Teaching in Pandemic Situations: Issues, Challenges, and probable Solutions

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Article Info	Abstract
	The contemporary era and the current pandemic situation of Covid-19 obliged the use of advanced and digital technologies to assist teaching and learning, making online education effective, convenient, and an alternative to conventional classroom practices. There has been a radical change in teaching-learning due to complete digitization. The unmatched levels of digitization in education have led to various pedagogical and logistical reforms and changes; as a result, evaluation has been affected. The online evaluation is unable to assess progress in the language learning of the student. This research paper aims to examine the issue of online evaluation of the knowledge of students. The empirical method has been used to analyze the online evaluation of the four language learning competencies, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It has been observed that in online classes, the class's strength should be restricted to make the teaching and learning more effective and didactic.

Introduction

"*Bad times have a scientific value. These are occasions a good learner would not miss*." Ralph Emerson

The outbreak of the pandemic Covid -19 has brought about tremendous change in the health care and education system all over the world. Education has been an ever-growing sector in India. The country occupies third position in the world in the field of higher education. The pandemic has heavily impacted the education sector and made it imperative to switch from conventional classroom practices. Online teaching and online classes became integral component of the Indian education system, thus facilitating teaching and learning of the language. The teaching and learning became easily accessible in the pandemic times. In the words of Hampel and Stickler, "*The online context of language learning has prompted the need for new teaching approaches and teaching skills that are different from those used in teaching face- to- face language courses*". Shifting from the traditional classroom teaching practices to online teaching was challenging in itself, not only for the teachers but for the students as well. Various pedagogical practices and the logistical reforms were adopted by the University teachers to teach French as a foreign language through online mode to the undergraduate students. These pedagogical practices include creating content using online resources, selecting suitable online tools and medium for teaching, adopting diverse teaching techniques (interactive assignments, notes, video lectures), developing varied form of assessments, planning the evaluation framework and providing consistent feedbacks. Barber et al. remark, "*The ubiquity of information technology and communication has significantly reshaped the learning in higher education. New teaching pedagogies, learning skills, and assessment methods have emerged to adapt to these changes*". The assessment of student's performance through online medium has not been a frequent practice in the classrooms but in the wake of pandemic, along with online teaching and learning, assessments are also being conducted online. A. Yulia et al. on online assessments have rightly said "*Despite the evident potential of online learning, there is still very less evidence on students' performance, especially on the learning outcomes assessed through assessments*." This paper focuses on the issue of online evaluation of the knowledge of the students.

Literature Review

Evaluation plays a very important role in the teaching-learning process. It helps to assess the learner's progress and is useful for both, the learner and the teacher to improve learning and teaching. Weleshcuk, Dyjur & Kelly consider*" Online assessments to be any means of evaluating student achievement, providing feedback, or moving the students forward in their learning process in fully online courses."* Pre-test and post-test are significant tools of assessment, useful in effective and direct evaluation of a course.

Methodology:

This empirical study was conducted among the undergraduate students of B.A L.L.B curriculum. French as a foreign language is taught as a compulsory subject to these students. The objective of this study was to study the

impact of online platform for assessment of students' performance compared to their assessment offline in the course of online learning.

Participants and Material

97 students participated in the online assessment after the conduction of the online classes. Three formative assessments as pre-tests T1, T2 and T3 were taken online while one summative assessment was taken in the form of offline exams..The students were taught on Google Meet and were provided online study material through various educational websites and video lectures for developing oral and listening skills. To enhance the grammar and vocabulary, the teacher prepared exercises and worksheets. Reading comprehension passages were shared through WhatsApp as the students did not have the prescribed textbooks. The assessments were administered online to the students and feedbacks were given. The teacher prepares the questionnaire for all the assessments and they were posted through Google forms. The students were instructed to completed in the given time. The questionnaires comprised of four sections based on the four competencies listening, speaking, reading and writing. A final post- test was taken offline.

Analysis

 This study employed a paired t-test. First the normality of the data was analyzed using Shapiro Wilk test in order to accomplish the assumptions required for further statistical tests and draw inference. Paired sample T-test, using T distribution (df=96) (left-tailed) (validation)

1. H_0 hypothesis

Since p-value < α, H_0 is rejected.
The average of **After minus Before's** population is considered to be **less than** the μ0.

2. P-value

The p-value equals **2.168e-30**, (p(x≤T) = 2.168e-30). It means that the chance of type I error (rejecting a correct H_0) is small: 2.168e-30 (2.2e-28%).
The smaller the p-value the more it supports H_1.

3. The statistics

The test statistic T equals **-16.6662**, which is not in the 95% region of acceptance: [-1.6609 : ∞].
x=-4.15, is not in the 95% region of acceptance: [-0.414 : ∞].
The standard deviation of the difference, S' equals 0.249, is used to calculate the statistic.

4. Effect size

The observed effect size d is **large**, **1.69**. This indicates that the magnitude of the difference between the average and μ0 is large.

Discussion and Conclusion

Undoubtedly the education process has enhanced due to the diverse features of online learning. The students have a wide array of available resources from online repositories and libraries at their fingertips. The students take advantage of the online available material. As a result, an academic misconduct like cheating and plagiarizing is observed on the part of students. In the words of Fask et al., *"Without in- person proctoring, instructors feel that they do not have the same ability to monitor students to ensure academic integrity".* A large class is another matter of concern in online learning. A personal interaction with each student is not possible in a large class. Each student has a different pace of learning and to recognize their learning outcomes through online assessments is not viable.

The objective of this paper was to study the effect of online platform for assessment of students' performance compared to their offline assessment in the course of online learning. A downfall in the grades of students indicates that online assessment is not an effective tool to gauge student's knowledge.

Limitation of the Study

 This study is restricted to the undergraduate students of University Five Year Law College, Jaipur. Therefore, beyond the sample group, results cannot be generalized.

References

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