

Teachers' Perception and Practices of Microsoft Teams as a Learning Management System

Anish Jackson N and Susmitha Shyamsundar

ABSTRACT:

Teaching and learning through Learning Management Systems (LMS) have gained momentum from the arrival of inexpensive digital gadgets that reached the commoner's hand during the Covid period, and due to the desperate requirements to shift from the traditional to modern teaching methodology. In India, almost every institution has incorporated either open-source or closed-source Learning Management System (LMS) software packages to manage the academic progress of the students. This study focuses on teachers' perceptions and practices towards using Microsoft Teams (Teams) as an LMS tool for language teaching. The study uses a Descriptive survey method to evaluate the usefulness and ease of use of Teams. 21 participants were language instructors from a private university who responded to the questionnaire. The obtained data was statistically analysed and graphically represented. The findings showed Teams to be an efficient tool for language instruction as it is pertinent and very easy to use for imparting language skills. The study includes a few suggestions brought out by the participants. The study recommends measures to make Teams a better and more efficient tool of LMS for language teaching learning.

Keywords: Digital technology, Learning Management System (LMS), Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Microsoft Teams (*Teams*), Language teaching.

Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been considered as the accepted tools that provide an active and empirical educational environment. Kirkwood (2009) in his study says that students can be engaged in challenging and open-ended activities that enhance their cognitive abilities in an ICT framework. While adopting the tools of ICT for classroom education, a large number of Learning Management Systems (LMS) have made their way to conventional classrooms and also to various other organisations. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian subcontinent saw an influx of LMS to help educators create classrooms in the online world, due to the lockdowns that were imposed to curb the spread of the disease. This opened doors for teachers to use an LMS of

convenience or as subscribed by their institution and also both by one's preference and at times compulsion, as enforced by the place of work. This exposure to incorporating various tools of communication and multimedia under the umbrella of an LMS, not just made way for the teachers to think of classrooms beyond the physical spaces, but also shift from the didactic traditional approaches.

There are certain essential features required for an LMS to make teaching and learning a smooth and successful process. As LMS is mainly used online, there are various challenges like communicating with students, assigning tasks and conducting tests in required formats, evaluating, providing feedback, scheduling virtual classes, and clarifying doubts in the process of transferring knowledge when compared to the regular physical

classroom. There are choices of free and paid LMS software applications that provide academicians with a platform to conduct and manage classes through LMS. However, the users are influenced by the applications of choice for various reasons. This study aims to focus on the perception and practices of language teachers who use Microsoft Teams (*Teams*) as an LMS tool. The study also attempts to find the appropriate reasons for using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) for Teams being the preferred choice of LMS for language teachers.

Review of Literature

Dhawan (2020) stated that “Online teaching is no more an option, it is a necessity” when COVID-19 brought the educational system across the country to a standstill. Academicians had to convert the existing traditional system of education into an online system to bridge the loss of time that was the cause of concern to both the students and the Government. Jena (2020) claimed in his study that online learning is the future of education post-pandemic. Praveen (2020) emphasizes how quickly educational establishments must adjust to online learning modes in light of the disruptions caused by the pandemic. Mazumder (2021) also considers the post-pandemic period as a prospect to reform the Indian higher education system. Furthermore, Mazumder enumerated how post-pandemic teaching-learning is being directed by blended learning, Learning Management Systems (LMS), online meetings, worldwide exposure, and demand for distance learning. The study by Al-Busaidi and Al-Shihi (2010) developed a theoretical framework to evaluate the teachers’ acceptance of LMS based on the Technology Acceptance Model. Alicia (2020) surveyed the perception of students in using *Teams* as an LMS for a specific course titled, Communicative

English, where she interpreted the results by finding the correlation between Perceived Usefulness (PU), Perceived Ease of Use (PEoU), and intention to use. It resulted in how PU and PEoU have influenced the students’ intention to use *Teams*. Hasnan and Mohin (2021) have used the framework developed by Al-Busaidi and Al-Shihi to study the challenges and issues faced by lecturers while using the LMS tool for a blended learning approach. Al Enezi et al. (2022) have analysed the attitudes of instructors in using *Teams* by identifying the significant correlation between PU, PEoU, and actual use. The result showed PU directly affected the attitudes and PEoU indirectly affected the attitudes. Jackson and Shyamsundar (2022) examine how language skills could be taught using Microsoft Teams as a learning management system (LMS). It evaluates Teams’ features and integrated apps using the SAMR framework to determine how effectively they enhance language learning.

