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## POST-COVID 19 EDUCATION LANDSCAPE: A STUDY ON STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPACT OF ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING IN ORAL COMMUNICATION COURSE

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### Abstract

Asynchronous mode in teaching and learning for oral communication is one way practiced by language instructors and students during the pandemic Covid-19. However, administering and learning through this mode have proven to be quite a challenge considering the lack of resources and knowledge they experienced now. This is a pilot study conducted to investigate the challenges or issues students faced in learning the oral skills online during the Movement Control Order (MCO) period. This pilot study utilised a questionnaire survey method for data collection. Recruitment of research participants was performed through purposive sampling. There were 80 participants that were involved in the study who have taken the Oral Communication in English (OCE) course in a public university in Malaysia. The participants were between 21 to 24 years old, with 60 females and 20 males. The data was analysed using SPSS version 27. Generally, participants felt that learning oral communication in asynchronous mode have helped them improve their oral communication skills. It is hoped that this study's findings will contribute to the development of an oral communication instructional framework in asynchronous mode to meet the literacy needs of students.

**Keywords:**

Asynchronous Mode, Oral Communication, Students' Perceptions

**Introduction**

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4.0) integrates technology into our daily lives, allowing us to access education at any time and from any location. The Covid-19 pandemic has forced schools, HEIs, and training providers to go online to ensure that effective learning continues. While technology can help with the transition from face-to-face to virtual learning, having access to high-quality digital content is critical, especially during the movement control order (MCO). The use of online teaching and learning (Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran, PdP) to replace classroom instruction is one technique to comply with the movement control order (MCO), which was enforced on March 18 to break the Covid-19 infection.

To limit the transmission of infection, many universities have shifted their classes online. HEIs must guarantee that remote techniques are effective for students to ensure minimal disruption to teaching and learning activities. Teachers and lecturers have been given a curveball by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has forced the closure of all schools and colleges across the country. Lecturers were concerned about how they would teach remotely during this unusual period so that students did not miss out on a significant portion of their education. Students' biggest issue, although having previously been taught through online lectures and coursework, was the difficulties of properly learning online.

**Problem Statement**

This study aims to explore issues or challenges in asynchronous multimedia-based oral communication (AMOC) in language learning and teaching faced by students and lecturers during the movement control order (MCO). Additionally, to come up with approaches that are effective for students to ensure limited interruption to teaching and learning activities in language learning. From a lack of internet access to disinterest by parents and students, online learning during the movement control order (MCO) is proving to be a challenge for lecturers struggling to ensure that classes continue despite the turmoil caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Oral communication skills have been traditionally conceived as the product of verbal interaction between the learners and the instructor in a face-to-face context, and unlike reading, writing and listening skills, oral skill is the most difficult to teach, practice, and evaluate through technology. Unlike face-to-face learning, when working in virtual contexts "the oral skill is weakened, since existing technologies do not have a solid methodological base for its maximum development" (Morales & Ferreira, 2008, p. 96). In other words, in online courses, speaking practice is not often provided, or it is limited to repetition and the learners' progress is rarely followed up on. Hence, the oral skill, understood as an instrument for communication, can also be adjusted to online learning just like writing, reading, or listening skills, which are more easily adjusted to online courses. Therefore, this is where research should be conducted to find out issues that affect the quality of language learning during AMOC activities and recommendations to enable asynchronous learning to be carried out effectively.

The proposed study is conducted to answer the question what are the students' perceptions on the impact of asynchronous learning in oral communication course?

## Literature Review

The spread of Covid-19 has forced most educational institutions around the world to temporarily halt their physical classes. UNESCO's report on COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response mentioned that closure of educational institutions has affected 91% of the number of students worldwide and a year into the pandemic, a little less than half of students around the world are still unable to attend physical classes. Educational institutions are now overwhelmed with the need to continue education through remote learning. The disruption of classes does not mean that teaching and learning should stop. Under IR4.0 learners should be able to learn at any time convenient to them and any place they are in (Chin, 2020). Physical classes must now be conducted on virtual platforms to be accessible to learners. Hence, alternative methods of teaching and learning during this period are needed to ensure the continuity of teaching and learning. Many educators voiced solidarity in the need of online teaching and learning materials and assessment methods to combat the inability to hold physical classes and question how teachers can be technologically assisted in virtual lesson deliveries as highlighted by OECD (Tibbits, 2020).

