

# A Study Of Google Classroom As An Effective LMS To Improve The LSRW Skills Of ESL Learners

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**Abstract :** The study focuses on how the four language skills namely Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) can be enhanced using a Learning Management System (LMS) like Google Classroom. The study also intends to analyse the outcome and impact of using Google Classroom among English as Second Language (ESL) learners via graded assessments and activities. The study identifies the advantages and disadvantages of using Google Classroom in an ESL classroom. Based on the feedback received from the students in a language classroom, the study identifies that Google Classroom encourages an advantageous, interactive, and learner-centred environment and turns out to be an effective alternative for the traditional teacher-centred chalk and talk classrooms. The general observation from the sample population is that using Google Classroom a teacher can keep track of the gradual progress of students through assignments and questionnaires. The learners, on the other hand, find in Google Classroom an effective medium to profuse their creativity and a promising platform to undergo advanced language learning activities in future.

**Index Terms :** Google Classroom, LMS, ESL, LSRW Skills

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The evolution of ICT has a tremendous impact in the field of education. The outreach of ICT, its extended platform with a wide range of tools and perhaps its integration with everyday life has become quite inevitable. Consequently, with ICT tools, classrooms have turned even more learner specific than as it was earlier. Unlike the monotonous chalk and talk set up of traditional classrooms, the learner with any ICT tool emerges as an active participant rather than a passive listener in the entire teaching-learning process. If ICT takes lead in the techno-dominant era, the field of education walks abreast with English, a global language. English, most recently is seen more than a medium of communication. It has taken the crucial role of showcasing a person's cognizance to the world, and its role, especially in the job market, has become very crucial. India being a nation of students is highly dependent in one way or the other the proficiency of English language skills because of which almost all the higher educational institutions prioritize English as a medium of instruction. Since the target language English is the second language for most Indian students, the latter find it difficult to learn. Likewise, the rural students who do not have enough exposure in terms of educational resources find it difficult to place themselves in an entirely English speaking environment. As much as ICT has become a part and parcel in the field of education, learning English, on the other hand, has become equally imperative in the present educational scenario.

## 2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The process of language learning begins at once when a person listens to the sound of a word (listening) and tries to

imitate or mimic it (speaking). This process gradually progresses when the person can relate the first two stages in the form of symbols or letters (reading) and verbally documenting it on a paper (writing). H. G. Widdowson [3] regards the aforementioned course of action in terms of four basic skills. Mastering these four basic skills that is, listening, speaking, reading and writing in English is very crucial in an ESL classroom and these four skills determine the communicative competence of a student. Thus learning a second language like English thus goes hand in hand with learning the four LSRW skills. Keeping in mind the aforementioned rationale, the present study analyses the two broad aspects. Firstly, the study pinpoints the importance of ICT as an effective medium in educational technology with a special emphasis on the Learning Management System (LMS). Secondly, the study focuses on how the four language skills namely Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) can be enhanced using an LMS like Google Classroom. Hence the study aims to identify the effectiveness of Google Classroom as an alternative of traditional classrooms to enhance the LSRW skills of English as Second Language (ESL) learners.

## 3 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The statement of problem is that every learner is different from one another, and to cope up with the different learning levels of students it is important to give them an effective strategy to learn a target language. Also, keeping in mind the attention span of a learner it is nearly impossible for a teacher to teach all the four skills at once especially within restricted time and with resources like blackboard as in traditional classrooms. So the present study hypothesizes Google Classroom as an effective LMS to help learners learn LSRW skills.

## 4 LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the recent review of literature it is observed that numerous studies have been conducted concerning the implementation of Google Classroom. While most studies affirm the effectiveness of using Google Classroom, only a limited number of studies have been conducted in using the

