

The Effect of COVID-19 Lockdown on the Sudanese EFL Students' Listening Skill at Tertiary Level

Dr. Rasha Mohammed Elbashir Salih¹, Dr. Shaza Mohammed Zain Rahma²

¹College of Education, Sudan University of Science and Technology, Khartoum, Sudan
Corresponding author E.mail: rashaelbashir2004@yahoo.com
Tel: 00249124777445

²College of Education, Sudan University of Science and Technology, Khartoum, Sudan
E.mail: shazarahma22@gmail.com
Tel: 00249999402772

Abstract: *COVID-19 Pandemic had a significant impact on the entire world, including the education sector. The purpose of this study is to shed light on the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on the Sudanese EFL learners' listening skills. To put this to the test, the researchers use a two-group experimental data collection method. The first is a control group of students who took the course prior to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, and the second is an experimental group of students who took the course after the lockdown. When the researchers compared the grades of the students on a standardized test of the listening skills course before and after the lockdown, the results have shown that the experimental group scores were higher than the control group, indicating that the lockdown had no effect on the students' listening skills. This, according to the researchers, is due to the nature of the course: unlike other academic courses, students practice listening to English both inside and outside of the classroom. Students can now listen to a variety of English online and form friendships with native speakers through various social media applications such as WhatsApp and Facebook, thanks to technological advancements. Telegram and Twitter are two popular social media platforms.*

Keywords: COVID-19, Lockdown, Listening skills, EFL students, Tertiary level

1. Introduction

Sudan's Federal Minister of Health announced the first confirmed COVID-19 case in Sudan on Friday, March 13th, 2020, a man in his fifties who recently arrived from the United Arab Emirates and then died in Sudan. Since then, the Sudanese government has declared a national state of emergency, closed the country's borders, suspended flights in and out, and ordered the closure of educational institutions for a month, which was then extended to the start of the new academic year in September. Apart from the final exams for Grades 8 and 11, the academic year had ended at the time of educational institution closure (grade 3 in secondary school). More than 653,000 tertiary-level students have been affected by the lockdown.

Listening is the most important aspect of communication because it is essential for providing a thorough and meaningful response. Listening is especially important when learning a language for communicative purposes, as it aids in the acquisition of pronunciation, word stress, vocabulary, and syntax, as well as the comprehension of messages conveyed based solely on tone of voice, pitch, and accent; and this is only possible when we listen. Learning simply cannot improve without a proper understanding of the input. Furthermore, no communication can be achieved without the ability to listen. (Renukadevi, 2014, p. 59)

The COVID-19 pandemic has an impact on every aspect of life, including education. All universities switched from traditional to online lectures during the pandemic. Sudan University was no exception; all classes were moved online

using Moodle and WhatsApp groups, making teaching listening difficult in Sudan for a variety of reasons, including poor network conditions and the lack of electricity in some areas. Some students do not have laptops or smart phones, and others find internet fees to be prohibitively expensive, owing to Sudan's current difficult circumstances, which include the revolution, floods, and the COVID-19. The ability to listen is the most important skill for EFL students to improve their L2 level. This paper will focus on the impact of COVID-19 on Sudanese EFL students' listening skills. (the authors)

2. Literature Survey

The COVID-19 pandemic was first reported in Wuhan, China, in Dec 2019 (Huang et al., 2019) (Khalil et al., 2020) states that, the pandemic expanded quickly within a short and unlimited time over all the world. The disease outbreak had an impact on all aspects of life, particularly education. As the epidemic spread, the worldwide freeze resulted in a lockdown of educational establishments. As a result, the closure of educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities has created an anxious situation with fewer opportunities for instructional management. (WHO 2020) The prevalence of poverty, weak health systems, and a lack of global cooperation have all been shown to exacerbate a pandemic at COVID-19. It has also had a significant impact on educational delivery. Around 17,000,000 cases of COVID-19 had been reported worldwide by the end of July 2020, with over 660,000 deaths, putting many countries' health systems under severe strain. Furthermore, the pandemic wreaked havoc on global social and economic

structures, triggering the worst global recession since the 1930s.

Sudan's Federal Minister of Health announced the first confirmed COVID-19 case in Sudan on Friday, March 13th, 2020, a man in his fifties who recently arrived from the United Arab Emirates and then died in Sudan. Since then, the Sudanese government has declared a national state of emergency, closed the country's borders, suspended flights in and out, and ordered the closure of educational institutions for a month, which was later extended to the start of the new academic year in September. Apart from the final exams for Grades 8 and 11, the academic year had ended at the time of educational institution closure (grade 3 in secondary school). This lockdown has impacted the education of more than 653,000 tertiary level students.