Many institutions that have adopted a blended learning approach in language learning pre-COVID-19 pandemic may still find that the sudden Movement Control Order (MCO) has created a ripple of 'panicgogy' among educators. 'Panicgogy' is a word coined by Morris to describe the panic that both teachers and students face in transitioning from physical classes into an online environment. He explained that what 'panicgogy' needs is teachers' total compassion in understanding the circumstances of the teaching and learning scenarios and how the teachers can work within the circumstances (Kamenetz, 2020).

The pandemic and lockdowns have globally prompted and forced many panic-stricken teachers with limited technological knowledge to learn and use technological tools and gadgets to hold classes on various online platforms. In a study by (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Taghizadeh & Yourdshahi, 2020) teachers were found to lack technological knowledge and experience to have better online teaching experience. However, they are required to prepare digitally curated contents to ensure students' learning and assessments continue.

Hence, educators need to expand their ability to use technological tools as there is a need for electronic and online adaptation at a larger scale for all educational materials to reach learners (Sani, 2020). As USM Centre for Development of Academic Excellence director Professor Abd Karim Alias stated, online teaching and learning need educators to see themselves as 'designers' to be creative in designing lessons using various applications, to get students' online class participation, to hold their interest and to know existing applications available to do class assessments (Sani, 2020).

In the quest to evaluate oral communication, language teachers have ventured onto various platforms to assess students' performance in their speaking skills. Many communication, asynchronous multimedia-based oral communication (AMOC) that includes video conferencing, voice blogs and voice discussions platforms have been utilised in strengthening language learners' communicative language skills. A multitude of activities can be done online to aid learners to develop and enhance their second language (L2) oral skills (Sun, 2009; Zhao, 2003). There are various softwares that promote learners' engagements and encourage extensive L2 oral productions (Beauvois, 1997; Rosen, 2009) which can help learners boost their motivation, collaboration and make them have more autonomy in their learning (Sun,

2009) in order to have a productive and effective language learning experience (Beauvois, 1998). Studies conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic indicated that ESL learners found that technology or multimedia-based learning opportunities fortified their learning experience and boosted their language productivity (Nugroho & Atmojo, 2020; Kim, 2020; Zhang, 2020).

Young & Wests (2018) defined asynchronous multimedia-based oral communication as:

“asynchronous multimedia-based oral communication is one way to provide learners with quality speaking practice outside of class. Asynchronous multimedia-based oral communication helps learners develop presentational speaking skills and raise their linguistic self-awareness” (p. 59).

Lim (2017) mentioned that asynchronous offers a flexible platform that can be accessed at any time; however, it does not provide instantaneous feedback that is “prolonging their agony in unclear terms” (p. 233). Moallem (2015) did a study on the impact of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools; students found that asynchronous communication methods lacked in maintaining social and emotional connections and had limitations on bonds and interchanges between group members. Andersen (2009), mentioned challenges in asynchronous methods in the role of instructors and the achievement of asynchronous communication. The obstacles of using asynchronous methods were supported by Mood (1995) where both students and teachers are virtually but not physically in the same location; all who participate are separated by space and real-time (Carswell and Venkatesh, 2002).

A study by Moallem (2015) revealed that AMOC did not promote either social or emotional bonds between teacher and students, and among students as it was a challenge to enthruse students who were alienated by time and space. Past study by Bordia, (1997) on computer mediated communication (CMC) found that it took longer time to finish than synchronous based tasks and participants were more assignment-oriented and not so much on being socially connected with their peers. However, in a recent study (Namin, et. al., 2021), the five aspects of students’ oral presentation skills (main content, supporting details, language, structure and presentation), evaluated using the Oral Communication VALUE Rubric developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, improved in their collaborative video creation tasks. Moffat, et al., (2021) study on students who had to upload their oral presentation videos on BONGO Video Assignment tool which ensures videos had equal viewing and peer assessed, found internet connection hindered the videos uploading and downloading, instructors needed to be meticulous but the tasks initiated active and engaging learning in students.

Online tools that are available online offer great flexibility to all language learners and teachers to prepare for their lessons. Having AMOC allows learners and teachers to have ample time to share and discuss compared to traditional classes, which allows for very limited in-class speaking opportunities between learners and teachers (Young & West, 2018; Meskill & Anthony, 2005). Similarly, when given the time and space to work at their own pace, students were able to practise, reflect on their tasks and amend their oral production repeatedly, which could lead to better overall output (Kim, 2015). Besides that, AMOC enables L2 learners to express their thoughts at their own pace and feel more confident than in face-to-face situations (Sun, 2009; Zhao, 2003). Assessors need to know that the use of new technology is likely to impact learners’ learning style as they embark on the new realm of online learning (Chéliz & Cabezuolo, 2019).

