final exams. The data were collected from the participants (N = 80 students), 40 males + 40 females, who received instructions via both the on-campus and online teaching modes. The results of the study revealed that the variability in both modes of teaching was very distinct. Students' grades in the on-campus mode of teaching did vary too much from grades in the online teaching mode. The scores of both modes of teaching similarly varied from A, B, C, D, and from failed, deprived, absentee, and withdrawn students. However, it has been found that the majority of the students performed better in the online teaching mode than on-campus.

Index Terms—academic performance, online teaching, on-campus teaching, speaking skills

I. INTRODUCTION

Research on the effect of online versus on-campus classes on the academic performance of EFL learners has been conducted during COVID-19, and speaking skills are no exception. A blend of technology in teaching and learning has recently been considered a boom in ELT pedagogy. As Manon (2019) concludes, technology is prevalent today, and while a gadget may not always be able to entirely replace a teacher, a teacher who uses technology is more likely to do so than a teacher who does not. ELT professionals were compelled to switch from the on-campus classroom to the distance education model of online teaching and learning. Distance education dates back to the 1960s. It first took the form of broadcast media initially used as a support for printed materials, then in use in on-campus classrooms. However, with the advent of the internet and new technologies, distance education saw significant changes. It has now become one of the most valuable resources in educational settings. It has transformed the way content and information are presented to learners. Today's world is changing, and it is open to new experiences and opportunities. The scope and reach of education have been greatly expanded by the implementation of online courses. Online learning is one of the fastest-growing methods of teaching and learning. The researchers compared the effects of online and on-campus classes on EFL students to accomplish the following research objectives.

II. PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

The effect of online learning vs. on-campus learning on students' academic achievement has been the subject of much research. Online classes are conducted using a variety of teaching and learning systems. Online platforms are used to develop students' language skills in general and speaking skills in particular. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, Najran University has not undertaken any studies on the speaking performances of EFL students. This study aims to:

- ❖ get insights into the teachers' evaluation of the learners' academic performance before and during the coronavirus lockdown.
- ❖ determine whether there are significant differences in the learners' grades between the two modes of teaching in the speaking course and
- ❖ determine whether there are significant differences in absent, deprived, and withdrawn students between on-campus and online classes.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many researchers like Bourelle et al. (2016) today have the firm belief that there are no significant differences between online and on-campus teaching and learning. More importantly, compared to their on-campus counterparts, as claimed by some studies, online learners obtained better results (Zhang et al., 2004).

Recently, speaking competence in English has been given great prominence in many educational programs (Bygate, 2001). However, the teaching of speaking is problematic for many teachers due to the complexity of spoken communication and the lack of agreement about the types of approaches to be used in teaching speaking.

Teaching speaking skills efficiently requires using effective methods of teaching. Methods of teaching language skills in regular classes and online are similar in the sense that the same methods can be used to achieve the same goals in both modes of teaching. What makes methods of teaching successful is the way of delivering them, supporting the task, and maintaining engagement and participation. However, the most obvious difference between online and on-campus teaching is the absence of physical interaction between teachers and learners and among learners themselves in online classes. As online learning is closely related to learner-centered methods, teachers' responsibilities lie in monitoring and directing students to practice their speaking skills in real-life activities that enhance interaction. In addition, it enables them to acquire these two crucial skills effectively and facilitates learning. According to Richards (2008), frequently used teaching methods may include getting learners to participate in class, demonstrating their comprehension of language, recitation, memorization, or a mixture of these.

Several studies on the teaching of language skills indicate that the online education offered by the new technology has provided great opportunities for wide-ranging developments in the teaching of these language skills, particularly speaking (Dudeny et al., 2013; Mauranen, 2004; Mottram, 2013).

Yang and Chen (2014) stated that teaching language skills using web-based tools such as online forums, weblogs, and email increased the interaction between learners and their use of pragmatic skills and enhanced their linguistic competence and intercultural knowledge. Dudeny et al. (2013) used the term "digital literacies" to define the "individual and social skills needed to effectively interpret, manage, share, and create meaning in the growing range of digital communication channels" and offer a wide range of activities that teachers can use to implement technology into their teaching of language skills.