Many studies were conducted to study the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education in general and EFL teaching and learning in particular. Hmedat, 2021 stated that the pandemic has forced a halt in learning methods and techniques in higher educational institutions as a result of Covid-19. As a result of the situation, students have been unable to participate in learning activities. The activities of higher education institutions were disrupted, and it is unclear how long the situation will last. It is critical to transition to a distance learning platform via the online procedure under the current circumstances. The benefits of online learning have long been debated in a country like India, where learners are diverse and infrastructure obstacles abound. The current research focuses on the common challenges that higher education institutions face, as well as potential solutions that could be implemented in the current environment to ensure continuous learning. (Hmedat, 2021) Because of the current situation, there is a good chance to test the practicability of using electronic programmes in distance education. To develop the educational process at all stages, many countries have come to rely on online learning while maintaining traditional classes. This development leads to the availability of learning throughout the day through various methods, including the provision of educational content with static and moving visual elements, as well as audio-visual effects, making education more exciting and enjoyable while also requiring less effort and time. (A. Ibrahim et al. 2021).

As a result of the closure of schools and universities, classroom hours have decreased, international student enrolment has been challenged, and learning inequality has increased. New trends have emerged as a result of the response phase in educational institutions. These include a rapid shift to online learning without necessary teacher training and development, increased reliance on EdTech startups, and decreased learning transfer, all of which have had a negative impact on the overall state of learning transfer. The focus was on deriving realistic solutions ranging from adoption of blended learning solutions across remote and hybrid learning, based on the results of the response phase and the existing challenges. The discussions also shed light on classifying learners based on their urgency to return to traditional classes, adopting systems and processes based on digital competence levels, and, most importantly, bringing about changes across educational policies and frameworks for a brighter future (Hmedat,

2021). The following are the main factors that supported the use of an e-learning system during the COVID-19 pandemic and that universities should consider in the future: Technology, e-learning system quality, cultural aspects, self-efficacy factors, and trust factors are all factors to consider. On the other hand, there are three major barriers to using an e-learning system: change management concerns, technical issues with the e-learning system, and financial support concerns..(Almaiah et al., 2020). The situation was different in Sudan. Gaily et al., 2021 is one of the studies done there, and it focuses on the use of ICT to support EFL learning and how traditional on-campus language classrooms could potentially be replaced by cyber-classes, especially during times of crisis. As a result, the study examines some potential issues with online tutoring from the perspective of students. As a result, it reflects AOU students' perspectives on a variety of issues related to the use of virtual classrooms as a new educational tool to replace traditional face-to-face classes in order to upgrade and enhance students' language proficiency while remaining fully autonomous distance learners. Finally, the paper also examines the prospects of building more successful virtual learning environment within the context of Arab Open University in Sudan. The findings demonstrated that, despite some difficulties in accessing online programs, the Sudanese students still had good sentiments toward this sort of remote education. (Gaily et al., 2021)

Since the emergence of the novel coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19), many Sudanese students have faced daily life changes that could predispose them to anxiety. Because of the limited availability of online learning and the country's difficult economic situation, the situation for Sudanese university students is even more complicated. According to the findings, 75.1 percent of participants had a low level of anxiety, 15.5 percent had a moderate level of anxiety, and 9.4 percent had a potentially concerning level of anxiety. A low level of anxiety was linked to having no symptoms in the previous 14 days. (Abas et al., 2021)-

2.2 Crisis in Sudan

Sudan is beset by political and economic instability, conflict, climate change-related shocks such as severe flooding and drought, endemic diseases, and a swell of refugees from neighbouring countries. Poverty, population displacement, and food insecurity have all been exacerbated as a result of these factors. Sudan's economy, which had been in a state of crisis since 2018, plummeted in 2020. The economic crisis, combined with unprecedented flooding and the depletion of state resources as a result of the crisis, has left an estimated 9.6 million people in a state of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and above food insecurity. (SUDAN Humanitarian Impact of Multiple Protracted Crises, 2020)

2.3 Education during crisis

An estimated three million students were absent from school at the start of 2020. Education has been severely disrupted as a result of floods and COVID-19-related school closures. COVID-19 lockdown measures, which closed schools across the country on March 15, 2020, prevented more than 8.1 million Sudanese students from attending school. Following

extensive disruptions to learning in 2019 due to civil and political unrest, COVID-19-related school closures have occurred. 2020 secondary school exams for the previous academic year, which had been postponed from April, were held across Sudan on September 13; however, a large number of students were absent. Long school closures and an increase in poverty as a result of economic insecurity may be to blame for the large number of absentees. (SUDAN Humanitarian Impact of Multiple Protracted Crisis, 2020)