In light of the COVID-19 epidemic, online learning has become more crucial, and digital tools like Microsoft Teams are essential for maintaining educational continuity. However, using Microsoft Teams as LMS in their teaching practices presents some significant challenges for many language teachers. These issues often result in unequal educational outcomes and less-than-ideal platform utilization.

It is essential to recognize the factors that impact language instructors’ acceptance of and usefulness using Microsoft Teams. This study explores these problems by looking at how instructors use Microsoft Teams and how they perceive it. The investigation’s findings are intended to enhance Microsoft Teams’ support and functionality, ultimately enhancing the software’s integration with language teaching and

promoting better learning results.

Therefore, this study focuses specifically on the language teachers' perspectives and practices on using integrated applications and features available in Microsoft Teams, an LMS tool. The study focuses Technology Acceptance Model, a theoretical framework to evaluate and understand how language teachers accept the use of *Teams* with the objective as follows:

1. Analyse the efficacy of Microsoft Teams as a tool of LMS.
2. Identify the ease of use of applications and features embedded in Microsoft Teams specific to language learning and teaching.
3. Understand the effectiveness and effortlessness in teaching while using Microsoft Teams in comparison to traditional teaching.

Methodology

This study is based on a mixed approach which employs both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The sample universe forms the language teachers and their respective students of English classes from a recognized private university in southern India which caters to students across the country. The sample size of this study comprises 21 teachers, including 11 females and 10 males. The data was gathered in the form of a questionnaire survey, interview, and observations based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), as the aim of this research is to find the perceptions and practices of language instructors in using *Teams* as an LMS tool.

The Technology Acceptance Model was developed by Fred D. Davis and designed to determine whether users embrace a particular

technology. Davis (1989) initiated this model by validating constructs such as Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use. Perceived Usefulness states, to what extent a specific tool contributes to the betterment of and is relevant to one's professional life. In contrast, Perceived Ease of Use states, to what extent the selective tool is easy to employ in one's profession. In addition, the user's Attitude plays a vital role as the tool creates an impactful experience in accepting it for his/her career. When the tool is advantageous and convenient, a positive Attitude is created to use it. On the contrary, the same system is difficult to operate, and inessential, a negative Attitude is created. Once the Attitude is developed, spontaneously Behavioural Intention is formed. Attitude and Behavioural Intention are interlinked because Attitude intends the user to use a specific system that cultivates a regular function of the user. Viswanath Venkatesh and Fred D. Davis (2003) extended TAM by integrating two more constructs, such as social influence processes and cognitive instrumental processes. In this extended model of TAM, Venkatesh and Davis considered social influence process variables such as subjective norm, voluntariness, and image under the construct and cognitive instrumental process variables including, job relevance, output quality, result demonstrability, and perceived ease of use.

To elicit the required information on the use of integrated applications and features associated with *Teams*, a questionnaire was prepared using Instructors' Acceptance of Learning Management Systems: A Theoretical Framework, which is developed by Al-Busaidi and Al-Shihi based on TAM. The framework contains critical factors related to instructor, organisation, and technology, which influence the instructors' perceived usefulness and ease of use in the actual use of the Learning Management System. Along

with the questionnaire, a semi-structured interview and an observation of the class were conducted to collect the experiences of language teachers in using *Teams* and to substantiate the responses to the questionnaire. The collected data has been represented graphically and analysed using a simple descriptive statistical method.

Analysis & Discussion

From the collected data, sociolinguistic variables like participants' Gender, Age, and Experience in teaching were analysed.