The new norm of learning from online and at the comfort of students' homes need adjustment. Students and teachers who are used to face-to-face classes need to look at the availability of devices and online connection to ensure that teaching and learning can be adjusting to learning from home requires more than just preparing the facilities and infrastructure to do so, but also summoning the motivation and determination to engage in autonomous learning. These, as can be conceived, may bring about various anxiety and pressure for the learners. Therefore, language teachers should take these into consideration when designing and employing AMOC activities.

Nevertheless, as pointed out by Cuestas and Fazzi (2012), if properly planned and executed, the use of technology outside of the classroom fosters independence and encourages students to take charge of their learning, which is a positive by-product of the shift to online teaching and learning. According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language's (2012), presentational speaking is a skill, which is compulsory in most occupations, that can be acquired via AMOC. It also prepares the learners to practice and plan before their speech act (Young & West, 2018). Crookes (1989) discovered that learners can produce a wide range of vocabulary, different phrases and sentences and detailed illustrations with more preparation time given. Young & West (2018) stated that AMOC promotes self-evaluation where students are required to listen and watch their own performance. Learners are allowed to revise and re-record to improve their videos into the best possible version. AMOC today has been widely used in social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Whatsapp and Snapchat among Generation Z around the world. To incorporate AMOC effectively into a curriculum, researchers need to determine the modes of content presentation that are best suited to teach the different oral skills.

### Methodology

This pilot study utilised a questionnaire survey method for data collection. Recruitment of research participants was performed through purposive sampling. In total 80 second year students who have taken the Oral Communication in English (OCE) course in a public university in Malaysia participated in this study. The participants were between 21 to 24 years old, with 60 females and 20 males.

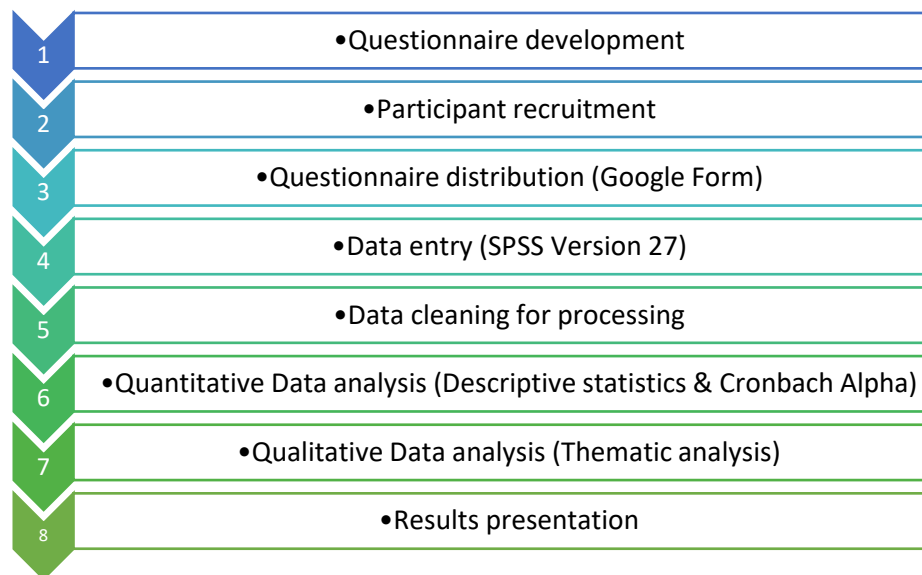
The research instrument of the present study was in the form of an online questionnaire administered through the Google Form platform. The link of the questionnaire was shared through WhatsApp to the participants by their respective OCE instructors. The self-developed questionnaire consisted of 29 questions. The questions were divided into four main sections: Section A, biodata; Section B, online learning preferences; Section C, impact of asynchronous mode in learning oral communication; and Section D, issues and recommendations. Section A consisted of six short answer questions. Sections B had two Likert scale questions and one multiple response question (Question 9). All 16 questions in Section C were based on Likert scale responses. Meanwhile, Section D contained two multiple choice questions (Questions 26 and 27), and two open-ended questions (Questions 28 and 29).