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same in an ESL classroom, and no exhaustive study has been carried out specifically that focuses the on enhancement of the LSRW skills on an Indian context. For example, Shaharane et. al's [5] study has been conducted for the Data Mining subject using Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The study shows significant results in terms of students' performance, interaction, ease of access and satisfaction. Likewise, the study of Al-Marouf and Al-Emran [9] focuses on the perspectives of the Gulf region's university students and highlights their level of acceptance of Google Classroom as an effective platform. Like Shaharane et. al the study also uses the TAM. Azhar and Iqbal's [6] Karachi based research work takes into consideration the teacher's perceptions and the use of Google Classroom as a facilitating tool. Heggart and Yoo's [7] study traces the implementation of Google Classroom at tertiary level to test the efficiency of using the platform to teach the final year primary teacher education students. The most recent study of Hussaini et. al [4] focuses on how students can effectively improve and gain skills using Google Classroom. In addition to the generalized appraisal of Google Classroom under various contexts, the present study takes a closer look at the researches that throws light on using the platform in EFL classrooms. Islam's [8] study, for instance, emphasizes the difficulties, problems and challenges ESL learners face in learning the LSRW skills through Google Classroom and the study of Philipose and Rajagopal [1] addresses largely the experiences of teachers in teaching formal, and face-to-face communication in English for the undergraduate students. While the former focuses on the perceptions of the students of Daffodil University in Bangladesh, the later stresses on the perceptions of teachers who taught the students of a public university in India. Likewise, the study of Apriyanti et al. [2] specifically focuses on the effectiveness of teaching and learning writing skill and the other three skills are not dealt with in the study. The research gap identified through the review of literature is that the perception of students in the Indian context is sparse hence limited. So the present study intends to fill the knowledge gap by discussing the effectiveness of using Google Classroom to enhance the LSRW skills of ESL learners in a private university in India and proposes to study the research questions given below-

- i. What is the outcome and impact of Google Classroom among the ESL learners in learning the LSRW skills?
- ii. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using Google Classroom?
- iii. What is the response of the students if Google Classroom is made the learners' future language learning platform?

## 5 METHODOLOGY

The study employs a descriptive method and the results are based on qualitative analysis. The qualitative design is tested through a Likert-scale survey. The population selected for the chosen study is the undergraduate first and second-year Commerce and Commerce with Computer Application students of Karpagam Academy of Higher Education, India. A total of 54 students out of 108 students who are in their even semester that take English as Part II language course participated in the survey and the 50% of

the respondents are taken for the study as a representative group. While the institution in which the study is based on uses Moodle, only in the even semester and as a repercussion of COVID-19 crisis Google Classroom has been officially introduced as a learning platform for the students. The results and findings of the study are investigational and based on qualitative data. Hence, the preliminary hypotheses are not framed before the time frame of the actual study.

## 6 RESULTS

Based on the research questions, the learners were given individual tasks and activities through Google Classroom through which the results of the proposed study has been analysed. The students were given activities framed by the researcher and the assignments of students were analysed based on grades. To begin with, listening, the students were given links of creative commons audio podcasts and they were asked to answer the questions that were based on the podcast. The listening activity also involved filling the missing blanks in the transcript of the audio and a few more questions in multiple choices were also given to the students. The test was taken by students using smartphones and laptops, and they were able to listen to the audio using a microphone and answer the question simultaneously. As such students were introduced to the pronunciation of a native speaker, while simultaneously instructed through Google Classroom. After the test, the students posted the screenshots of their answers and auto-updated scores as assignments. In order to enhance the speaking skills of the students, the researcher posted a question on Google Classroom in which the students were asked to prepare their self-introduction and record it as a video assignment. The lecture on preparing self-introduction was conducted through Gmeet and template was explained to the students in advance. The assessment was carried out online using Gmeet for immediate feedback and suggestions. Likewise, reading comprehension passages have been posted on the Google Classroom with questions set by the researcher to analyse the reading competencies of students. The students were given questions ranging from multiple-choice questions to fill in the blanks. The students were asked to read a passage and find the synonyms for an underlined word in the sentence that was taken from the same passage. Similarly, they were given multiple choices to choose from four options. Likewise, the students were also given a reading activity to transcode a table first in a short passage and then to choose relevant options for questions based on the table. For the writing task, a webinar was conducted by the researcher using Gmeet. The session focused on the various components of report writing. At the end of the session two online activities, in choosing the best answer and true or false pattern was given to the students. The students were then asked to write the answers and a detailed report on the webinar. The students posted the same as an assignment in Google Classroom.