There is an increasing number of studies investigating the impact of using new technologies in facilitating the teaching of language skills, particularly speaking skills. This has led most educators to move from on-campus to online learning environments for the teaching of speaking skills.

According to Fakhruddin (2019), students' speaking abilities can be enhanced by using the Google Meet platform. The rise in speaking proficiency achievement serves as a good indicator of this development. Additionally, students' self-confidence rises as well.

According to a study by Harunasari et al. (2021), the availability of online material, effective time management, and an internet connection are necessary conditions for online learning to be effective.

Firmansyah and Minandar (2021) state that there are a lot of difficulties in implementing online learning, including objections from both instructors and students.

On the other hand, online learning has its pros and cons. The biggest advantage of online learning is its increased flexibility. Students can learn where they want and when they want, regardless of place and time constraints, which offers better chances for education in all circumstances, especially during times of crisis. Sagheb-Tehrani (2008) assessed the advantages and disadvantages of online learning in the higher education environment. He states that flexibility is the best advantage of online education. Cole and Spence (2012) stated that, regarding the speaking course, interaction among students is higher in online teaching compared to on-campus teaching. Arias et al. (2018) remarked that online education is also well suited for non-traditional students who need flexibility because of obligations related to their jobs or families that are not often shared by undergraduate students.

Compared to the limited classroom material, online learning offers plenty of resources on the internet. It provides a wider range of materials that are easily accessible. In addition, when it comes to teaching language skills like speaking, the focus will be greater on practicing speaking comprehension skills. It may prompt learners to be more attentive and alert to the speaking tasks, leading to much faster development than in on-campus classes. Rodrigues and Vethamani (2015), for instance, explored the effectiveness of an online learning approach that could affect the speaking proficiency of ESL learners. Researchers report that the use of online learning programs shows greater language proficiency and stronger self-confidence among ESL learners in developing speaking skills.

However, there are several disadvantages to online education as well. One of the biggest disadvantages is the lack of physical interaction between teachers and learners and among learners themselves. On-campus classes may have a great opportunity to offer better physical interactions. In addition, online education can increase the level of apprehension and stress among learners. Vijay (2020) compares on-campus and online education during the coronavirus lockdown from the learners' perspective. The findings state that the majority of students claim that online learning is stressful and that online classes have a decreased level of discipline.

Moreover, teachers and learners may experience several technical and internet connection problems, which may impede or delay the teaching and learning process. Coman et al. (2020) explored learners' perspectives on online education during the COVID-19 lockdown. The researchers state that technical issues are the most crucial problem

encountered, followed by teachers' lack of technical experience. The current study was guided through the following research questions.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Questions

- ❖ What are the insights from the teachers' evaluation of the learners' academic performance before and during the coronavirus lockdown?
- ❖ Are there significant differences in the learners' grades between the two modes of teaching in the speaking course?
- ❖ Are there significant differences in absent, deprived, and withdrawn students between on-campus and online classes?

B. Data for the Study

The data was gathered from the final grades of the 80 undergraduate students of both genders who studied language skill courses before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

C. Research Instrument

The final test scores of undergraduate students are utilized as the study's tool to assess their academic performance.

D. Participants

The researchers categorized the participants as 40 males: 20 students who took on-campus speaking courses in the academic year 2018-2019 before the coronavirus lockdown, and 20 of them who were enrolled in the online speaking course during the academic year 2020-2021 during the lockdown period. Similarly, other 40 samples were taken from females (20 students who were taught through the on-campus mode of teaching in the academic year 2018-2019 before the Covid-19 lockdown and other 20 samples who received the online mode of teaching in 2020-2021, during the coronavirus lockdown. This study used a qualitative approach to achieve its objectives.

E. Linguistic Background of Participants

These students were studying for a BA degree in the English Language. Their English proficiency can be described as intermediate. The students in both on-campus and online modes were taught the same contents by the same instructor and had the same learning objectives.

F. Limitation of the Study

Like other research studies, the present research also has some limitations. The investigation examined only one language skill—the "speaking skill"—at each of the three undergraduate levels. To limit the scope of the study, other skills like "listening, reading, and writing" were deliberately not included.

G. Demographic Analysis

The students' final grades in speaking courses in both on-campus and online teaching are compared to find out the academic performance of the students. The division of the participants according to the levels of their speaking courses is given below in a tabulated format.