Table 1.1: Demographic details – Gender and Age

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	10	47.6
	Female	11	52.4
Age	25-35	12	57.1
	35-45	7	33.3
	45-55	2	9.5

Table 1.1, represents the demographic details like Gender and Age of the respondents. The frequency of female teachers' responses is recorded as higher than the male counterparts. 52.4 % of the respondents are female and 47.6% are male. The survey also shows that 57.1% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 25-35 years, which indicates that most of the respondents are young, in comparison to the senior teachers who form a meager 9.5 %.

Table 1.2: Demographic details - Years of experience as a teacher and experience with the current university

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Years of experience as a teacher	0-5 years	13	61.9
	5-10 years	5	23.8
	10-15 years	1	4.8
	15 above	2	9.5
Years of experience with the current university	0-1 year	11	52.4
	2 years	6	28.6
	3 years	2	9.5
	More than 4 years	2	9.5

Table 1.2 describes the role of respondents' overall experience in teaching and experience with the current university. The overall experience in the profession in the range of 0-5 years is 61.9% which is higher than the other ranges such as 5-10 years, 10-15 years, and 15 years and above. Most of the participants are freshers in the profession. An equal part of the participants, 52.4% are new to the organisation where the study was conducted. The rest of the respondents have association with the institution for more than 2 years.

Table 2: Technical competency of the participants

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Technical Competency	Beginner	2	9.5
	Intermediate	4	19
	Expert	14	66.7
	Advanced	1	4.8

Table 2 represents the level of Technical competency of the participants. It plays a crucial role in the present times because digital technology has made its way into the teaching-learning process. The technical competency of the participants was measured using a four-point scale consisting of Beginner, Intermediate,

Expert, and Advanced. From the data, the majority of the participants belong to the Expert level. Fourteen participants have responded as Expert users of technology in the classroom. They represent 66.7% of the sample, proving that teachers today accept technology in the teaching-learning process. Only 9.5% of respondents have categorized themselves as Beginners. So, this shows every teacher is made to use technology in the teaching-learning process. So far, only the demographic details and technical competency of the participants have been discussed. Therefore, the data related to the effectiveness of the tool, features, and integrated applications and the significance of *Teams* in teaching language skills are analysed through graphical representations as given below.

Efficacy of Teams as an LMS tool

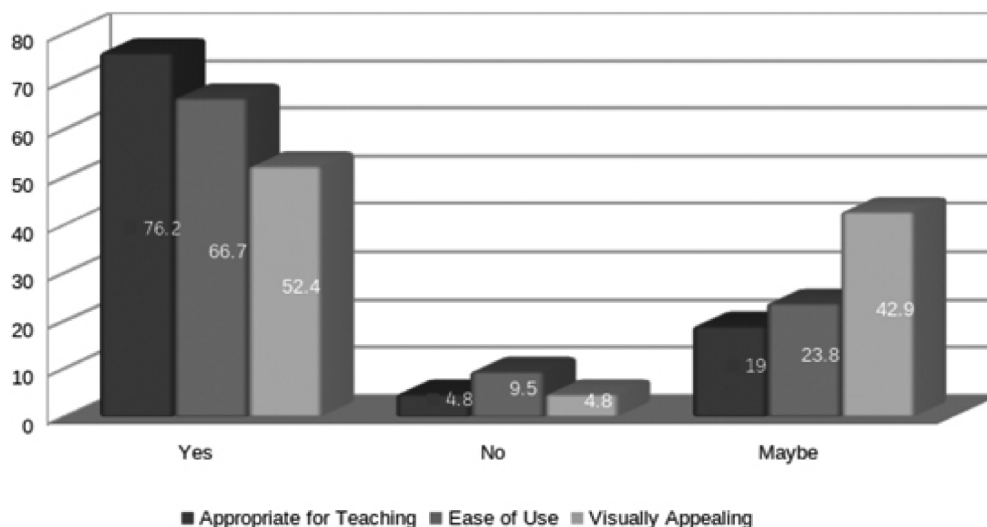


Fig. 1.1 Efficacy of Teams as an LMS Tool

Fig. 1.1 represents the efficacy of *Teams* as an LMS tool. The efficacy of the tool was measured using closed-ended questions which provided choices such as 'Yes', 'No', and 'Maybe' based on the tool's appropriateness, ease of use, and