The data was analysed using the IBM SPSS Statistics (version 27) software. Analysis of descriptive statistics such as frequency and mean were performed. In addition, the Cronbach Alpha of the questionnaire items were also analysed to determine the reliability of the items. Before the items were analysed, the Likert scale score for five questions were reversed because these items were negatively worded. These include Question 15, 'I feel that asynchronous mode



does not provide me with the support I need to improve on my oral communication'; Question 16, 'I felt that asynchronous mode made me procrastinate in doing my communicative tasks'; Question 17 'I easily forget about the oral communication tasks assigned in asynchronous learning'; Question 18, 'I tend to get confused with all the assigned oral communication assignments in asynchronous learning'; and Question 22, 'I did not feel the pressure to learn to speak the English Language because asynchronous learning allows me to learn at my own pace'. The reliability score for Section B and C (Questions 7-8, 10-25) was .809.

Section D, Issues and recommendations (questions 27-28) were analysed qualitatively. The two open-ended questions were coded according to themes before the results were presented. The methodology of this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

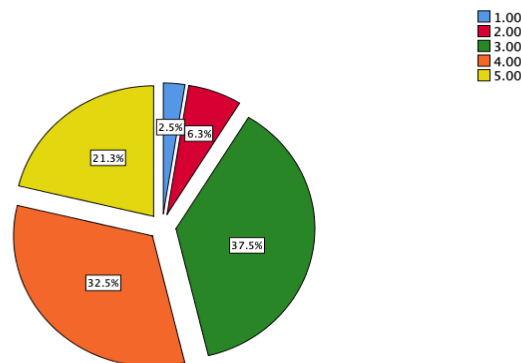


**Figure 1. Methodology of The Study**

In reporting the results, findings are discussed under six sub-themes; flexibility, support, attitude, performance, satisfaction and preference.

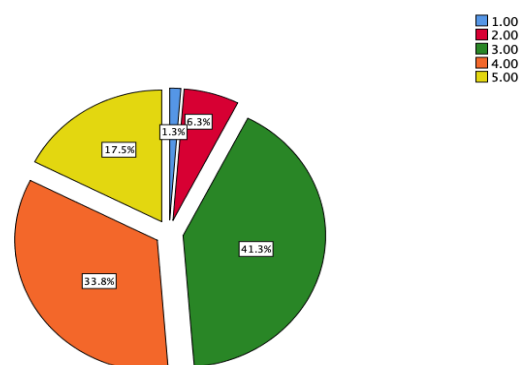
## Result

### *Flexibility*



**Figure 2: I Prefer The Flexibility Of Learning Oral Communication In Asynchronous Mode Than Synchronous Mode Because It Can Be Done Anytime, Anywhere.**

Based on Figure 2, there are 37.5% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 11. However, there are more respondents who prefers the flexibility of learning oral communication in using asynchronous mode with 32.5% agree and 21.3% strongly agree with the item. A total of 2.5% strongly disagree and 6.3% disagree that prefers synchronous mode when learning oral communication.

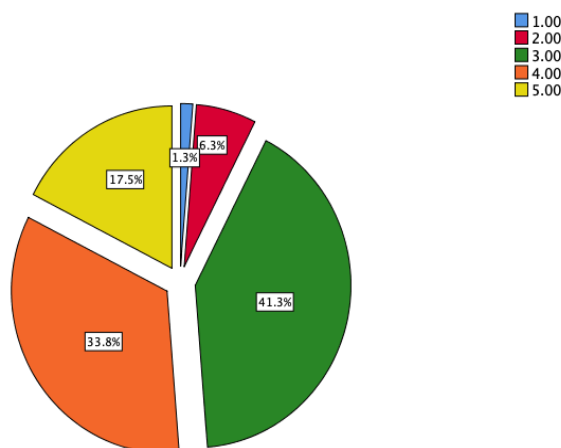


**Figure 3: I Felt That Asynchronous Mode Helped Me To Be More Independent In My Learning.**

Based on Figure 3, there are a total of 41.3% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 12. However, there are more respondents who have agreed that asynchronous mode has indeed helped them to be more independent in their learning with 33.8% agree and 17.5%

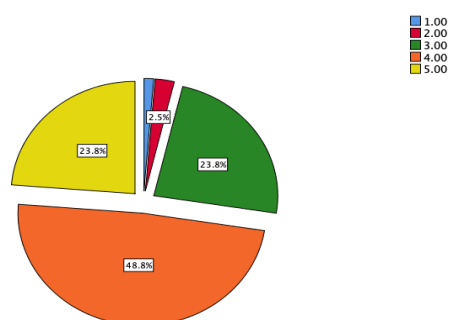
strongly agree with the item. A total of 1.3% strongly disagree and 6.3% disagree that asynchronous helped them to be an independent learner.