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE STUDENTS FROM LEVEL I-III ON-CAMPUS MODE

Level	Course Type	Section No.	No. of students
Level I	On campus	4	04
Level II	On campus	17	07
Level III	On campus	28	09
Total			20

DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE STUDENTS FROM LEVEL I-III ONLINE MODE

Level	Course Type	Section No.	No. of students
Level I	Online	3	04
Level II	Online	9	11
Level III	Online	18	05
Total			20
Grand Total			40

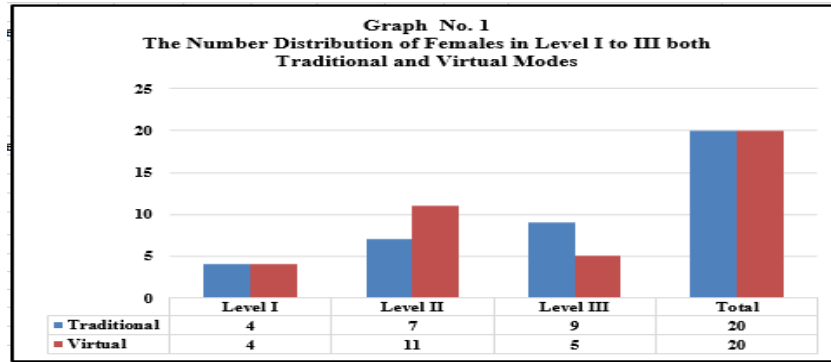
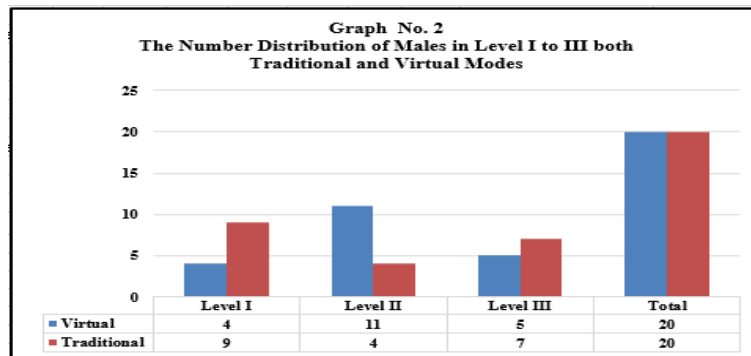


TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF MALE STUDENTS FROM LEVEL I-III ON-CAMPUS MODE

Level	Course Type	Section No.	No. of students
Level I	On campus	99	09
Level II	On campus	163	04
Level III	On campus	113	07
Total			20

DISTRIBUTION OF MALE STUDENTS FROM LEVEL I-III ONLINE MODE

Level	Course Type	Section No.	No. of students
Level I	Online	64	04
Level II	Online	91	11
Level III	Online	93	05
Total			20
Grand Total			40



According to the above tables and graphs No. 1 and 2, scores of 80 students (40 females and 40 males) were selected by the researchers for the analysis of the study. The evaluations were taken from different levels of speaking courses and ranged as follows: Level 1 (25.25%), Level 2 (41.25%), and Level 3 (32.5%).

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

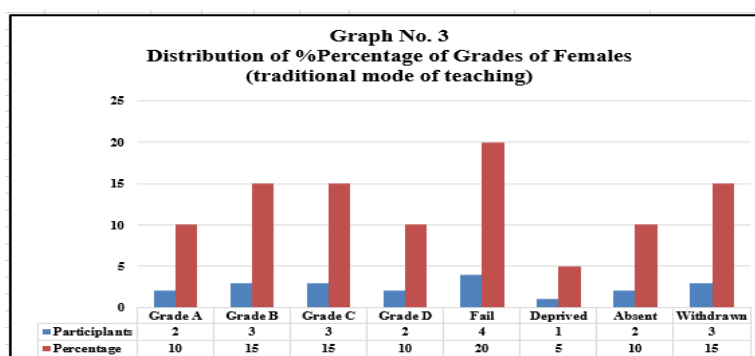
This research compared the academic performance of the students who took speaking courses at all three levels through on-campus teaching modes to the students who were enrolled in online teaching modes during the coronavirus lockdown. We recognized the differences and similarities between the two modes of teaching. The data were analysed, interpreted, and tabulated in tables, graphs, and charts to find out the accurate academic performance of both teaching modes. The data of the study were divided into four sections (Section A, B, C, and Section D) to analyze the academic performance of the students in both online and on-campus modes. The details of the sections are given below:

Section A: A consolidated grade of the female students, including deprived, absentees, and withdrawn, who took the on-campus mode of teaching in the academic session 2018-2019, before the coronavirus lockdown, is shown below.