visually appealing. The suitability of the tools and the tools that aid in achieving the learning objectives make the teaching-learning process more effective. So, teachers tend to use the tools that are appropriate for teaching as they perceive

the usefulness. 76.2% of the sample responded that *Teams* is a suitable tool for teaching. 19.0% are uncertain about the appropriacy of *Teams* as an LMS tool and a single participant clearly stated it is not appropriate. In the semi-structured interview, participants were asked, What is your opinion of Microsoft Teams' general appropriateness for teaching languages? Most of the teachers reported their experience with *Teams* as they can conduct activities for important language skills like Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW) as it is more interactive and engaging than the other software. This clearly shows that the majority of respondents accept *Teams* as an appropriate LMS tool for teaching.

The teachers opt for technology, with which they are familiar and feel comfortable to use. The technology incorporated in the classroom should be uncomplicated and that which does not consume much of the teacher's time. If any technology fails or causes troubles in the classroom the user would not prefer to use it anymore. To test the ease of using *Teams*, the participants were asked questions about the ease of use. From the collected responses, 66.7% have indicated *Teams* as a user-friendly tool for teaching. In comparison, 23.8% are unsure whether the application is easy to use and two respondents noted that *Teams* is a tool that is complicated to use. This indicates that the majority of the respondents consider *Teams* as a

tool that is easy to use. In the interview discussion, teachers were asked, How would you define Microsoft Teams' ease of use in your instructive methods? The participants described that using *Teams* is very convenient for them for various reasons such as assigning tasks for language skills, and managing the student record and connecting with the students using the *Teams* call and chat facility.

Similarly, technical factors that influence the users were also examined. The participants were asked about the interface of the application and whether it was visually appealing or not. Consequently, 52.4% of the participants have expressed that *Teams* is aesthetically pleasing. On the other hand, 42.8% were confused to define whether the interface of the tool is appealing or not, and one stated precisely it is not visually appealing. This shows only half of the samples accept *Teams* as a captivating tool. In the discussion, teachers were asked, To what extent do you think Microsoft Teams is a visually appealing tool for teaching language online? The teachers reported their opinions on the interface of the application. The majority of the participants described that the sections like Calls, Files, Grades, *Teams*, Insights, and Assignments are well arranged. Only a few stated that *Teams* interface is not so impressive. Some stated that the interface of the application is confusing.