## 7 DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

A survey has been carried out among the students to identify the effectiveness of Google Classroom an ESL

classroom. A questionnaire that contained both open-ended and closed-ended questions was distributed to the students to check the effectiveness of learning LSRW skills using Google Classroom. Around 52 students from the first year Commerce and the second year Commerce with Computer Application took part in the survey. About ninety per cent of the students agreed that learning LSRW skills are effective compared to the traditional classroom. Since the usage of internet has become quite common among the students, the use of an online LMS was viable. Likewise, most students were good at handling mobile applications. The students used the free version of Google Classroom application installed in their smartphone. As an added advantage, the use of their own smartphone turned out to be a convenient mode of learning since the learners were already familiar with their devices. Most students found Google Classroom user-friendly and had the ease of accessibility.

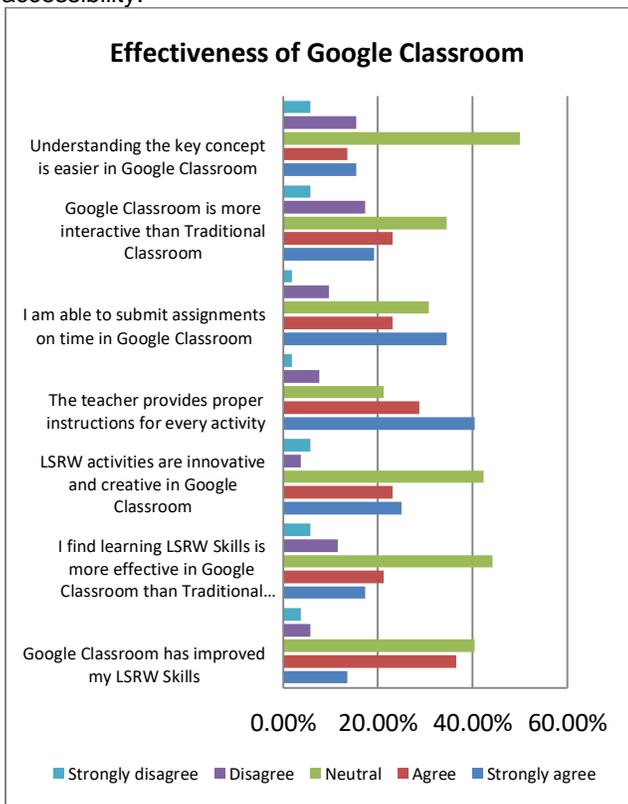


Fig. 1 Effectiveness of Google Classroom

In Google Classroom, the students had freedom in showcasing their creativity during online assessments and they found it advantageous. Students also have mentioned that they seem confident in taking the assessments and seemed less burdened than in a typical classroom set up where they were not able to perform effectively. The students mentioned that learning through Google Classroom was anew and challenging at the same time since they had to attend both lectures and assessments online. It is identified that around 50% of the total participants who took the survey agreed that Google Classroom has improved their LSRW skills while 40.40% of learners remained neutral in their preference (see Fig. 1). Students opined that they find learning LSRW skills in Google Classroom is effective than a traditional classroom.

Likewise, the students found the activities innovative and creative in Google Classroom adequately instructed by the teacher, and also they were able to participate in a more interactive classroom than usual. Similarly, on learning the content the students agreed considerably that they were able to understand a concept easily and able to submit the assignments on time, unlike traditional classroom.

7.1 Advantages

Students mentioned that they were able to keep a track of their progress, feedback and grades and they can approach the teacher spontaneously in Google Classroom. Likewise, the students found that clarifying doubts are easier in Google Classroom.

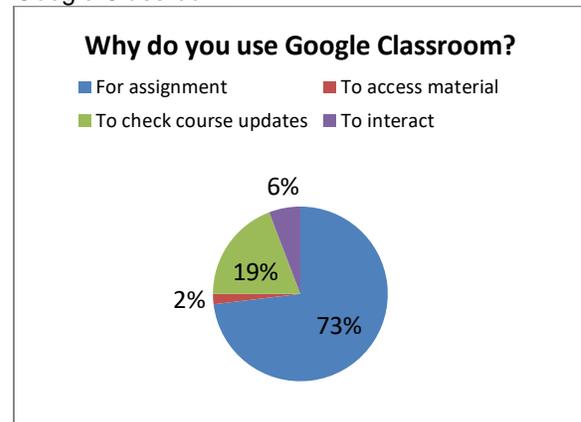


Fig. 2 Why do you use Google Classroom?