2.4 Impact of COVID19 on education in Sudan

COVID-19 has had an impact on the delivery of the curriculum due to the fact that no classes were missed while students were on spring break. There was still time to apply to university for students who had completed secondary school but were unable to complete their exams because university begins in August/September. Students in Sudan, on the other hand, were out of school for six months and did not receive any formal education. This follows the previous year, when the Sudan revolution caused students to miss up to 70 days of school. Closing schools, for example, disrupts students' daily routines, adds stress to families, and exposes students to new security risks. As they begin to receive more messages on COVID-19, they become concerned for their own and their loved ones' safety. (GUIDANCE NOTE FOR EDUCATION SECTOR DURING COVID-19 IN SUDAN, 2020) Many countries used lockdown, which entails physical separation and movement restrictions, to slow the spread of the disease. However, this had unfavourable consequences for communities and individuals, affecting not only the social and economic aspects of life, but also psychological health. (Abas et al., 2021)

2.4 E-learning in Sudan

2.4.1 Current status of E-learning in Sudan:

Around four months after all higher education schools in Sudan were closed on March 14, 2020, due to the outbreak of Covid19, private and public universities in Sudan were instructed to begin online learning and teaching. Experts were concerned about the staff's and students' ability to handle the transition.

2.4.2 The major barriers of E-learning

Many studies have been conducted on the challenges and barriers to e-learning in developing countries, with the following examples: categorised e-learning barriers into three categories: a. personal factors: these are all barriers that are personal to an individual. One of the personal barriers in E-learning for lecturers with limited e-learning experience is a lack of time to prepare online learning content. Furthermore, instructors with less e-learning experience and skill have reservations about their ability to deliver classes online and appear to be less confident. Lack of individual motivation is another personal barrier to online learning; b. institutional and cultural factors, such as a lack of support, a lack of ICT utilisation training centres, and a lack of recognition of online teaching. c. technical aspects These aspects had to do with technology and infrastructure. Lack of skills in using E-Learning tools, infrastructure (no stable WIFI connection), and usability are all technical factors. Also, there is a scarcity of technology such as

computers, laptops, and tablets. (Ibrahim, 2021)

2.4.5 Potential Challenges of Online Classes

This pandemic forces fully online language learning to occur in an unexpected and unprepared manner. A study of fully online language learning, on the other hand, is extremely rare (Sun, 2014), especially during a pandemic. (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020)

Implementing eLearning in the context of tertiary education. In this regard, it has been demonstrated that administrative or institutional problems associated with the use of technology in higher education institutions include a lack of strategies, institutional policies, and administrative costs. In terms of pedagogy, there are still some common misconceptions among tutors about online teaching. The majority of teachers continue to believe that they can conduct their online sessions using the same procedures that they used in their face-to-face tutorials, despite the fact that online delivery differs significantly from face-to-face delivery in several ways. As a result, it is clear that not all face-to-face approaches and methodologies are applicable in an online context, and vice versa. As a result, EFL teachers should take responsibility for transforming their lessons into digital learning with new perspectives and perspectives. To summarise, while modern technology has revolutionised the ELT realm, pedagogical exercise appears to be less dynamic, and there is still a growing demand for more research to modernise EL theories and practising in a way that allows students to learn in a more engaging digitalized environment. (Gaily et al., 2021)

2.5 Teaching Listening Skills

2.5.1 Theory of Listening Comprehension Second language

The fundamental skills are listening and speaking, and if the foundation is solid, the edifice built on it will last. Children have a natural opportunity to listen and speak in their surroundings when they speak their mother tongue. Following that, they are sent to school to learn how to read and write. However, in a communication classroom, the learner's available environment is his mother tongue in his surroundings; as a result, the teaching learning strategy should differ significantly. As a result, a paradigm shift in teaching and learning speaking skills is urgently needed, with a focus shift toward oral orientation, teacher training, and curriculum development. (Hussain, 2017, p. 14)