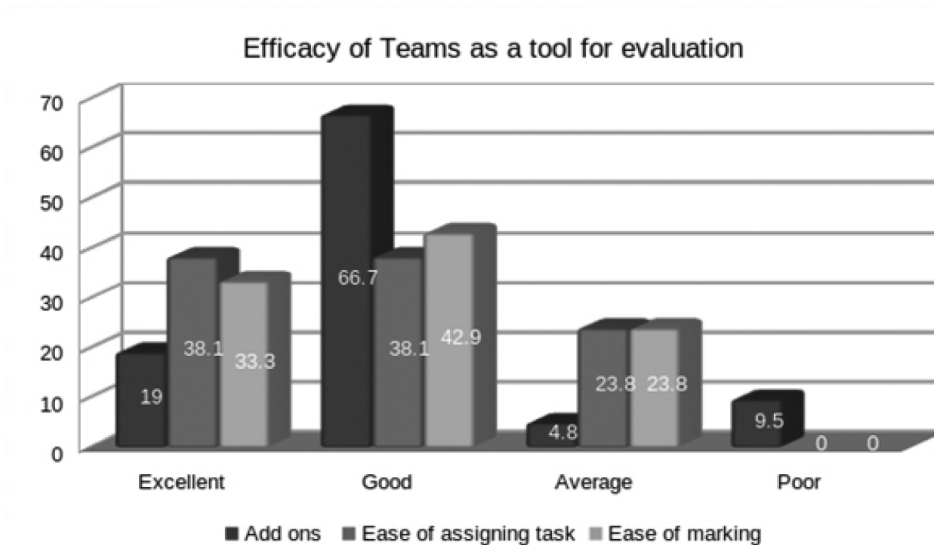


Fig. 1.2 Efficacy of Teams as a Tool for Evaluation

Fig. 1.2 refers to the effectiveness of *Teams* as a tool for evaluation in the teaching process. When the process of teaching and learning is done online through *Teams*, the integrated applications and features available on *Teams* should be relevant and capable of assigning tasks, and the user should be able to assess the assignments or tests smoothly. Accordingly, the teachers' perceptions and practices on *Teams* as an evaluation tool have been measured using a five-point rating scale such as Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, and Very Poor.

Teams provides plenty of integrated applications by which teachers can assign tasks as well as administer the test. So, participants were asked to rate the integrated applications available in *Teams*. According to the responses of participants, 19% have rated integrated applications as Excellent. 66.7% of the sample have rated it as Good. Only an insignificant number of participants have rated it as Average and Poor. The gathered responses clearly show that integrated applications available on *Teams* are effective, as more than 50% have rated them

as Good.

Easiness in assigning a task is assessed from the ratings given by the participants. In using *Teams* for assigning tasks, 38.1% of the participants have identically rated as Excellent and Good, reflecting three-fourths of the participants prefer to use *Teams* to hand over work by using the integrated applications available in the tool which avoids depending on the external resources. Still, 23.8% of the respondents have rated it as an average tool. In the interview, teachers were asked, how do you find *Teams* is easy to assign language-specific tasks? Some answered features like breakout rooms are very easy to conduct speaking tasks. Some responded assigning them tasks using various integrated applications is very easy. On the other hand, a few participants expressed that they had overlooked the features that make their work simple in assigning a specific task. Consequently, the accomplishment of handing over a task to students in *Teams* is flexible.

Assessment is very important in the educational setting as it provides feedback and the academic

status of students. In consequence, students focus on their errors and develop further. In the case of online classes through LMS, it is necessary to have inbuilt assessing features to make the evaluation process straightforward. So, participants were asked to rate the ease of grading features available on *Teams*. Accordingly, 42.9% have rated it as a Good tool for grading, whereas only 33.3% of the respondents have rated it as Excellent. Besides, 23.8% of the respondents have expressed *Teams* as an Average tool for evaluation. The collected

responses clearly show the majority of the participants accept the grading features in *Teams* for its comfort. In the discussion, participants were asked about their opinions on the assessments using *Teams*. Some participants expressed it is an excellent tool for evaluating multiple-choice questions. Some stated that students can make peer assessments using the chat option. Only some participants conveyed that the evaluation interface of *Teams* could have been designed as per testing language skills. Some of the participants stated that evaluating descriptive answers is quite challenging.

