Benefits of Online Language Learning: Study on IGNOU Online Arabic Language Learners

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ABSTRACT: Any language can be learned via online effectively and meaningfully. The author has 25 years of experience in producing audio-video lessons and incorporated novel language teaching-learning methods for distance learners. Conventional Classroom language teacher use word of mouth as teaching tool. Very few institutions equipped with language learning labs, but due to limited seats only few can learn the foreign languages. ICT revolution in education created myriad opportunities with technology enabled flexible learning for many learners from anywhere anytime. Listening repeatedly, innovative blended learning, easy of accessibility and learners' independence, autonomy provided bouquet of language learning opportunities with ease. This study examines how various learners benefited by online innovative language learning methods and further examine what kind of various problems encountered by learners during their course of study. Finally this study will suggest how to overcome the hurdles of online teaching-learning methods for the conduct of successful online language learning.
Key words: multimedia, repetition, blended learning, accessibility, autonomy, ICT.

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning of any foreign language provides multiple advantages to an individual and also for the country. Knowledge of additional language creates job opportunities in tourism industries, other industries, boost-up their business, improve bilateral relations with outer world, and help inter-disciplinary knowledge in research and development. Thus knowledge of foreign languages is directly depends on any country's overall development in cognitive, socio-economic sectors. Benefits of having additional knowledge of foreign language is very helpful in achieving competitive advantages as said by students of "The American Graduate School of International Management". Thunderbird survey organization conducted an electronic survey from 1970 to 2002 on 2500 alumni candidates, 581 responded and said

4 semesters of foreign language is compulsory to complete graduation. Majority of the students accepted that the knowledge of foreign language skills and cultural knowledge of the country helped them to achieve their career prospects (Grosse, C. U. 2004). We all know inventions of Greeks, Latin, Romans, French, Russians, Japanese inventions have been translated in English and other languages, Indian Vedas have been translated in English and thus all Indians and rest of the whole world came to the know the hidden treasures of our ancient Vedas. Thus the entire world will be benefited having the knowledge of any foreign language. At present some of the pioneering Indian universities offering foreign languages viz. Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University, English and Foreign Language University, Banaras Hindu University, Jamia Millia Islamia, University of Calcutta, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Pune University, University of Mumbai, Viswa Bharathi University. In India the ground reality is 89% percent of the students opt for regular mode of education only 11% percent of the students opt for distance mode (HE, MHRD 2015-16). In recent years there are many language learning apps offering online learning opportunity on mass scale. Some of the private apps offering language learning course on both iOS and android versions, they are FluentU, Duolingo, Busuu, Mango Languages, Babbel, Memrise, Mondly, Daily Dose of Language, Rosetta Stone, TripLingo, Lingvist, 50languages, LingoDeer, LingQ, Udemy.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Benefits of having additional knowledge of any foreign language is very helpful in achieving competitive advantages as said by students of The American Graduate School of International Management. Thunderbird conducted an electronic survey from 1970 to 2002 on 2500 alumni candidates, 581 responded and said 4 semesters of foreign language is compulsory to complete graduation. Majority of the students accepted that the knowledge of foreign language skills and cultural knowledge of the country helped to

achieve their career prospects (Grosse, C. U. 2004). Advent of mobile apps for both iOS and android versions in the year 2008 created educational revolution with bouquet of opportunities in the field of education, for both teachers and learners. Best talented well trained teacher can educate unlimited number of students by using affordable mobile applications(apps) these learning apps not only learner's pocket friendly but also suits their busy lives in an industrialized society. Language learning could not have been possible learning while earning. University students emphasized on intensive online training is required on various apps before entering any online course (Steel, C.2012). Some of the research studies conducted on learning Arabic language for specific purpose of tourism students expressed learning on websites is more effective and fun. Online Languages learning provide proactive support to students during their study in isolation (Ghani, M. T. A. 2016). 2G, 3G, 4G technology in the field of internet laid a platform for technology enabled flexible learning to millions of student's community across the globe allowing them to flexible study and quick access of rich digital content. Present day learners are aware as how to use the available mobile technologies on internet. (Ansari, M. S., & Tripathi, A. 2017). Present day educational system tapping the advantages of multimedia online learning which not only providing boundless learning opportunities but also creating autonomy to learners. In recent years online Arabic language learning made successful in Malaysia (Yahaya, H 2019). It has been noticed ubiquity of internet technology presence in developed as well as developing and under developing countries. E-Learning, mobile learning, online learning will become mainstream reality by 2025. Online learning broke all regimental dogmatic conventional systems barriers and provided equal opportunities to learners of geographically disconnected areas, social constraints of home makers, in-serviceperson's inability to attend regular colleges, economically weaker sections who cannot afford huge amount of money on transport, boarding and lodging expenses, to bear the charges for books and stationeries. Internet technology not only changed the paradigm shift in education but also enhanced the growth of business and industrial sector. (Palvia, S. 2018).