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF THE GRADES OF FEMALES
(ON-CAMPUS MODE OF TEACHING)

Grades	N	Percentage
Grade A	02	10.00%
Grade B	03	15.00%
Grade C	03	15.00%
Grade D	02	10.00%
Fail	04	20.00%
Deprived	01	5.00%
Absent	02	10.00%
Withdrawn	03	15.00%
Total No. no of Samples	20	100.00%
Mean	2.42	12.14%
Standard Deviation	0.86	04.33

Table 3 displays the grades of the total number of female students who enrolled in on-campus speaking courses. Out of 20 students, 2 students secured grade A, 3 students grade B, 3 students grade C, and 2 of them obtained grade D, whereas 4 students failed, 1 of them was deprived, 2 students were absent, and 3 students withdrew from the course. The highest percentage was achieved by failed students with 20% of the overall results, whereas the smallest percentage was obtained by deprived students with 5%. The mean (average) was 2.42, and the standard deviation was 0.86.



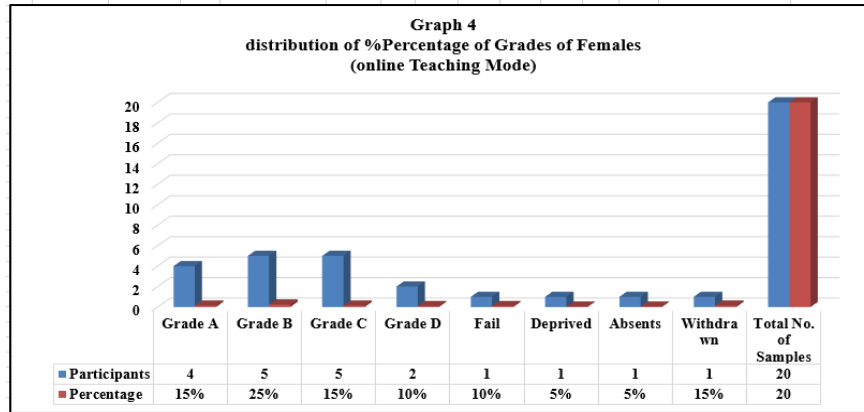
The above graph displays the percentage of female students' grades who took on-campus speaking courses. 10% of the students secured an A, 15% of them got a B, 15% obtained a C, and 10% got a D, while 20% of them failed; 5% of the students were deprived, 10% were absent, and 15% of the students withdrew from the course.

(Section B): A consolidated grade of the female students including deprived, absentees, and withdrawn who received online mode of teaching in the academic session 2020-2021 in the course of the coronavirus lockdown is given below:

TABLE 4
DISTRIBUTION OF THE GRADES OF FEMALES
(ONLINE MODE OF TEACHING)

Grades	N	Percentage%
Grade A	04	20%
Grade B	05	25%
Grade C	05	25%
Grade D	02	10%
Fail	01	5%
Deprived	01	5%
Absents	01	5%
Withdrawn	01	5%
Total No. of Samples	20	100%
Mean	2.5	13%
Standard Deviation	1.22	9%

Table 4 presents the results of section B, the grades of the total number of female students enrolled in online English-speaking courses. Out of 20 students 4 students, secured grade A, 5 students grade B, 5 students grade C, and 2 of them obtained a grade D, whereas 1 student each failed, deprived, absent, and withdrew from the course. The highest percentage was occupied by grades B and C with 25% of the overall results, while the smallest percentage was achieved by absentee, failed, deprived, and withdrawn students with 5% each. The mean (average) was 2.5, and the standard deviation was 1.73.