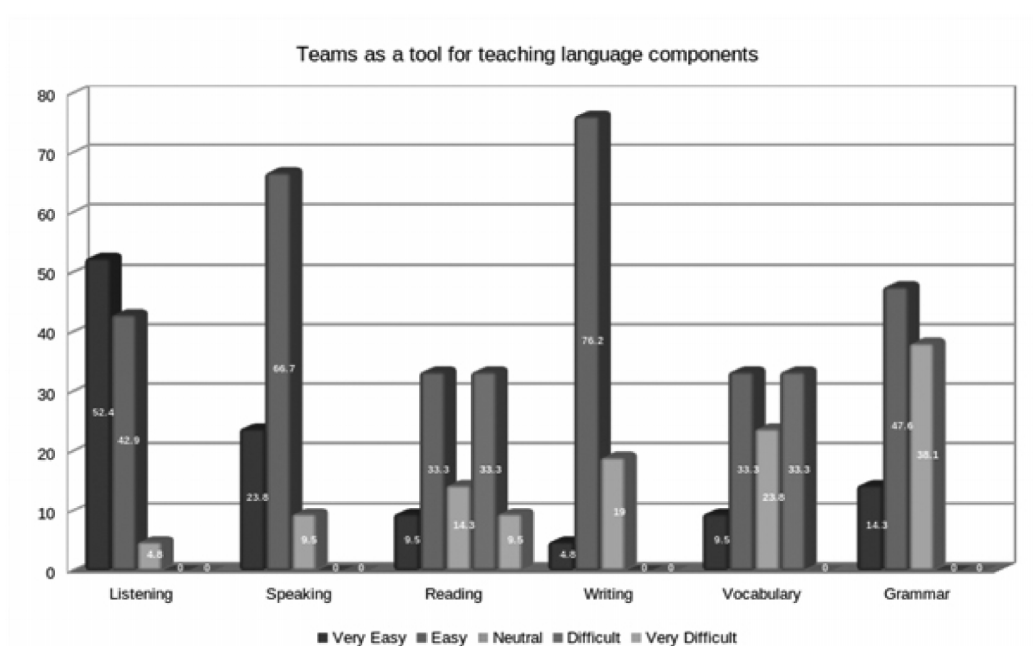


Fig. 2 Teams as a tool for teaching language components

Fig. 2 presents the ease of use of applications within *Teams* for imparting language components. The language classroom particularly focuses on important components like Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Vocabulary, and Grammar. Hence, the ease of using *Teams* for teaching the aforementioned components in language classrooms has been measured using a five-point Likert scale comprising of Very Easy, Easy, Neutral, Difficult, and Very Difficult.

Easiness in imparting language components through *Teams* has been reflected in the ratings of the participants as follows:

Listening: 52.4% of the respondents have rated *Teams* as Very Easy to impart listening component. 42.9% of them have rated it as Easy whereas only one participant has rated it as Neutral. This clearly shows that a significant number of teachers are influenced by *Teams* as

they easily impart listening components through the available features and integrated applications.

Speaking: 66.7% of the participants have *Teams* rated as Easy and 23.8% have rated it as Very Easy. Only two participants have rated it as Neutral. As most of the participants have rated to the positive end of the Likert scale, it distinctly shows that they consider *Teams* to be an easy tool to impart speaking component.

Reading: 33.3% have similarly rated *Teams* as Easy and Difficult. Likewise, 9.5% have identically rated it as Very Easy and Very Difficult. Only three participants have rated the tool as Neutral. As an equal number of participants have rated to both ends such as positive and negative, it indicates participants equally feel *Teams* is an easy tool as well as a complicated tool to impart reading component.

Writing: 76.2% have rated *Teams* as Easy and 19.0% have rated it as Neutral. Only one participant has rated it as Very Easy. The majority of the participants have rated to the positive end, it is apparent that participants perceive *Teams* as an easy tool to impart writing components.

Vocabulary: 33.3% have uniformly rated *Teams* as Easy and Difficult. 23.8% have rated it as Neutral while only two participants have rated it as a Very Easy tool. This clearly states that participants feel neither easy nor complicated for imparting vocabulary components. In the interview discussion, participants expressed that a dictionary could have been integrated within the application which minimize them to navigate from the application just for the meaning.

Grammar: 14.3% have rated *Teams* as Very Easy and 47.6% have rated it as Easy. On the other hand, 38.1% have rated it as Neutral. As most of the participants have rated to the positive end

and no one has rated to the negative end, it is clear that they feel easy to impart grammar components using *Teams*.

The easiness in imparting language components using *Teams* is analysed above. Among all the mentioned skills, participants consistently feel that it is easy to impart Listening, Speaking, and Writing components. In the next part, the preferred integrated applications and features that are used for LSRW skills are identified.