III. PROBLEM OF THE STUDY
Learning any foreign language or any other Indian languages help us to gain career prospects, improve our business and overall development of any country. Limited number of seats in schools and colleges, lack of proper equipped language learning labs, prevent the aspiring underprivileged and in-service persons to acquire other language skills. Even though, online education removed all dogmatic rigid rules of four wall brick and mortal of traditional education system. The actual reality is the majority of the Teachers and Students acquired their education in conventional education system are not familiar with handling online software or not aware of many language learning apps for teaching-learning purposes. Lack of enough server space, poor internet connectivity, poor visibility of video content and dead low video streaming issues, power cuts badly de-motivate online learners especially when they do their study in isolation after office hours (Rao, T.S. 2020). In addition to these technical issues lack of proper knowledge to handle the software for teaching-learning purposes by both teachers and learners forced to stop their study till the technical team to resolve trivial issues (Rao, T.S., Kusuma,KK 2020). But we all know online learner carry his/her study in isolation that too in late night hours or in odd hours without having any immediate 24x7 trouble shooting teams. Once the momentum or mood of learning is interrupted by these technical hurdles in accessing the study material or hindrance posed by server, learners either gets de-motivated or drop out of the course.

Scope of the Study
This study gives us a clear picture about the benefits of online language learning. What are the student's experiences about online study? And further enable us to gain the insights of the online learning issues being encountered by learners during their study period. Finally this study gives constructive corrective measures to be taken up by the online platform managers and teachers in connection with teaching strategies.

Objectives of the Study
- To find out the benefits of online language learning by the students
- To find out the technical, pedagogical and students support system lacunae
- To give corrective measures and suggestions to SWAYAM managers and teachers

IV. METHODOLOGY
The study focused on to obtain an overview of online language learning benefits and subsequent problems encountered by students. The study relied on both primary and secondary data. Survey method is employed to get the end

users/learners' perspective on Technology-enabled learning through online platform. Before the survey, the questionnaires were validated by expert academics in the similar field of study. The survey has proceeded through the self-administered questionnaire on 354 students admitted for Certificate in Arabic. Google form questionnaire has been sent on SWAYAM platform created emails.

Sample

This study included learners from a wide range of educational background and age. Among 354 students 108 students responded, out of which male students 66, female students 38 and Prefer not to say third gender students are 4 as sampling

method. The study also considered third gender as one of the essential variables for the study. The respondent's age ranging from 13 to 100 years and while their educational background varying from high school to doctoral degree.

Tool for data collection

A Questionnaire developed by the researchers and validated by the experts is used for collecting the data from the respondents. A total of 11 questions include both 10 close-ended types and 1open-ended type. Questions are uploaded on Google forms and distributed through sharing the hyper link through email to reach the respondents.