Listening comprehension in (L2) is a difficult task. Listening comprehension is made up of two distinct processes. When learners use prior knowledge to decipher the meaning of incoming messages, they use 'top-down' processes. When they use linguistic knowledge to understand them, on the other hand, they use 'bottom-up' processes. Listeners focus on individual words and phrases in bottom-up processing, and construct meaning in a linear mode from the smallest unit of spoken language to the entire content. Top-down processing, on the other hand, provides listeners with the gist and main ideas of the listening passage. They use schemata or prior knowledge to interpret the speakers' intended meaning. This understanding emphasises the listeners' prior knowledge, which aids their ability to

comprehend incoming information. The process of listening comprehension, on the other hand, is defined as interactions between top-down and bottom-up processing, according to some. Individual, cultural, social, contextualised, affective, strategic, and critical dimensions are all included in Reference's interactive models. They discovered that listeners process spoken language interactively and simultaneously using these models, compensating for a lack of information on one level by comparing it to another. In both EFL classrooms and research involving teaching EFL, teaching listening has long been a key component. Despite the fact that listening is a passive skill, students must actively participate in interpreting information from aural and visual cues. Listening skills in a second language are difficult to improve because learners must process both content and linguistic knowledge at the same time while listening. According to students, they have a lot of trouble understanding what's being said because they can't control how fast it's being said. Furthermore, students have a hard time concentrating on listening because it takes a lot of effort to understand what is being said. Because of their unfamiliarity with the new language, L2 learners face cognitive challenges when processing information in the second language. Teaching listening in ESL and EFL courses is somewhat complicated due to the theoretical aspects of listening. (Kim, 2015, p. 16)

2.5.2 The importance of listening in communicative language learning

As all human beings are born to speak, verbal communication is the natural state of language. Not only does verbal interaction entail making meaningful utterances, but it also entails receiving others' oral utterances. (Masuram & Sripada, 2020, p. 624) Every study on the acquisition of language skills has shown that we gain 45 percent of our language competence from listening, 30 percent from speaking, 15 percent from reading, and 10 percent from writing when we communicate. Listening has to be considered a language forerunner because it has the highest percentage of involvement in the exchange of information in effective communication. Listening, in contrast to the other language skills, is perceived by learners to be more difficult because it includes all of the interrelated subskills of receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. However, with the introduction of communicative language teaching and a focus on proficiency, listening began to receive more attention. Listening, on the other hand, is not yet fully integrated into the curriculum and requires more attention in a language learning environment. (Renukadevi, 2014, p. 61)

2.6 The context at Sudan University of Science and Technology

Sudan University of Science and Technology was the only university to transition to remote learning as soon as the lockdown began, as a technological pioneer. As COVID-19 spread across the country, SUST decided to alternate face-to-face lectures with virtual ones, and the University's English Language Department did the same, using the educational platform (Moodle) and a WhatsApp group for each subject to make communication with students easier. The researchers wish they could say the transition to online

education went smoothly, but students faced numerous obstacles, including poor networks in rural areas outside of Khartoum, Sudan's capital, and a lack of smartphones due to the poor economic situation and the pandemic, which meant some students did not have access to smartphones and were unable to obtain one. It was impossible to teach Speaking skills or even record sessions due to the nature of the course. As a result, the teacher decided to delay the start of the course until the end of the lockdown so that he could personally teach them. (The authors),

3. Methodology /approach

The researchers compared students who took listening classes before the COVID-19 Pandemic to those who took them online using Moodle and WhatsApp groups during the Pandemic, using pre and post tests as tools. At Sudan University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Education, English Language Department, First Year, the researchers are interested in learning about the impact of the COVID-19 on Sudanese EFL students' listening skills.

3.1 Problem definition

Students who took listening classes prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown were compared to those who took them after the lockdown. One of the most important aspects of language learning is listening. Many universities have faced internet accessibility challenges as a result of the abrupt shift to online learning. Sudan University of Science and Technology was one of the first universities to use Moodle and WhatsApp groups, but students had a lot of trouble connecting to the sessions and groups. Unlike other English language skills, listening has a unique nature that requires direct communication between the teacher and students, as well as between the students themselves. As a result, the researchers are interested in learning more about the impact of COVID-19 Lockdown on Sudanese EFL students' Tertiary Listening Skills.

3.2 Question of the study

What is the impact of COVID-19 on the Sudanese EFL students' listening skill?

3.3 Hypothesis of the study

COVID-19 has a negative effect on the Sudanese EFL students' listening skill.

3.4 Population of the study

This study focuses on Sudanese EFL first-year students at Sudan University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Education, English Language Department. The study's sample size is 30 Sudanese EFL students. It is divided into two groups: those who completed the Listening skills course prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in the academic year 2019/2020, and those who completed it during the Pandemic in the academic year 2020/2021.