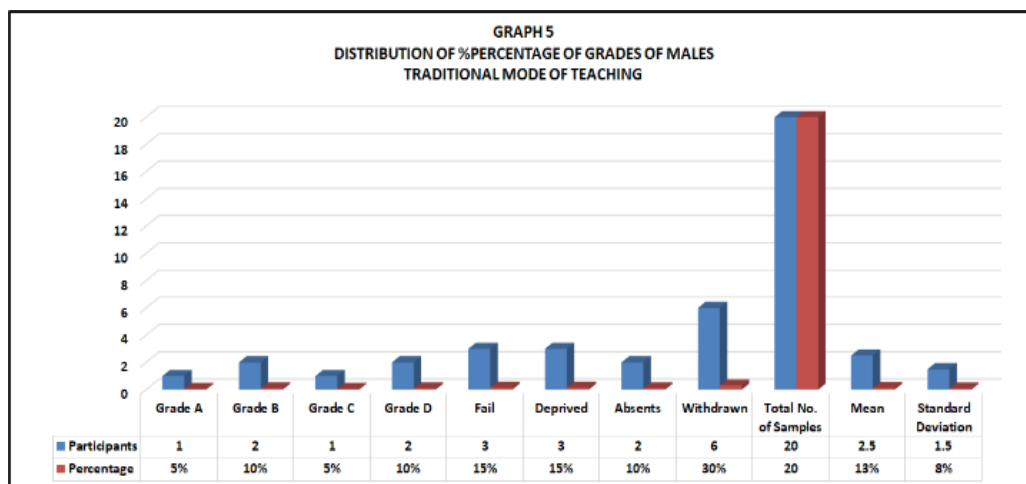
Graph 4 states the percentage of female students' grades who took online English-speaking courses. 15% of the students' secured grades A, 25% each obtained grades B and C, 10% got D grades while failed, deprived, absentee, and withdrew students got 5% each.

Section C: A consolidated grade of the male students, including deprived, absentees, and withdrawn, who were taught through the on-campus teaching mode in the academic session 2018-2019, before the coronavirus lockdown, is shown below:

TABLE 5
DISTRIBUTION OF THE GRADES OF MALES
(ON-CAMPUS MODE OF TEACHING)

Grades	N	Percentage%
Grade A	01	5%
Grade B	02	10%
Grade C	01	5%
Grade D	02	10%
Fail	03	15%
Deprived	03	15%
Absents	02	5%
Withdrawn	06	30%
Total No. of Samples	20	100%
Mean	2.5	13%
Standard Deviation	1.5	8%

Table 5 explores the grades of the total number of male students who took on-campus speaking courses. Out of 20 students, 1 student secured a grade A, 2 students a grade B, 1 student a grade C, and 2 of them obtained a grade D, whereas 3 of them failed, 3 students were deprived, 1 of them was absent, and 6 students withdrew from the course. The maximum percentage was achieved by withdrawn students with 30% of the overall results, while the smallest percentage was achieved by students in grade C with 5%. The mean (average) and standard deviation were 2.5 and 1.5, respectively.



Graph 5 shows the percentage of male students grades who were enrolled in the on-campus mode of speaking course. According to the findings, 5% of the students secured an A, 10% of them got a B, 5% obtained a C, and 10% got a D,

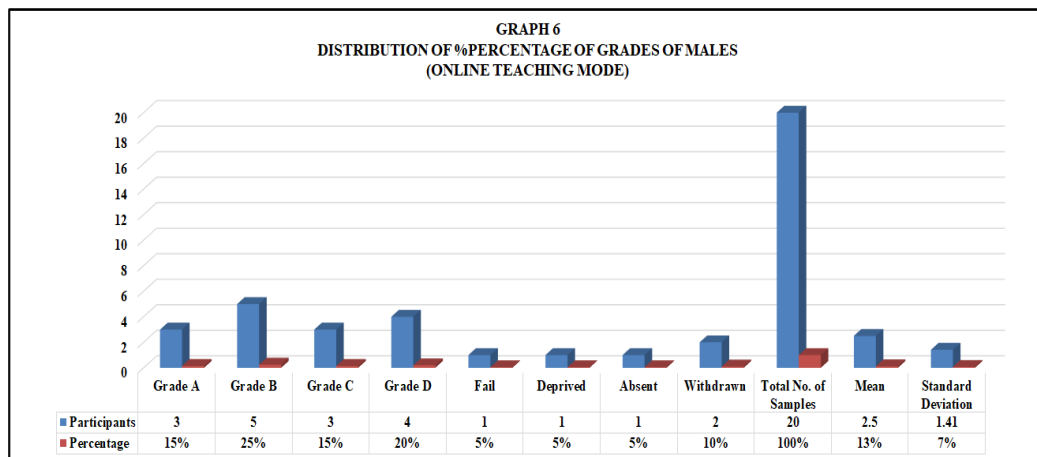
while 15% of them failed and 15% of the males were deprived 10% of them were absent from the examination; and 30% of the students withdrew from the course.