Around 73% (see Fig. 2) of the students access Google Classroom for activities while others found Google Classroom useful to check course updates, access material and to interact with the teacher and the fellow student learners thus showing significant growth in participation and involvement.

7.2 Disadvantages

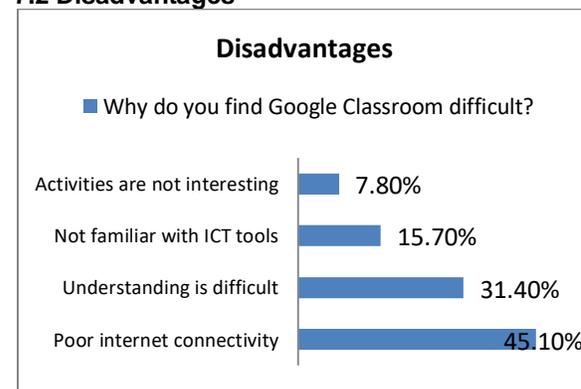
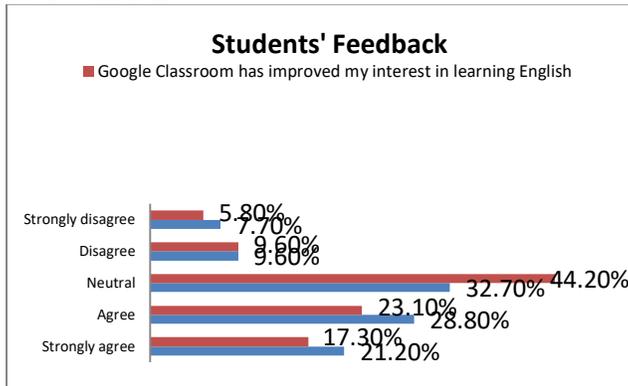


Fig. 3 Disadvantages

Most of the students mentioned that due to poor internet connection they were not able to incessantly follow the activities and because of that they were not able to submit their assignments on or before the deadline (see Fig. 3). Likewise, some students stated that they were not familiar with ICT tools. Since the students are used to a traditional classroom set up, and unfamiliar with Google Classroom they found it difficult to understand the activities at once and mentioned that sometimes they were not interested in the

activities at all. These students sought maximum facilitation by the researcher.

### 7.3 Feedback



**Fig. 4** Students' Feedback

Feedback was received from the students to find out whether the learners would be interested to learn other language skills using Google Classroom in the future. About 50% (see Fig. 4) of the students agreed that they would show active participation in learning through Google Classroom and they also have remarked that Google Classroom has significantly improved their interest in learning English.

### 8 LIMITATIONS

The study was carried out by testing only a limited number of samples because of which the exactness in deriving the results may have a slight difference with a large population. Similarly, study was carried within a limited period and not based on a complete semester. So an extended study can be implemented for a longer duration with a large population.

### 9 IMPLICATIONS

Even though students were chaotic in the beginning, they were most enthusiastic about their new venture. They showed significant improvement in learning LSRW skills and remained hopeful and confident when undergoing advanced level activities. The students also were able to bring to the researcher's attention the difficulty they have in understanding a particular activity without hesitation. Time constraints are completely evaded in Google Classroom. The ease of access and user-friendliness has significantly encouraged an interactive classroom environment seeking active participation from both the researcher and students.

### 10 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The general observation from the sample population is that through Google Classroom the teacher can record the gradual progress of the students in terms of assignments and questionnaires and keep the feedback received from the students as a guideline for future lessons in an ESL classroom. To sum up, the use of Google Classroom has a positive impact on improving the learners' LSRW skills. Since Google Classroom is completely online the students find a chance to explore new learning environments in

which they can confidently take up new challenges in learning the second language. Besides, the learning levels of a student vary from one another, so Google Classroom turns out to be a platform where every student gets individual attention by the teacher, and the learner does not feel that he is out of the classroom. Since the present study is based on the students' perception a comparative study on the perceptions of teachers and students can be attempted based on an Indian context.

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