4. Data Analysis

Cronbach's alpha method

Where reliability was calculated using Cranach's alpha equation shown below:

$$\text{Reliability coefficient} = \frac{n}{n-1} * \frac{1 - \text{Total variations questions}}{\text{variation total grades}}$$

$$\text{Validity} = \sqrt{\frac{n}{n-1} * \frac{1 - \text{Total variations questions}}{\text{variation total grades}}}$$

Cranbach's alpha coefficient = (0.89), a reliability coefficient is high and it indicates the stability of the scale and the validity of the study

Validity coefficient is the square root of the reliability coefficient is (0.94), and this shows that there is a high sincerity of the scale and that the benefit of the study

Table 1: Illustrates of the Cranach's alpha method for the test

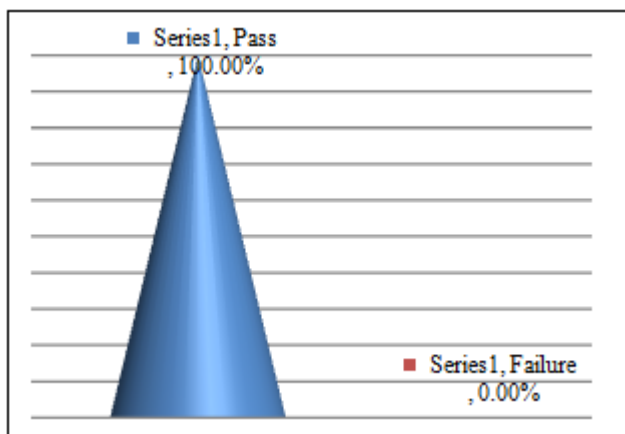
No.	Statement	Reliability	Validity
1	Pre-test grades for listening skill before Corona Virus	0.89	0.94
2	Post-test grades for listening skill during Corona Virus	0.87	0.93
Total		0.89	0.94

Source: IPM SPSS 24 package

Table 2: Illustrates the frequency and percentage for the pre-test grades for listening skill before Corona Virus

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Pass	70	100.0%
Failure	0	0.0%
Total	70	100.0%

Source: IPM SPSS 24 package



Source: prepared by the researcher of the excel 2016

Table (2) illustrates the views of the distribution of the Pre-test grades for listening skill before Corona Virus sample by the statement as follows before pass by (100.0%) (and failure by (0.0%).

Table 3: t-test result showing group means of the pre-test grades for listening skill before Corona Virus

N	Mean	Std. deviation	T – test	Df	Sig.	Scale
30	58.57	5.04	25.564	29	0.00	pass

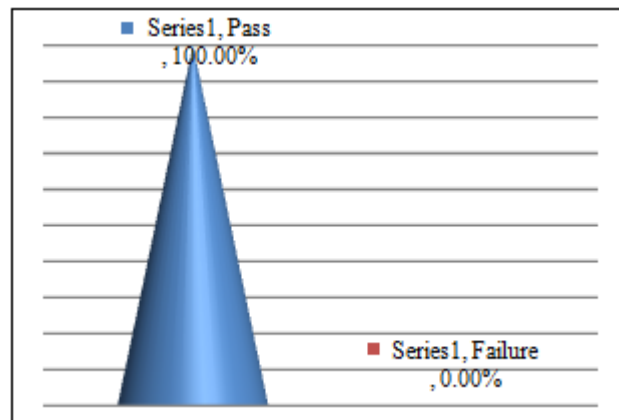
Source: IPM SPSS 24 package

The value of (T) test calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the hypothesis was (25.564) with signify value (0.000) which is less than the level of significant value (0.05) These refer to the existence of differences statistically for the Pass

Table 4: Illustrates the frequency and percentage for the Post-test grades for listening skill during Corona Virus

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Pass	70	100.0%
Failure	0	0.0%
Total	70	100.0%

Source: IPM SPSS 24 package



Source: prepared by the researcher of the excel 2016

Table (4) illustrates the views of the distribution of the Post-test grades for listening skill during Corona Virus sample by the statement as follows before pass by (100.0%) (and failure by (0.0%).