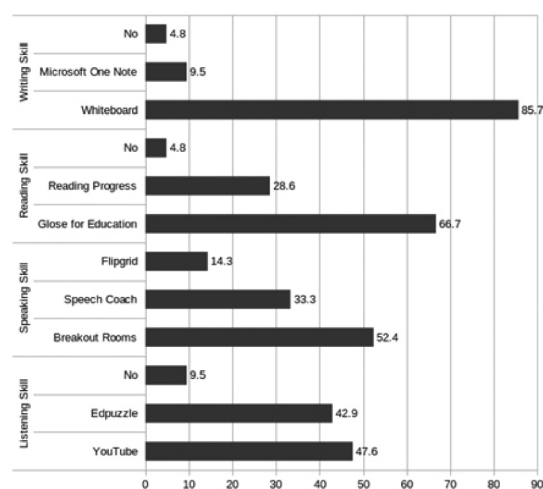


Fig. 3 Preferred features and integrated applications to impart major language skills

Fig. 3 represents the features and integrated applications within Teams preferred by the respondents, specifically for imparting language skills including Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. The mentioned language skills can be taught mostly by giving practical experience to students. But in terms of distance learning, there are more challenges in transferring these skills. So, in this study, participants have expressed that the applications and features integrated with Teams masterly serve language teachers with appropriateness.

Teams is embedded with various third-party applications and internal features which serve the

users for their requirements. Following language teaching, few integrated applications are aiding the teachers in imparting the skills. So, the participants were asked to mention the integrated applications and features that are being used specifically for LSRW skills. Those applications and features which are used by the participants are identified from their responses.

According to the survey, all the respondents have expressed that they use integrated applications and features when they impart language skills. Very few have clearly stated that they do not use them. The integrated applications and features in *Teams* used by the participants are as follows:

Listening: YouTube (YT) is used by 47.6% of the respondents and Edpuzzle is used by 42.9%. Besides, two have expressed they do not use any applications for Listening skills. In the discussion, YouTube users expressed that they use the application as it is a popular and has plenty of video resources than the other applications. Whereas Edpuzzle users stated that it has more in-built options like testing, grading, and integrating content.

Speaking: The Breakout rooms feature is used by 52.4%, Speechcoach is employed by 33.3% and Flipgrid is integrated by 14.3% for imparting speaking skills. During the interview participants who use breakout rooms reported that it helps them to manage time and reduce noise in conducting group activities. Participants who preferred Speechcoach expressed that it provides them feedback for real-time meetings as well as post-meetings. Similarly, Flipgrid users expressed that it has options like uploading the recorded video and commenting and liking the videos uploaded.

Reading: Glose for Education is used by 66.7% of the participants and Reading Progress is used by 28.6%. Only one participant has denoted that no applications are used for reading skills by himself

or herself. In the discussion, Glose for Education users expressed that it helps them to track the progress of every student, give tasks, clear doubts, and contain salient classic books that are open source. Participants who use Reading Progress reported that it develops the reading fluency of the students. It also gives feedback to the readers including on intonation, stress, and even punctuation fluencies. Therefore, It is apparent that *Teams* offers applications that develop reading comprehension as well as fluency.

Writing: Whiteboard is used by 85.7% and Microsoft OneNote is used by 9.5%. Only one participant has clearly stated that no applications are used by himself or herself. In the discussion, participants recorded their experience with both applications. Participants who use Whiteboard expressed that it is an application with a good interface that allows students to scribble and draw collaboratively. Whereas the One Note users indicated that it is an application that has a formal interface similar to Microsoft Word helps the students to make notes. In the next part, the effectiveness and effortlessness of teaching while using *Teams* in comparison to traditional teaching is discussed using the responses of the participants.