Analysis of the Online Arabic Language learning

Chart No.1: Showing Gender of Certificate in Arabic Language Students

■ Percentage	66 Male Students	38 Female Students	4 Prefer not to say
Percentage	71%	36.20%	3.80%
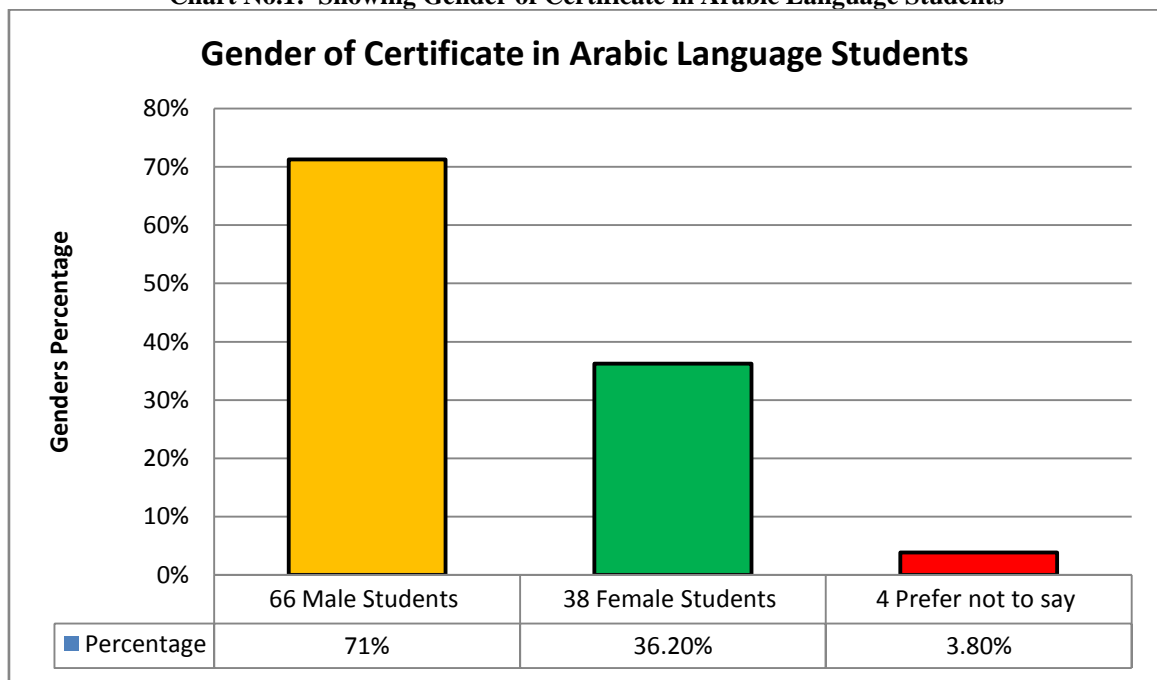
The study on Certificate in Arabic Language indicates 71% percent of male students, 36.20% percent female students and 3.80% percent third gender students taken admission and this

study. Thirdan additional column is provided as prefer not to say along with male, female, to give equal human rights to the third gender category in this study. .

Table No.1: Showing Age Group of Certificate in Arabic Language.

Age Groups of Arabic Language Students	Number of Students	Percentage
13 – 20	9	9.71%
20 – 30	59	55.1%
30 – 40	26	24.3%
40 – 50	9	8.4%
50 -60	4	3.7%
60 – 70	1	0.9%

70 – 80	0	0%
80- 90	0	0%
90 - 100	0	0%

In the above Table No.1, highest 55.1% percent of the students age group between 20 -30 taken admission this followed by age the group 30 – 40 consists of 24.3%. This study also indicates online study provided an opportunity to senior citizens for fulfilling their lifelong hobby of education age group between 50- 60 and 60 – 70 also taken admission in the Certificate in Arabic Language.

Table No.2: Showing Educational Qualifications of Arabic Language Students

Educational Qualifications of Arabic Language Students	Number of Students	Percentage
High School	4	3.8%
Pre- University	15	14.2%
Certificate Course	4	3.8%
Diploma Course	9	8.5%
3 Years Bachelor Degree	19	17.9%
4 Years Bachelor Degree	12	11.3%
5 Years Bachelor Degree	5	5.4%
Post-Graduation	43	40.6
Doctoral Degree	9	8.5%

This study indicates 40.6 % percent highest number of Post-Graduation students opted for the Certificate in Arabic Language, followed by 17.9% percent 3 year Graduate and in third position 14.2% pre-university students taken admission. This study also indicated most of them are in-service persons wants to learn Arabic language to improve their career growth.