Table 5: t-test result showing group means of the post-test grades for listening skill during Corona Virus

N	Mean	Std. deviation	T – test	Df	Sig.	Scale
30	52.33	6.39	14.841	29	0.00	Pass

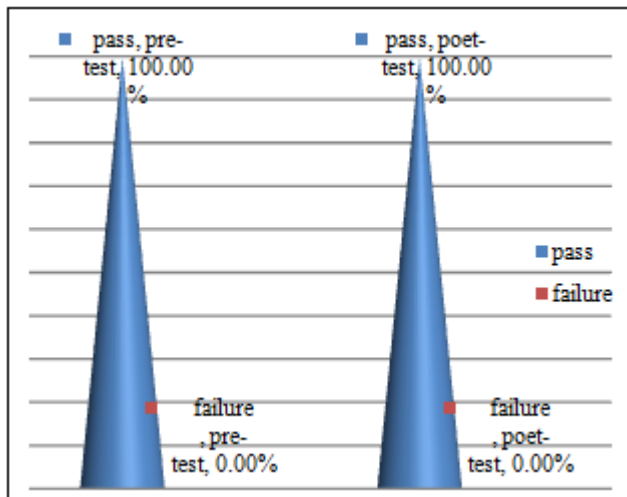
Source: IPM SPSS 24 package

The value of (T) test calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the hypothesis was (14.841) with signify value (0.000) which is less than the level of significant value (0.05) These refer to the existence of differences statistically for the pass.

Table 6: illustrates the frequency and percentage for the content

Valid	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Pass	70	100.0%	70	100.0%
Failure	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	70	100.0%	70	100.0%

Source: IPM SPSS 24 package



Source: prepared by the researcher of the excel 2016

Table (6) illustrates the views of the distribution of the Pre-test sample by the statement as follows pass by (100.0% (and failure by (0.0%) and Post-test pass by (100.0%) and failure by (0.0%).

Table 7: t-test result showing group means of the pre-test and post-test

N	Mean	Std. deviation	T – test	Df	Sig.	Significant
Pre-test	58.57	5.049	4.234	29	0.00	Significant
Post-test	52.33	6.397				

The value of (T) test calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the hypothesis was (4.234) with signify value (0.000) which is less than the level of significant value (0.05) These refer to the existence of differences statistically for the Pre-test.

5. Findings

When the researchers compared the participants' grades on standardized assessments of listening skills before and after the lockdown, the experimental group scored higher than the control group, indicating that the lockdown had no effect on the students' listening skills.

6. Future Scope

More research is needed, on the other hand, to determine the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on English learners' performance in terms of Reading, Writing, and Speaking skills, as well as other aspects of English language learning and teaching. One of the study's limitations is that it only looked at a small sample of Sudanese EFL students from the Faculty of Education at Sudan University of Science and Technology; a larger sample could be drawn from other Sudanese universities. Sudan's infrastructure and educational technology should be developed more by the ministry of general and higher education.

7. Results and Discussion

Sudan has experienced a number of conflicts, including political crises since the revolution began in 2011, environmental crises like the flood of 2020, and health

issues like the COVID-19 pandemic, which has lasted since March 2020. Many schools and universities in other countries adopted eLearning techniques as an alternative to offline and face-to-face classes as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic; however, this did not happen in Sudan. Except for Sudan University of Science and Technology, which is the only university in the country (SUST) (A. H. Ibrahim, 2021), As previously reported, SUST, as a pioneer in the field of technology, was the only university to switch to remote learning as soon as the lockdown began, as was the case with this study. SUST decided to alternate face-to-face lectures with virtual ones as COVID-19 spread across the country, and the English Language Department as part of the University did the same, using the educational platform (Moodle) and a WhatsApp group for each subject to make communication with students easier. The researchers wish they could say the process went smoothly, but students faced numerous obstacles that made it difficult for them to transition to online education, such as poor internet connections in rural areas outside of Khartoum, Sudan's capital. Some students lacked smartphones due to the poor economic situation and the pandemic, and were unable to obtain one. It was impossible to teach or even record listening skills. As a result, the teacher decided to postpone the course until the lockdown ended so that he could teach them face to face. In the era of the covid19 pandemic, Sudan, on the other hand, has around 36 governmental universities that do not offer online learning. It is only available to master's students. To overcome all deficiencies and create a more motivated and effective online learning environment, online learning through Blackboard must be introduced on a regular and proper basis. (Almekhlafy, S.2020). When the researchers compared the grades of the students on a standardized test of the listening skills course before and after the lockdown, the results have shown that the experimental group scores were higher than the control group, indicating that the lockdown had no effect on the students' listening skills. The researchers argue that more research into the impact of the lockdown on other aspects and skills of English language teaching and learning is needed because they are English teachers.

8. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has an impact on every aspect of life, including education. All universities switched from traditional to online lectures during the pandemic. Sudan university was no exception; all classes were shifted online using Moodle and WhatsApp groups, making teaching listening difficult in Sudan for a variety of reasons: the network was not very good, and in some areas, electricity services were even unavailable, some students did not have laptops or smart phones, and some students found internet fees to be prohibitively expensive, because Sudan is currently experiencing very difficult situations, first the revolution, then the flirtation. The ability to listen is the most important skill for EFL students to improve their L2 level. The ability to listen is the most important skill for EFL students to improve their L2 level.

The purpose of this study is to see how lockdown affects the performance of Sudanese EFL students in listening skills. Around the world, online or electronic learning (E-learning)

has become an important part of the provision of educational materials. The extent, to which it is used, however, varies from place to place. (Alzamil, 2021, p. 20) . Despite the fact that human desires are limitless and endless, and that they strive to achieve higher levels of satisfaction by satisfying higher levels of need through higher demands, the same appears to be meaningless in the current context. The pandemic has also taught us to focus on our most important priorities while ignoring the rest. (Dubey1, P., & Pandey, D. 2020) Despite the fact that human desires are limitless and endless, and they strive for higher levels of satisfaction by satisfying higher levels of need through higher demands, the same appears to be meaningless in the current context. The pandemic has also taught us to focus on our most important priorities while ignoring the rest. (Kuning, 2019, p. 43) All classes have moved to an online format due to COVID-19. Systemic and technical issues are two types of problems that can arise. Institutions lack the necessary resources and equipment for conducting online classes. All of these issues are significant obstacles to running online classes, such as server overloading, a lack of computer devices, and the inability to install software. Institutions must be prepared to deal with these issues at all times. These types of pandemics can strike at any time. Furthermore, the institute should have backup plans in place, such as Plan B or Plan C, to address these issues without causing students to fall behind in their studies. (Mahmood, 2020, p. 201) The COVID-19 pandemic is posing a threat to health systems and governments all over the world, including in developed countries. Sudan's situation is more dangerous than that of other countries because, in addition to the ongoing pandemic, the country is experiencing a syndemic of several man-made and natural disasters. (Ahmed et al., 2021, p.207) According to researchers, the lockdown has had a negative impact on the students' listening skills. The researchers can see that the experimental test's listening scores are higher than the controlled test's. That is something that researchers can owe to the course's structure, the psychological effects of the lockdown, and the fear of a COVID-19 Pandemic. In addition to a lack of instructor preparation, there were also technological challenges and student demotivation.

Declaration

The paper is not financed.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their thanks and gratitude to the participants of this study for their dedication, efforts and time.