Section D: A consolidated grade of the male students, including deprived, absentees, and withdrawn, who were enrolled in online teaching mode in the academic session 2020-2021 in the course of the coronavirus lockdown is given below.

TABLE 6
DISTRIBUTION OF THE GRADES OF MALES
(ONLINE MODE OF TEACHING)

Grades	N	Parentage%
Grade A	03	15%
Grade B	05	25%
Grade C	03	15%
Grade D	04	20%
Fail	01	5%
Deprived	01	5%
Absent	01	5%
Withdrawn	02	10%
Total No. of Samples	20	100%
Mean	2.5	13%
Standard Deviation	0.70	7%

Section D of the analysis throws light on the grades of the total number of male students who received online speaking courses. Out of 20 students, 3 students secured grade A, 5 students grade B, 3 students grade C, and 4 of them obtained a grade D, whereas 1 of them failed, 1 was deprived, 1 of them was absent from the examination, and 2 students withdrew from the course. The highest percentage was achieved by the students who secured grades B with 25% of the overall results, while the lowest percentage was achieved by failed, deprived, and absent students with 5%. The mean (average) and standard deviation were 2.5 and 0.70, respectively.



Graph 6 states the percentage of male students' grades who took the online speaking course. 15% of the students secured an A, 25% of them got a B, 15% obtained C, and 20% got D grades, whereas 5% of them failed, 5% of the males were deprived, 5% of them were absent in the exams, and 10% withdrew from the course.

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

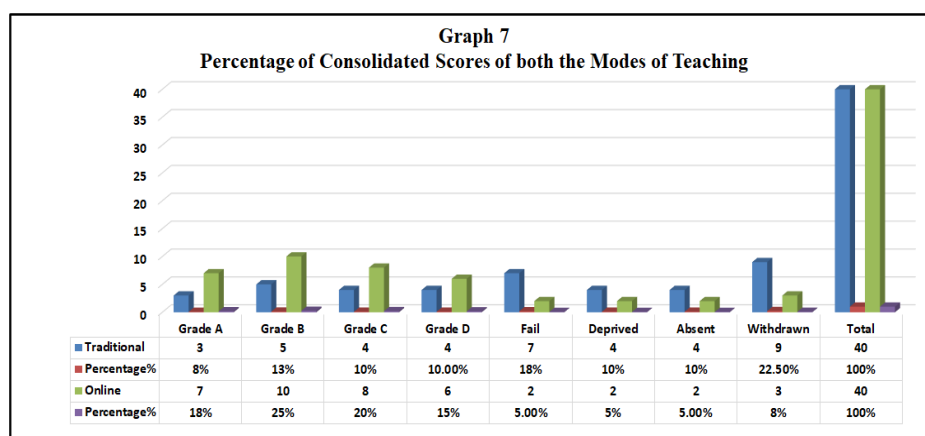
The present study aimed to investigate the impact of online vs. on-campus classes the academic performance of EFL learners' speaking skills. Next, the study made an effort to report on how Najran University students perceived the amalgamation of online classrooms into the learning process for a speaking course. 80 students from the English department are involved in this study to accomplish these goals. For the analysis of the consolidated results, researchers selected an equal number of students from both modes of teaching to compare the academic performance of the students. The variability in both modes of teaching was very small. In other words, grades in the on-campus mode of teaching did vary too much from grades in the online teaching mode. The findings of this study are aligned with those of McBrien et al. (2009), who obtained similar results. According to the findings of the study, the synchronous online system provided a variety of communication channels that boosted interaction and communication. However, the current research witnessed scores of both modes of teaching varied into A, B, C, D, and failed, deprived, absentees, and withdrawn students.

The study's findings also explained that the students who took online programs significantly outperformed those who took on-campus classes in speaking skills courses. These findings are partially aligned with Cakiroglu's (2014) study,

which evaluated students' perspectives on online classrooms. The findings of the study discovered that Saudi English students improved significantly in fluency and pronunciation in addition to developing other areas like information organization, grammar, and vocabulary in online classes. In other words, the online classes were more effective at teaching speaking skills than the on-campus classes. The results also showed that the participants had a favorable opinion of the use of online classes, particularly in terms of accessibility, an extension of the class period, a sense of connection with the teacher, and the development of target language abilities. The online classes also provided students with fun, enjoyment, satisfaction, and experience, which were essential sources for active participation. The study's findings also point to the possibility that online courses can help students develop their speaking skills. It has been found that the majority of the students performed better in the online teaching mode than the on-campus one. See the following table and graph:

TABLE 7
PERCENTAGE OF CONSOLIDATED SCORES OF BOTH THE MODES OF TEACHING

Mode/ Percentage	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Failed	Deprived	Absent	Withdrawn	Total
On-campus	03	05	04	04	07	04	04	09	40
Percentage	7.5%	12.5%	10%	10%	17.5%	10%	10%	22.5%	100%
Online	07	10	08	06	02	02	02	03	40
Percentage	17.5%	25%	20%	15%	5%	5%	5%	7.5%	100%



According to the above table, out of 40 students, 40% of the students who took on-campus classes secured passing grades, while 77.5% of the students who took online classes, obtained passing grades in all A, B, C, and D. As far as absentees and deprived students were concerned, there was not a big difference between them in both modes, but there was a variance between the students who failed and withdrew from the on-campus mode of teaching, i.e., 17% and 22.5%, respectively. The above percentage illustrates that the highest percentage of students withdrew, and a large number of students failed the final examinations in the on-campus mode of teaching in comparison to the online one.

The finding of this investigation shows that using new techniques while maintaining the good aspects of previous strategies positively affects students' academic performance. On-campus or on-campus methods had their strong points, like the stability, the security, and in particular roles of the instructors. Instructors most certainly and unquestionably play a crucial part in online teaching. They work with individual and group discussions, reply to students' questions, plan course tasks, and assess students' learning.

The evaluation reports of the students and the analysis of the data showed some reasons to clarify the significant differences in the academic performance of the students in on-campus classes. Some of the reasons are given below:

- ❖ Some students were not regular, and they were absent from many exams as they lived far away from the university campus.
- ❖ In some sections, such as Section 99, a very large number of students were deprived because they were irregular in their classes and their attendance did not reach the required percentage of the university, i.e., 75%, so students were deprived and could not appear in the examination.

Reasons for the good academic performance of the students in speaking in online classes are:

- ❖ Hundreds of students who belong to different parts of Saudi Arabia are sometimes unable to come to the campus to attend on-campus classes. But online lectures are easily accessible countrywide. Students can join classes from any part of the country.
- ❖ Some students feel hesitant while speaking in English; they can easily communicate online as they are better speaking online than in on-campus communication.
- ❖ Online courses are easier for students to take than on-campus courses.

Online teaching methods have their shortcomings too. For example, learning through online mode is limited to bookish knowledge, text assignments, and quizzes. It does not include live and real learning interaction. At the point when the power is out or when the network speed is low, it is hard to get to online courses. Web-based teaching

likewise needs a powerful internet connection all the time. Moreover, when the students attempt an internet-based test, the instructor cannot feel completely sure if the actual students are attempting the test. In any case, it does not imply that web-based teaching and learning do not have advantages. Although online teaching methods do not appear to be earnestly acknowledged by a few researchers, the benefits may bring significant innovation to the field of teaching globally.

The findings of the present study will help course designers and curriculum developers for both online and on-campus teaching programs to re-manage and re-design the methods and curriculum according to the needs of the hour.

Recommendation for future research:

This type of exhaustive research should be carried out in all educational institutions and universities worldwide. The results of these studies and data will help all educators and administrators of the institutions regulate the weak and strong points of their online and on-campus modes of education. They should review and restructure their online education system according to the needs of the learners. Universities and educational institutions can provide solutions to ease their glitches in both modes of teaching and achieve excellence in education, which can be beneficial for all students.

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