Table No.3: Showing Students noticed following Multimedia Benefits of online courses

Arabic Language Students Responses of Multimedia Benefits of online courses	Number of Students	Percentage
Video Lessons	103	99%
Audio Pictograms	19	18.3%
Interactive Grammar correction Tools	56	53.8%
Automation	35	33.7%
Chart boards	50	54%
Telephones	37	35.6%
Instant Messaging	58	55.8%
Webcam	53	51%

In the Table No.3 online learners of Arabic language mentioned the benefits of multimedia are 99% percent of the students admitted video lessons, followed by instant messaging 55.8% percent and in third position chart board 54% learners said webcam also one of the best advantages while learning online 51% present of the students admitted. Interactive Grammar correction tools, audio pictograms, automation, telephones all adds to online study benefits.

Table No.4: Showing How Repetition Facility helps online Language Students

Benefits of Repetition online Students Responses	Number of Students	Percentage
Traditional Classroom Teacher do not repeat again	51	55.08%
Classroom Teacher give limited examples	49	47.1%
Online Learning allow repeatedly listening lessons	93	89.4%

We have more options for learning our language	58	55.8%

In the Table No. 4: Repetition facility proved to be one of the most beneficial aspects of online language learning. 89.4% learners said online study allows them to listen repeatedly their lessons which normally conventional classroom teacher does not repeat it. Lack of enough time to complete syllabus and routine boredom most of the classroom teachers seldom to repeat once taught55.08% said by students. 55.8% said online study provide more study options. 47.1% said classroom teacher give limited examples. This proves the fact online language has more potential benefits than a conventional class.

Table No.5: Showing How Online Learning Provide New Learning Methods

Students Responses on New Learning Methods	Number of Students	Percentage
Online courses offer a variety of listening and speaking	83	79%
Multimedia tools to address reading	55	52.4%
Help to learn better Writing the language skills	30	32.4%
Watching different situation dialogues and conversations	66	62.9%
Help to Learn Speaking Language Techniques	74	70.5%
Online Learning help to learn correct pronunciation	69	65.7%

Table No. 5, explains as how online learning provide many new learning methods 79% of the respondents says online courses offer a variety of methods for listening and speaking. 70.5% says online course helps to learn speaking language techniques. 65.7% said it helps learn correct pronunciation. 62.9% said they can watch different situation dialogues and conversations. 52.4% said Multimedia tools address their reading. 32.4% said they have improved their language writing skills due to online new learning methods.

Table No.6: Showing how Accessibility helps online Students learning Arabic language

Students Responses on how accessibility benefits of online learning help Students	Number of Students	Percentage
I can take admission from any part of the world	83	78.3%
I can access my study material from any ware	84	79.2%
Learn while traveling, free time, at nights, while walking	60	56.6%
I need not Travel to attend college or institutions	63	59.4%
I can learn language at my lunch break	33	31.1%
I can learn at late nights.	44	41.5%
I can learn language with my convenience	67	63.2%
Introvert students escape peer group teasing in classroom	18	17%
In-serviceperson learn Arabic language while working	38	35.8%
I am a house wife I can stay at home and learn language	16	17.28%
Online language is more thrilling	30	28.3%
I can learn language during my lunch time	1	0.9%

Table No.6: Indicates, accessibility benefits of online study removed dogmatic, regimental conventional system methodologies of conditional physical attendance. Online study provided technology flexible enabled education. 79.2% students said they can access study material from any part of the world. 78.3% they can take admission form anywhere in the globe. 63.2% said they can learn language with their convenience. 59.4% said they need not attend regular college. 56.6% said they can learn while traveling, at free time, at nights, while walking etc. 35.8% in-service persons said we can learn language while working, while 17.28% housewives said online provided an opportunity to learn language of our choice. This proves the fact online line learning is inclusive and empowering in nature.

Table No.7: Showing Students Opinion on How Autonomy helps online Language Learners

Students Responses on how "Autonomy" of online courses helps to deal with the following.	Number of Students	Percentage
Motivate to Self-Learning	85	81%
Shy students Learn without fear of teasing in classroom	40	38.1%
Challenge yourself to complete assignments on time.	60	57.1%
Opportunity to learn from discussion board postings	55	52.4%
Clarify doubts with peers via chat /discussion boards.	53	50.5%
Can post our doubts with online teachers.	50	47.6%
We Can enjoy the quizzes	45	42.9%
It Improve our communication and writing skills	64	61%
Chat boards give more knowledge and motivation to us	50	54%

Table No.7: Indicates various opinions of the students on the autonomy quality of online language learning help them in multiple ways. 81% of the learner's opinion quality of autonomy motivates self-learning. 61% said improves their communication and writing skills. 57.1% says online study pose a challenge to complete their assignments on time. 54% said online study provide an opportunity to learn from postings of discussion board. 50.5% said online study facilitate online chats and clarifications of their doubts with peers. 47.6% said they can post their doubts with online teachers. 38.1% said online study provide an opportunity for shy students to learn without fear of classroom teasing. No doubts online study provides autonomy to learners in many valid ways. Online learning improves communication and language writing skills while posting their doubts with peers and teachers. Motivates independent study and also inculcates systematic study habits to individual learners.

Table No.8: Shwoing Students Agreemenmt Scale if Provided Audio Lessons to learn Converssation And Pronunciation without straining eyes.

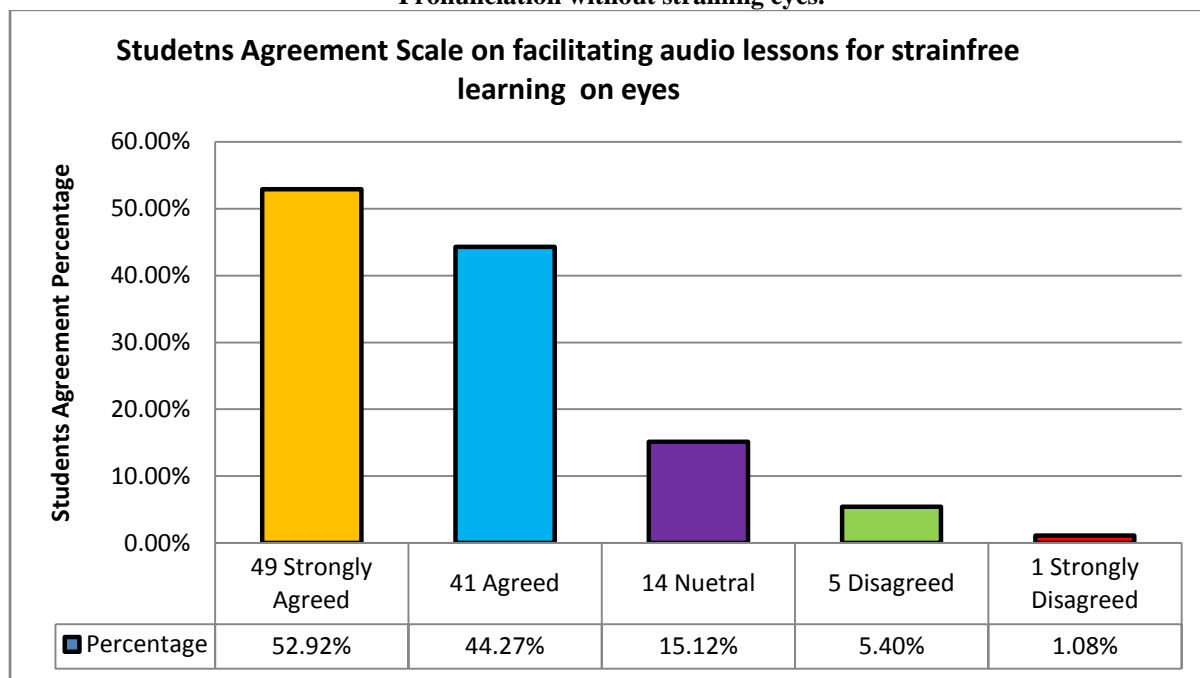|	49 Strongly Agreed	41 Agreed	14 Nuetral	5 Disagreed	1 Strongly Disagreed
■Percentage	52.92%	44.27%	15.12%	5.40%	1.08%

Table No.8: Showing student's agreement scale on if provided audio lessons to learn conversation and pronunciation so that they can listen and learn without straining their eyes. 52.92% percent strongly agreed and 44.27% percent agreed. 97.19% (52.92 + 44.27) percent of

students expressed their agreement audio programs will be are very useful in learning conversation and

pronunciation without straining their eyes.

Table No.9: Showing Reasons Why Students are learning Arabic Language

Why Students are learning Arabic Language	Number of Students	Percentage
I work in Middle East Arabic countries	24	25.5%
Knowledge of Arabic essential for job	10	10.6%
I love Arabic language	36	38.3%
Language Is my life long hobby	17	18.1%
Studied in English medium learning my mother tongue	3	3.2%
Arabic language is essential for job	5	5.3%
Knowledge of Arabic language enhance my career	29	30.9%
Joined online, I can't afford to join day college	16	17%
Knowledge of Arabic provide job opportunities to me	19	20.2%
To get a job in Arabic countries	25	26.6%

Table No.9:   Showing Reasons Why Students are learning Arabic Language, 94 students responded. 38.3% of the students said they love Arabic language, 30.9% said knowledge of Arabic language give growth in their profession. 26.6% students wanted to work in Arabic countries. 25.5% percent of the students work in the Middle East countries so they want to learn Arabic language. 20.2% students hope Arabic language provides jobs opportunities in Middle East countries.   18.1% opted as lifelong learning habits.   15.9% percent students said knowledge of Arabic language is essential for their job. 3.2% said their mother tongue is Arabic, but they had their education in English medium now they wanted to learn. This proves the fact knowledge of Arabic language enhance their career prospects. Learning Arabic language provide job   opportunities. In some cases knowledge of Arabic language is essential for their jobs. Thus offering Arabic Language online not only helps diversified an online learners but also provide an employment opportunity to many aspiring needy learners which finally improves business sectors of the world economy.

V. SUMMARY OF STUDENTS PROBLEMS

75% percent of the students reported Server and network issues posed a hindrance during their study. Microsoft teams app is a best application but 70% of the students informed that they don't have the familiarity and they wanted online training before introducing any new software on SWAYAM platform. 80% percent of the students faced technical issues constantly which posed severe problems during their online study in isolation. After admissions are approved, all the online learners should be given online training as how to handle the software. 50% percent of the students appreciated Microsoft Teams app for

handling assignments, project work submission but they lack familiarity to handle the software. Proper tutorials should be given by SWAYAM technical teams as how to work with Microsoft Team software. 25% of the students felt that the examination fee is more than the course fees. Only 5% of the students felt video lectures should be more interactive, more quizzes would help them to learn language better. Lack of time for study, family problems and ill health are some of the mundane problems which caused hindrance during their studies. Teachers said due to poor signal they can able to upload their videos at midnight after zero hours only. Similarly students also enable to watch video lessons after zero hours. This will pose a severe health problem, if the poor signal persists for longer duration.

VI. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Technical teams of SWAYAM platform managers should immediately take corrective measures to resolve all technical issues, which students are encountering constantly. SWAYAM platform should try to increase its own server space, due to lack of own SWAYAM's server space, video lessons are given a link via YouTube. This is not desirable to both teachers and learners. Lack of server space added to poor streaming of videos, weak signal strength and network speed should be improved. More than 90% percent of the Students admitted that the online learning has more benefits over conventional class room only when improved server space, good video streaming, direct video links, good network speed, and good video quality.   Otherwise if the technical issues remain constantly not only dropout rate of students will be increased but also online learning will be miserable   rather   than   enjoyable   experience. Technical Teams of SWAYAM platform should

evolve a system to address student's quarries immediately and resolve their issues. SWAYAM platform managers should inform higher authorities and policy makers to take remedial measures.

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