References

- [1] Abas, I. M. Y., Alejail, I. I. E. M., & Ali, S. M., 2021. Anxiety among the Sudanese university students during the initial stage of COVID-19 pandemic. *Heliyon*, 7(3), e06300. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e06300>
- [2] Ahmed et al. 2021. COVID-19 in Sudan, *J Infect Dev Ctries* 2021; 15(2):204-208. doi:10.3855/jidc.14520
- [3] Almaiah, M. A., Al-Khasawneh, A., & Althunibat, A. 2020. Exploring the critical challenges and factors influencing the E-learning system usage during COVID-19 pandemic. *Education and Information Technologies*, 25(6), 5261–5280. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-020-10219-y>
- [4] Alzamil, A. 2021. Teaching English Speaking Online versus Face-to-Face: Saudi Students' Experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Arab World English Journal*, 12 (1) 19-27. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.2>
- [5] Almekhlafy, S., 2020. Online learning of English language courses via blackboard at Saudi universities in the era of COVID-19: perception and use | *Emerald Insight*. [online] Emerald.com. Available at: <<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/PRR-08-2020-0026/full/html>> [Accessed 10 November 2021].
- [6] Atmojo, A. and Nugroho, A. 2020, EFL Classes Must Go Online! Teaching Activities and Challenges during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia. *Register Journal*, Vol 13, No 1, pp.50. DOI: 10.18326/rgt.v13i1.49-76
- [7] Dubey1, P., & Pandey, D. 2020. Distance learning in higher education during pandemic: challenges and opportunities. *Distance Learning in Higher Education during Pandemic: Challenges and Opportunities*, 8(2), 43. <https://doi.org/10.25215/0802.204>
- [8] Gaily, M., al Haziiaz, M., al Hajri, A., P Subramanian, K., & Muthuraman, S. (Eds.). 2021. Reconsidering the Challenges of Virtual Language Classrooms in the Light of the Covid-19 Pandemic: the Case of AOU in Sudan. In "Co-Creating the Post COVID-19 World Exploring Sustainable Paths" (1st ed., Vol. 1, p. 240). Arab Open University, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.
- [9] Hussain, S. 2017. Teaching Speaking Skills in Communication Classroom. *International Journal of Media, Journalism and Mass Communications*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.20431/2454-9479.0303003>
- [10] Huang, Chaolin, et al. "Clinical Features of Patients Infected with 2019 Novel Coronavirus in Wuhan, China." *The Lancet*, vol. 395, 2020, pp. 497.
- [11] Hmedat, W. 2021. A Study on Rediscovering, Redesigning and Reinventing the strategies to overcome Challenges posed by COVID – 19 On Global Education. In M. Ali, M. al Haziazi, A. al Hajri, K. P Subramanian, & S. Muthuraman (Eds.), "Co-Creating the Post COVID-19 World Exploring Sustainable Paths" (1st ed., Vol. 1, p. 190). Arab Open University, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.
- [12] Ibrahim, A., al Haziazi, M., al Hajri, A., Subramanian, K., & Muthuraman, S. (Eds.). 2021. New Learning Paths: Technology Transformations, Challenges, and Sustainable Educational Practices. In CO-CREATING THE POST COVID-19 WORLD EXPLORING SUSTAINABLE PATHS (1st ed., Vol. 1, p. 172). Arab Open University, Sultanate of Oman.
- [13] Ibrahim, A. H. 2021. E-Services in Sudan during the Covid-19 Pandemic as a Model: a Case Study of University of Bahri-Sudan. *Journal of Governance and Public Policy*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.18196/jgpp.v8i2.11422>
- [14] Khalil, Rehana, et al. "The Sudden Transition to Synchronized Online Learning during the COVID-19

- Pandemic in Saudi Arabia: A Qualitative Study Exploring Medical Students' Perspectives." BMC Medical Education, vol. 20, 2020.
- [15] Kuning, D. S. TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING SPEAKING SKILL. Journal of English Education, Literature and Linguistics, 2(1), 50–59. <https://doi.org/10.31540/JEELL.V2I1.243>
- [16] Mahmood, S. 2020. Instructional Strategies for Online Teaching in COVID -19 Pandemic. Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies, 3(1), 199–203. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.218>
- [17] Masuram, J., & Sripada, P. N. 2020,.DEVELOPING SPOKEN FLUENCY THROUGH TASK-BASED TEACHING. Procedia Computer Science, 172, 624–625. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2020.05.080>
- [18] SUDAN humanitarian impact of multiple protracted crises.2020, November.ACAPS.<https://www.acaps.org/country/sudan/crisis/complex-crisis>
- [19] GUIDANCE NOTE FOR EDUCATION SECTOR DURING COVID-19 IN SUDAN.2020, April. Sudan Education Sector.
- [20] Renukadevi, D. (2014). The Role of Listening in Language Acquisition; the Challenges & Strategies in Teaching Listening. International Journal of Education and Information Studies, 4(1), 59.

Author Profile



Dr. Rasha Mohammed Elbashir Salih is assistant professor of Applied Linguistics at Sudan University of Science and Technology. She did her PhD in Applied Linguistics and Master's degree and Bachelor degree in ELT. A CELTA graduate, certified teacher trainer, teacher training supervisor and e.moderator at the British Council Sudan. Dr. Rasha has a very good experience in administration as well; she was the coordinator for English language programs at Technology College and master degree in education (English language teaching) program in Graduate college and head of English department in Sudan University. She was the executive secretary and a member of the advisory committee TESOL SUDAN, a member of TESOL International and IATEFL. Dr. Rasha has four published course books on Phonetics, Phonology and Approaches and Methods of ELT and English language testing, two published papers and 4 under publication. She volunteered as a proposal reviewer for TESOL International convention and English language Expo 2021 and a reviewer for Journal of Learning and teaching in Higher education: Gulf Perspectives and the Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice.



Dr. Shaza Mohammdzain Rahama is a graduate of Education (ELT) with First class. She did her master's degree in ELT and PhD in Applied Linguistics. She started her career as a secondary school teacher at Aljaili high secondary school and then joined Sudan University of Science and Technology as a teaching assistant then promoted to a lecturer and assistant professor. Shaza has a very good experience in administrative work as well. She is a coordinator for master's degree program of ELT at her college and has professional skills in Web tools and