Effectiveness and Effortlessness in teaching using Teams

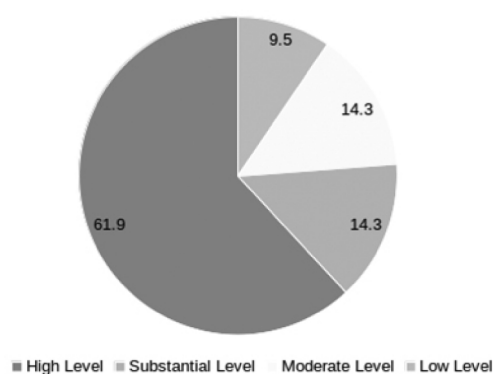


Fig. 4. Effectiveness and Effortlessness in Teaching Using Teams

Fig. 4. Shows the effectiveness and simpleness of teaching using *Teams* as an LMS tool. As teachers and students have become accustomed to digital learning who were following traditional teaching priorly, it is essential to assess the effectiveness and effortlessness of *Teams* in teaching online. Henceforth, the participants were asked to rate with a four-point Likert scale regarding the effectiveness and effortlessness of using *Teams* for language instruction. The four-point Likert scale includes High Level, Substantial Level, Moderate Level, and Low Level. Accordingly, 61.9% have rated as High Level which means minor improvements are required. 14.3% have rated identically to Substantial Level and Moderate Level which signifies moderate and major improvements are needed respectively. Lastly, only 9.5% have rated as Low Level. Ratings on the effectiveness of *Teams* in teaching reflect three-fourths of the participants expressed that *Teams* assist the teachers effectively.

In the discussion, participants were asked to present various advantages and disadvantages. they expressed that *Teams* have more benefits than challenges. The teachers expressed *Teams* help them to perform better than the traditional class setup where the time and space are so rigid. They described that they can be so innovative with applications and features available in *Teams* which offer hands-on experience especially when language skills are being taught. Few participants conveyed how the Breakout Rooms feature helps them in conducting debate or group discussions which had been a great challenge in a usual physical classroom condition that creates a noisy atmosphere. Similarly, one of the participants indicated *Teams* assists them even when they are out of campus. For example, how the applications like Glose for Education help them to track students reading progress. One respondent stated *Teams* help them create a paperless environment

by collecting assignments or conducting tests. Nevertheless, few respondents disclosed the disadvantages of *Teams* like the average interface for evaluation page and Network issues. One expressed evaluating objective typed test is convenient while subjective typed tests are challenging to assess. Some have expressed that a dictionary could have been added to the integrated applications list or in the features of *Teams*, to minimize the window switching for seeking the meaning. One respondent indicated that exclusive training on using *Teams* for Language instruction is required.

In the future, researchers can individually analyse the potential of each application identified in this study. Analysis can be done on all the language skills in specific. As this study contains only 21 participants, the results cannot be generalised. Hence, more samples can be taken in future research. *Teams* software development crew can focus on integrating dictionary applications to impart vocabulary skills in specific. Application interface for evaluation could be modified and features for assessing the subjective answers can also be designed. Jayaparakash (2021) also addressed the challenges of evaluating descriptive answers in online environments. Therefore, with the advancements in artificial intelligence and the Generative Pre-Trained Transformers (GPT) model, software developers can integrate them into LMS to make usage more effective and easy.

Conclusion

As technology has been increasingly integrated into the field of education, the use of LMS is at its peak as it extends the teaching-learning process from a four-wall setting. Hence, it is necessary to evaluate a tool's effectiveness to identify the reasons for preferring a particular LMS software. As this study focuses on the use

of *Teams* for language teaching, the effectiveness of *Teams* as an LMS tool has been evaluated using the framework, TAM. The participants have identified the usefulness and easiness of using *Teams* for language classrooms. They indicated that *Teams* is an effective tool for language teaching as it is appropriate and easy to use. The participants have expressed that *Teams* is a perfect tool for assigning a task and evaluating the same. In imparting the language components, participants stated that *Teams* is an easy tool to impart Listening, Speaking, Writing, and Grammar components. Participants have also identified a list of features and integrated applications that are being used by them in imparting the four major language skills. Besides, the drawbacks have also been recorded in the study. On the whole, it can be understood from the perceptions and practices of the user that *Teams* is a useful LMS tool and also easy to use for the language teaching-learning process.

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Mr. Anish Jackson N, Research Scholar, VIT-AP University, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh..

Dr.Susmitha Shyamsundar, Associate Professor, VIT-AP University, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh.