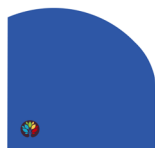


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updates

Research Article

Section: Education and Pandemic

Published in Crewe, England
by Steadfast OA

Volume 1, Issue 1, 2022

**Article Information**

Submitted: 15th May 2022

Accepted: 30th July 2022

Published: 9th August 2022

Additional information is
available at the end of the
article<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>To read the paper online,
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Tuffour, A. D., Gyampoh, F., Akossah, J., Dankwa, D., & Owusu-Ansah, J. B. (2022). Teachers' perception towards blended online teaching in speaking class during COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana. *Steadfast Social Sciences*, 1(1). Retrieved from <https://www.steadfastoa.com/index.php/sfss/article/view/12>

**Teachers' perception towards blended online teaching in speaking class during COVID-19 pandemic**

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¹ Department of Languages, Atebubu College of Education, Ghana² Department of Languages, Abetifi Presbyterian College of Education, Ghana³ Department of Languages, Kibi Presbyterian College of Education, Ghana⁴ Department of Languages, SDA College of Education, Ghana**Correspondence:** [adutuffourdavid@gmail.com](mailto:adutuffour david@gmail.com) <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2561-0617>**Abstract**

The sudden closure of all learning institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic has caused learners to experience problems in learning the Ghanaian Language, particularly speaking skills. Learning speaking skills is crucial because it is the main mode of communication worldwide. Most learning institutions across the world have adopted e-learning since the COVID-19 lockdown implementation. Teachers and students require more time to adapt to virtual learning since the majority of them are not familiar with the new technologies to be used in the classroom. Hence, this paper investigates teachers' and learners' perceptions concerning the application of online/blended learning methods in teaching and learning. The paper will also examine the challenges encountered by teachers and learners in online classrooms. The study used a structured questionnaire in Google forms covering teachers' and learners' perceptions of online/blended services in Ghanaian Colleges of Education. The empirical data was collected by distributing an online questionnaire to ten (10) Ghanaian Language teachers and fifty (50) students. Data analysis was done by the use of simple statistical tools like mean and percentages. The findings of the study revealed that both instructors and learners testified that blended learning was important during the pandemic period. However, it was not much effective as face-to-face teaching and learning. Some challenges identified were internet problems, exam cheating by learners, inadequate facilities, lack of motivation and interaction, security and data privacy.

Keywords: blended learning, COVID-19, computer literacy, instructional methods, e-learning

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Introduction

The abrupt outbreak of the COVID-19 disease has caused Trauma across the world. The disease has directly impacted human lives in different parts of the world (Aboagye, 2020). Daily activities such as travelling have been temporally abandoned so as to prevent the spread of the disease. The consequences of COVID-19 have led to many institutions coming up with new norms of operation. Many nations have implemented lockdown measures that have resulted in the closure of all learning institutions. For the sake of reducing the transmission of COVID-19, there has been a suspension of all face- to- face learning (Adedoyin, 2020). The situation has forced tutors and educators from different parts of the globe to switch to online learning. Most of the learning institutions have come up with the best measures to tackle the challenges that are associated with the current online learning modes. However, most teachers across the globe lack enough skills of using e-learning in teaching. The works of (Alhumaid, 2020) revealed that most students have a negative attitude towards blended learning, although they support the fact that e-learning is the best option of learning in the course of the pandemic. In this case, learning platforms such as zoom, skype, Microsoft Teams and social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp are mostly used during online learning. The adoption of e-learning techniques by most learning institutions has ensured the continuation of the learning process during the pandemic period when the schools are closed.

ESL learners have encountered various difficulties in learning and improving the English language because of the abrupt closure of learning institutions (Al-Jumaili, 2020). This has greatly affected language learning, more particularly speaking skills. In line with the works of Allam (2020), the decision to eliminate face-to-face learning and the closing of schools has led to the adaptation of the “new normal.” It has been a great challenge for most English learners who are trying to improve their speaking abilities during online learning. The works of Azam (2019) revealed that high anxiety levels as a result of fear of being evaluated, the teaching techniques of educators and the culture of learners are the factors that result in English learners being reluctant to use the target language. Similarly, the study by (Cakrawati 2020) indicated that the main problems hindering learners’ speaking abilities include low self-confidence, inadequate vocabulary, nervousness and lack of motivation. Hence, it is crucial to determine the possible solutions to counter learners’ speaking challenges and improve their speaking skills. There is an urgent need to explore the instructors and learners’ perception of the application of online/blended learning in the teaching and learning processes in the **Ghanaian Language** classroom, the challenges they encounter while using online/blended learning and the measures that can be put in place to reduce the challenges. This paper **looks** at the idea of online learning during the pandemic, challenges that are encountered by students in the process of learning speaking skills during the pandemic and some of the strategies that teachers use to give instructions during the pandemic, including social media platforms to ensure the continuation of learning in the COVID-19 period.

Literature Review

The E-Learning Concept during COVID-19 Pandemic

Online learning refers to the application of new technologies and the internet to improve the quality of learning by making learning materials more accessible to learners. In the current world, the terms “21st-century skills” are widely used. This means that teachers should adjust their instruction giving techniques to ensure their students are equipped with good skills that will make them competitive in the current world. Also, e-learning is the use of the internet to monitor, distribute and execute courses. It encompasses the application of technology to plan, guide, and distribute learning

materials and encourage two-way interaction of instructors and learners. Most learning institutions have adopted online learning platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google meet to facilitate the implementation of e-learning. According to (Chung, 2020), it is unavoidable for teachers to use technology in instruction giving during this time of the pandemic. The application of virtual learning in language classrooms before the outbreak of COVID-19 was mainly to make conventional learning to be effective. However, the application of technology in English classrooms has become compulsory during the pandemic because it helps curb the spread of the disease and ensure the continuity of learning during the pandemic period (Dizon, 2020). According to Famularsih (2020), e-learning occurs when teachers and students apply the internet and technology to teach and learn. That is, e-learning also encompasses web design and ICT integration optimization.

Challenges Encountered by GHL Students in the Learning of Speaking Skills during the Pandemic

According to (Ghavifekr, 2020), lack of confidence by students and communication through virtual classrooms has made it hard for the learners to speak or give correct pronunciation of words. Students find it difficult to express themselves because they fear making mistakes. Also, they lack enough vocabulary making it harder for them to speak perfectly in English. (Hernandez, 2021). Language content deprivation makes the students anxious as they can't speak. Even if the learners have something to say, they hesitate because of the fear of making grammatical mistakes and being laughed at by their colleagues (Jasrial, 2020). In comparison to face-to-face learning, online learning limits peer interaction. According to Kaur (2020), insufficient peer interaction hinders the effective practice of speaking skills. Even though teachers are making great efforts during online classes to ensure they capture the attention of all learners by engaging them in interesting activities which encourage them to speak in class, it is still difficult for them to achieve this purpose since not all learners are used to e-learning, and it's even more difficult for the instructors to receive a response from inactive learners (Kaur, 2020). According to Layali (2020), COVID-19 has placed learners in a situation where they can learn the languages on their own, which has caused them to struggle to understand and handle the challenges that result from learning the language by themselves.

According to (Lim, 2021), psychological factors affects learners' engagement in the English language learning process. A great problem of e-learning is inadequate contact with instructors (Manan, 2020). Students usually require a two-way form of interaction which is needed to achieve learning goals during the pandemic period. Learners are not motivated enough to learn in these hard situations because some are not competent in using the computer. They rarely get enough time for online learning because it needs a lot of time to do exploration of subject interpretation. According to (Mistar, 2020), e-learning is discouraging because it involves numerous processes such as recording, consuming online-based learning media and memorizing, especially for speaking assessment. This is a circumstance where learners are supposed to make a quick adaptation. There have been increased levels of stress for learners who find it difficult to adapt. This makes them submit assignments late due to poor internet coverage (Octaberlina, 2020). Also, with improper support from families, friends, learning institutions and instructors during the pandemic, learners find it hard to apply e-learning in their studies (Pazilah, 2020). Lack of a comfortable learning atmosphere at home is also a challenge that hinders the successful implementation of online learning. This is because most families force the students to participate in household chores during the pandemic, thereby negatively affecting their studies (Rashid, 2020).

Furthermore, physical challenges like eye pressure are common problems encountered by students and can make them feel uncomfortable during the learning process (Shahzad, 2020).

According to (Verawardina, 2019), learners' satisfaction and engagement are crucial factors in the online learning process, especially in English learning. Students will be more motivated to engage in online teaching when teachers give excellent reactions during the interaction process. This process will result in predicted learning results.

Application of social media to help GHL Learners to Cope with the Challenges during the pandemic

Self-learning strategies are one of the commonly used techniques of language learning, especially during the pandemic period. Learning language skills, especially communication skills during this era, is crucial for learners as it boosts their employment chances. Instructors need to develop effective strategies and be more innovative in using technology to give instructions in several disciplines. The teaching and learning resources should be enough in the classroom. Teachers and learners should use technology to make language learning possible in class. Creating a sustainable learning environment, developing learning communities, and applying appropriate technology to develop the right content are examples where online learning can give the best learning opportunities to learners. According to Wang (2020), learners are always motivated when participating in online learning activities. Institutions of higher learning are currently applying e-learning platforms in place of face-to-face teaching, especially in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Yilmaz (2017), it is evident that e-learning activities are crucial as it helps the learners practice language skills and get to know new vocabularies in the process of learning. Learners prefer to learn languages through online resources due to the abrupt increase of digital, android and smart devices. Currently, most students have dictionaries installed on their devices to help them get the meanings of new vocabularies. Also, some applications are useful as it helps the teachers to create assignments for their learners. Zakaria (2017) study suggests that electronic dictionaries are convenient and save learners time while looking for definitions of new vocabularies. Some studies have revealed that learners' confidence is enhanced by the application of these strategies, which allows them to learn vocabulary at their own pace.

According to (Rashid, 2020), learners get excited about learning English on social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp. Similarly, learners from different parts of the world can engage and discuss various topics on social media platforms (Mistar, 2015). The application of mobile-mediated communication enables students to learn a language standard form and its variations. According to the works of Hernandez (2017), it is evident that students prefer to use Facebook in learning activities because the communication features are user friendly. According to Chung (2017), Facebook helped students improve their speaking skills and also acquire new terms and terminologies. It was also evident that Facebook gives a surrounding that encourages learners and improves students' confidence, motivation and perception concerning the learning of **Ghanaian Language** speaking skills. In line with Kaur (2016), the attitude of students to learning a new language can be boosted through social media. Accordingly, Octaberlina (2015) study revealed that Facebook could enhance language instruction and extend communication beyond the classroom. Because Facebook is easier to use, it allows learners to communicate in any language while also reducing their anxiety about communicating in a second language.

Similarly, the application of WhatsApp in teaching and learning is common in many learning institutions across the globe. Many people are familiar with this application, and hence no need for prior education on how to use it (Allam, 2019). WhatsApp enables teachers and learners to interact more effectively in an education setting (Adedoyin, 2018). In the pandemic period, this application has made it possible for teachers to monitor their learner's progress of learning. WhatsApp is applied

in a one-on-one text exchange with students and discuss their requirements, particularly in Ghanaian Language teaching. According to the study done by Layali (2020) on undergraduate students English learning process, it was evident that the WhatsApp application was crucial as it facilitated learning and fostered problem-solving and assisted learners in collaborating and making improvements to their communication skills. A study in Indonesia by Manan (2017) revealed that the application of WhatsApp could support and enhance the conversational abilities of learners in a university context. Learners use the software effectively because it doesn't have obstacles and minimizes communication problems. Also, it was evident that WhatsApp enhances learners' vocabulary. The works of (Yilmaz, 2020) revealed that WhatsApp is used to exchange conversations, alert the deadlines of submissions and give lecture notifications. Because WhatsApp is a widely used social media that allows the operators to send and receive texts, videos and voice calls, it improves learners' speaking skills indirectly (Mistar, 2019). Students can also engage their instructors via WhatsApp during office hours regardless of the physical distance limits and hence receive immediate feedback from the lecturer. Efficiency in communication is crucial in online learning (Alhumaid, 2020). The application of the WhatsApp platform in facilitating the process of learning improves learning experiences, especially for English learners (Jasrial, 2018).

According to (Rashid, 2021), online learning is crucial in helping learners enhance their speaking and listening skills. Because the application of technology in learning is becoming the new norm, there is a lack of adequate technological resources for teachers to use in classrooms, particularly in teaching speaking skills. The study by Octaberlina (2015) suggested that online learning is the best technique for teaching and learning speaking skills because it is reliable when we have distance constraints. It is also an appropriate way of teaching because instructors obtain knowledge from various sources. E-learning is usually regarded as the best and fun way of delivering and teaching speaking skills because it boosts learners confidence (Yilmaz, 2018). Also, most students prefer independent learning because they can obtain information away from the classroom at their own comfort.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive quantitative research design. Due to this Pandemic, the data were obtained by distributing an online questionnaire to Ghanaian Language teachers in Colleges of Education through Google form.

Participants

The study population incorporated teachers and learners of the Colleges of Education. A sample of ten (10) teachers and fifty (50) students were selected from the population to fill the questionnaires, which is considered appropriate to give important information on perceptions of instructors and students concerning blended learning. The research used two online surveys that were distributed to participants by use of social media platforms. The online surveys were created Google Forms which were sent to the participants via Facebook, emails, and WhatsApp so as to observe social distancing.

Research Instrument

The online surveys were generated by Google Docs. The teacher's survey was made of three sections that included sociodemographic data, teachers' perceptions of online teaching effectiveness and online training education. The learner's survey involved their perception of the efficiency of online learning and the challenges and advantages of online learning. The survey was developed based on a Likert Scale format for statements rating. Participation in the study was voluntary, and there was no

collection of personal information. Data were then transferred to Excel to enable analysis presented into tables and percentages.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researchers commonly use an online survey in this COVID-19 pandemic situation. Thus, in this study, the authors employed an online survey to collect the data from the respondents. They were asked to fill out the questionnaire through Google form prepared by the authors. They needed to complete **ten** (10) items provided in the questionnaire. It took time for about 10-15 minutes. Finally, their responses were analysed and presented in frequencies, percentages, and mean to represent the frequency of the data.

Results and Discussion

The results **were** arranged according to the surveys sections.

Teacher's Survey

Online Teaching Experience

The study looked at the readiness of teachers to give online instructions. The findings revealed a significant proportion of the teachers had previous knowledge of online teaching before the outbreak of COVID-19 with a percentage of 60%. However, 40% of the teachers didn't have any previous online teaching experience.

The teachers also indicated that they used Microsoft Teams and Zoom to deliver online classes with a percentage of 40% and 20%, respectively. It was also evident that most teachers used WhatsApp as a communication medium with their learners. Moreover, some participants indicated that they used phone calls, as indicated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Online platforms and teaching experiences.

Questions	Classification	Frequency	(%)
Do you have any experience of online teaching before the outbreak of COVID-19?	Agree	6	60
	Disagree	4	40
Do you have any training in online teaching	Yes	3	30
	No	7	70
Which of the following online teaching platforms have you used?	Zoom	2	20
	Microsoft Teams	4	40
	WhatsApp	3	30
Which means do you use to communicate with your learners outside the classroom?	Chat and call options provided by online platforms	1	10

Teacher's Attitudes concerning Computer Literacy and Online Class Preparations

The second part of the survey sought to investigate computer literacy and preparation of online classes to show the teachers' IT and computer skills, as indicated in Table 2 below. Slightly more of the respondents reported that they have adequate skills to conduct online classes. Also, the teachers indicated that online classes were complicated and required more time as compared to face-to-face learning.

Table 2: Attitude of IT skills and online class preparations

No	Statement	S.A	A	D	S.D	Mean	S t d . Deviation
1	I have the IT competency to conduct online classes.	30%	50%	20%	-	4.5714	0.61237
2	Carrying out online classes needs more effort as compared to face-to-face learning.	40%	55%	5%	-	4.6327	0.63554
3	Teachers need to open their cameras to have maximum live interaction with learners.	20%	45%	30%	5%	4.5102	0.58175
4	Online platforms have tools to enhance online classes.	35%	50%	15%	-	3.24	1.392
5	Traditional learning techniques are more efficient as compared to e-learning.	55%	40%	5%	-	3.3469	1.3624

Teachers' Attitude Toward Online Education Effectiveness

The surveys' third section was to look at the attitude of teachers to the effectiveness of online teaching. The responses of the teachers towards the efficiency of online education had a neutral response. Some suggested that it was effective, while others claimed it was ineffective. The responses are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Teachers' Perception of the effectiveness of online teaching.

No	Statement	S.A	A	D	S.D	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Theoretical and practical classes could be taught in virtual classes.	25%	30%	35%	10%	3.1224	1.37890
2	There is low performance because of the lack of interactions between teachers and students.	35%	20%	40%	5%	3.7959	1.18988
3	Students have adequate resources to ask questions clearly in virtual classes.	18%	38%	29%	15%	3.7551	0.90210
4	virtual classes help instructors to attain the syllabus learning outcome.	24%	41%	33%	2%	3.7959	0.84112
5	Students with virtual learning courses outperform face-to-face learners.	19%	38%	35%	8%	2.9388	1.10695
6	Online classes have encouraged cheating from students (Copying from the internet)	30%	42%	23%	5%	3.8367	1.02768
7	Learners' engagement in virtual courses reflects their performance and knowledge.	13%	37%	41%	9%	3.6122	0.99617
8	You aggravate your learners to work on their assignments, and you respond to their tasks.	26%	31%	37%	6%	4.0612	0.77482

9	You are capable of assessing your students fairly and understanding their individual difference.	23%	41%	33%	3%	3.9184	0.88593
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Teachers' suggestions to increase the quality of teaching and learning of Speaking skills during COVID-19 Pandemic

The study also looked at the instructors' suggestions to improve the quality of teaching and learning speaking skills during the COVID-19 pandemic. More of the respondents agreed that watching a video, using course books, discussion boards, and many other strategies were crucial in improving teaching and learning speaking skills during the pandemic, as indicated in the table below.

Table 4: Teachers' suggestions to increase the quality of teaching and learning Speaking skills during COVID-19 Pandemic

No	Statement	S.A	A	D	S.D	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Watching a video story	40%	50%	10%	-	3.3562	0.5627
2	Discussion boards/forums	35%	60%	5%	-	3.2150	0.1892
3	course books	37%	59%	4%	-	3.1975	0.1786
4	Reviewing vocabulary and grammar in a digital workbook	61%	39%	-	-	3.9876	0.1675
5	software to self-practice/recording	45%	50%	5%	-	3.7065	0.1576
6	course books	63%	34%	3%	-	3.5656	0.7897

Students' Survey

The Effectiveness of Virtual Teaching and Learning During the Pandemic

The first portion looked at the student's views regarding the effectiveness of virtual learning during the pandemic, as indicated in Table 4. It was evident that the learners regarded online learning as an appropriate solution for learning during the pandemic. Most of the respondents indicated that they used Microsoft Teams in their virtual Classes. This goes hand in hand with the study of Hernandez (2020), who discovered that the use of Microsoft Teams has significantly increased during the pandemic. The participants, however, revealed that they had inadequate training and lacked technological skills to conduct online learning.

The learners also indicated that online platforms are not that easy to use. This indicates that the learners had not received enough training to attend virtual classes. Online classes gave more flexibility of attending the classes. Most of the learners reported that they were unsatisfied with the interaction of students and teachers in the course of online teaching and learning.

The learners also indicated that they were not highly motivated to attend online classes. This is because most of their homes were not suitable to enable and give enough time to attend online classes. This indicates that the students encountered external distractions from their family members in the course of online lectures.

The data disagrees with the effectiveness of online learning with a mean of 2.548 and a standard deviation of 0.647. Most of the challenges reported included insufficient facilities and equipment, inadequate computer knowledge, and the difficulties of using online platforms.

Table 5: Online teaching & learning perception during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Question	Mean	Std	Response
You have adequate resources to attend online classes	2.0929	0.92668	disagree
You have adequate computer skills to conduct virtual classes.	2.9321	0.93845	disagree
Teachers give guidelines before engaging in online classes.	3.6821	1.00306	disagree
It is easy to use online tools.	2.8929	0.99242	disagree
I gained learning experience in the new virtual learning environment.	3.6893	1.07091	Agree
It is flexible to participate in online learning.	2.5429	1.157	disagree
I have high motivation in participating in online learning.	3.3630	1.40120	Neither
I am satisfied with the interaction of learners and instructors in virtual classes.	3.475	1.13249	Agree
You have enough resources of asking questions in virtual learning.	2.7321	1.02463	disagree
I can effectively participate in online learning while at home.	3.3857	1.3311	Neither
There is the possibility of family members distractions while attending online lectures.	2.7179	1.1527	Agree

The Challenges of Online Teaching and Learning During the Pandemic

The learners indicated that they encountered several challenges in the process of online teaching and learning. Some of the challenges included taking too much time to adapt to online learning, lack of adequate IT skills and lack of access to the internet. The learners also indicated that they faced difficulties in time management as they always submitted their tasks late. Some of the students also revealed that lack of interaction was also a challenge for them.

Additionally, the learners indicated that the virtual classes had inadequate tools for the assessment of students. The virtual classes also didn't allow lecturers to identify individual differences among the learners quickly. Finally, the students' security issue was a concern as most of them indicated that using their laptops at home exposed their data breaches.

Table 6: Virtual teaching and learning challenges during the pandemic.

Question	Mean	Std	Response
Struggle of adaptation	3.7683	0.92457	Agree
Internet and other technical issues	3.5778	0.67699	Agree
Time management issues and work organization	3.3670	1.22020	Agree
Inadequate interaction with peers and instructors	3.7966	0.41899	Agree
Lack of adequate tools for assessing learners	3.8662	1.53110	Agree
Security and data privacy	3.7170	0.35789	Agree

The Advantages of e-learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The learners reported that virtual learning enabled them to access learning materials conveniently. Also, virtual learning motivated the students to participate in learning since it majorly focuses on a student-centred learning approach. Online learning also helped the students to gain new skills and experience. The students also revealed that virtual learning reduced the travelling costs of going to universities and other related expenses, as indicated in Table 6.

Table 7: Online teaching and learning advantages during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Question	Mean	Std	Response
You can get access to various learning materials	3.8677	1.4706	Agree
Convenience and comfort while learning	3.7170	1.90513	Agree
Self-cantered learning technique	3.9378	0.0197	Agree
New efficient tools for learning	3.7165	1.79101	Agree
Online learning enhances grasping of new skills and knowledge	3.3670	1.83807	Agree
It is flexible in terms of time and communicating	3.5763	1.4113	Agree
Lower costs	3.3041	1.95631	Neither

Learners' suggestions to increase the quality of teaching and learning of Speaking skills during COVID-19 Pandemic

The students were also provided with suggestions to improve speaking skills' learning quality during the pandemic. It was evident that most of the learners agreed that the use of materials, recording and reviewing grammar and vocabulary in a digital workbook, among other factors, were very helpful in improving teaching and learning speaking skills during the pandemic, as indicated in the table below.

Table 8: Learners' suggestions to increase the quality of teaching and learning Speaking skill during COVID-19 Pandemic

No	Statement	S.A	A	D	S.D	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Materials	65%	35%	-	-	4.3563	0.5097
2	videos	57%	41%	2%	-	4.5033	0.1675
3	course books	33%	54%	10%	3%	3.8091	0.6576
4	Reviewing vocabulary and grammar in a digital workbook	71%	28%	1%	-	4.1976	0.1896
5	Discussion boards	38%	56%	6%	-	3.3565	0.1887
6	recording	69%	29%	2%	-	4.1121	0.9564

Discussion

Training programs should always involve teachers and learners. Training is crucial for the teachers to equip them with the necessary skills. The research found that the surveyed faculty used Zoom and Microsoft Teams more than others in online teaching. The findings revealed that some teachers had undergone training to conduct online learning while others had not. These findings go hand in hand with the works of (Hernandez, 2020).

Some teachers also indicated that they had computer skills before the outbreak of the pandemic. These skills helped them to give online instructions. This finding is supported by Adedoyin (2016) works which revealed that IT skills are crucial in online teaching. However, it was evident that most teachers preferred face to face learning to online learning. According to (Famularsih, 2020), face-to-face classes are more lively and enable instructors to discuss with their learners. It was also evident that most of the teachers decided to keep their online classes short. Long online classes make learners bored and distracted. The teachers also indicated that online classes required more preparation time than traditional classes.

Based on the student's survey, it was evident that online learning was a productive source

of knowledge. A large proportion of the learners reported that virtual learning enabled them to have wide access to learning materials. This finding is supported by the works of (Adedoyin, 2020) that revealed that online learning enables students to have access to learning materials across the globe. Also, it encouraged the students to participate in learning because it focuses on self-learning techniques.

However, the findings revealed that the learners encountered difficulties in the process of virtual learning. Some of the challenges reported were the struggle of adapting to online learning, lack of interaction with instructors, and lack of time management skills. Students also highlighted that poor internet connectivity affected their virtual learning. This finding is supported by the works of (Jasrial, 2020) who found that most of the learners have inadequate IT skills. This problem can be solved by improving internet speed. Hence, the government should give learners internet packages at a lower cost. The issue of data privacy was also a concern by the learners. The Colleges of Education should give more education to the students concerning data privacy. They should also give their learners free firewall programs to secure their data, as indicated by Allam (2020) study.

Conclusion

The research investigated the teachers and learners' perceptions of virtual learning. The findings revealed that face-to-face learning was more effective as compared to virtual learning. Students conducting online learning encountered several challenges due to adaptation struggle to virtual courses and inadequate interaction of teachers and learners. It is important to consider the difficulties encountered by **GHL** learners during the process of learning, particularly in the learning of speaking skills during the pandemic. Lack of motivation, low self-confidence, and inadequate vocabularies are issues that hinder learners from practising speaking skills. Hence, it is crucial to develop the strategies that will be appropriate for instructors to teach speaking skills during the pandemic. Virtual learning encourages self-learning practices by students. The higher learning institutions across the countries should train their learners on how to protect their data.

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