### Support



**Figure 4: I Have Multiple Opportunities To Listen And Respond To (And Benefit From) The Contributions Of My Peers In Asynchronous Mode.**

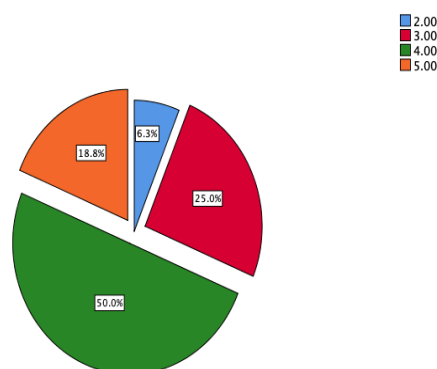
Figure 4 shows that there are a total of 33.8% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 13. There are more respondents who agreed that they have more opportunities to listen and get responds from their peers when they are doing asynchronous mode with 46.3% agree and 16.3% strongly agree with the item. 3.8% respondents disagree on having opportunities to listen and respond from their peers.



**Figure 5: I Was Able To Get Personal Help And Feedback From My Instructor While Learning Oral Communication In Asynchronous Mode.**

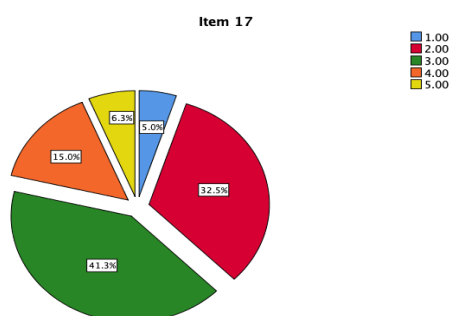


Figure 5 points out that there are a total of 23.8% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 14. On the other hand, majority of the respondents with 48.8% agree and 23.8% strongly agree that they were able to get personal help and feedback from their instructor when they are learning the course through the asynchronous mode. 2.5% disagree and 1.3% strongly disagree respondents were not able to get personal help or feedback during asynchronous mode.



**Figure 6: I Feel That Asynchronous Mode Does Not Provide Me With The Support I Need To Improve On My Oral Communication.**

Figure 6 shows that there are a total of 45.0% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 16. Majority of the respondents with 27.5% disagree and 7.5% strongly disagree felt that there were sufficient support received to improve on their oral communication. However, 2.5% strongly agree and 17.5% agree that they did not receive sufficient support to improve on their oral communication during asynchronous mode.

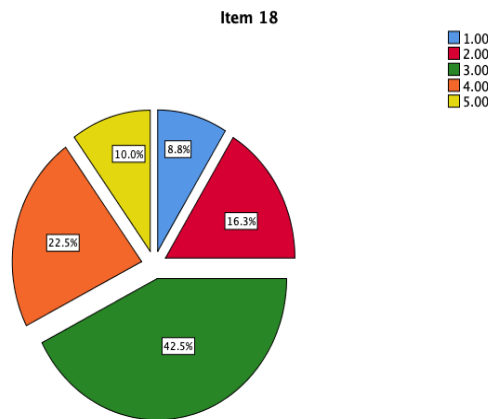


**Figure 7: I Felt That Asynchronous Mode Made Me Procrastinate In Doing My Communicative Tasks.**

Figure 7 shows that there are a total of 41.3% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 17. The respondents with 32.5% disagree and 5.0% strongly disagree that asynchronous mode made them procrastinate in their communicative tasks. However, 6.3% strongly agree

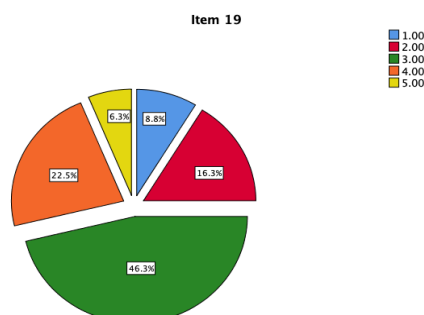
and 15.0% agree that they procrastinate their communicative tasks when they are in their asynchronous mode.

### *Attitude*



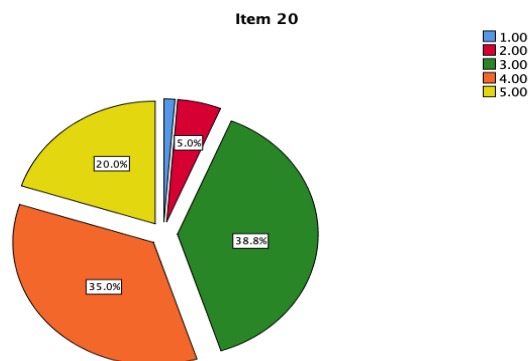
**Figure 8: I Easily Forget About The Oral Communication Tasks Assigned In Asynchronous Learning.**

Figure 8 points out that there are a total of 42.5% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 18. Majority of the respondents with 22.5% agree and 10.0% strongly agree that they easily forget about the tasks assigned when they are doing asynchronous learning. 16.3% disagree and 8.8% strongly disagree respondents know or remember the tasks given during the asynchronous learning.



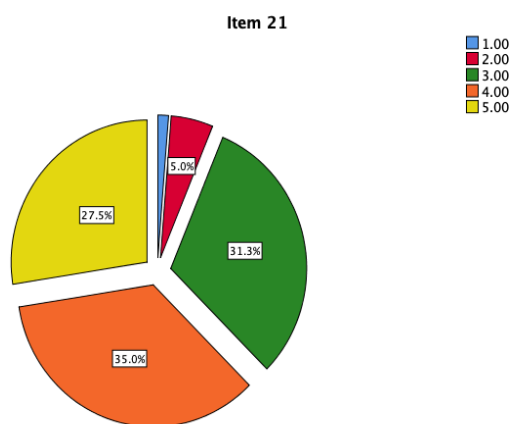
**Figure 9: I Tend To Get Confused With All The Assigned Oral Communication Assignments In Asynchronous Learning.**

Figure 9 shows that there are a total of 46.3% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 19. Some of the respondents with 22.5% agree and 6.3% strongly agree as they tend to get confused with the assigned tasks for the course. Some respondents did not get confused with their assigned tasks with 16.3% disagree and 8.8% strongly disagree.



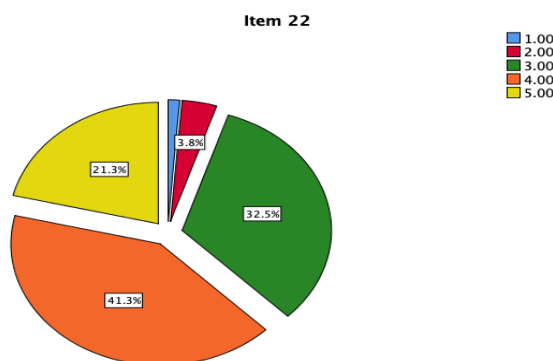
**Figure 10: I Participated Actively In Online Class Discussion Asynchronously.**

Figure 10 depicts that there are a total of 38.8% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 20. Most of the respondents with 35.0% agree and 20.0% strongly agree participated actively in online discussion asynchronously. Some respondents were not active in participating when it comes to asynchronous learning with 5.0% disagree and 1.2% strongly disagree.



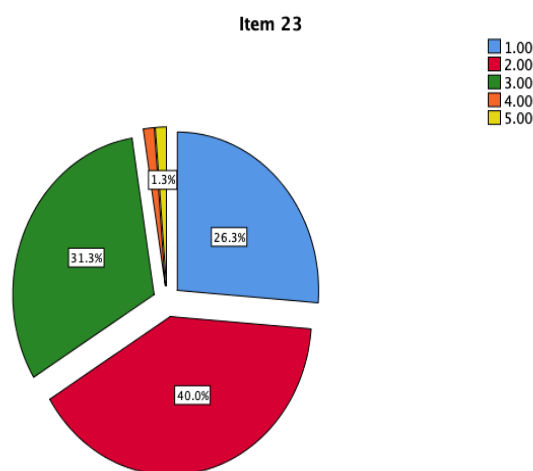
**Figure 11: I Became More Confident In Expressing My Ideas Because Asynchronous Learning Provides Me More Time To Practice.**

Figure 11 indicates that there are a total of 31.3% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 21. Most of the respondents with 35.0% agree and 27.5% strongly agree that they become more confident in expressing their ideas as they get more time to practice on their own. Some respondents did not agree that they have become more confident in expressing their ideas with 5.0% disagree and 1.2% strongly disagree.



**Figure 12: I Became More Motivated To Improve My Speaking Skills Because Asynchronous Learning Allows Me More Time To Practice.**

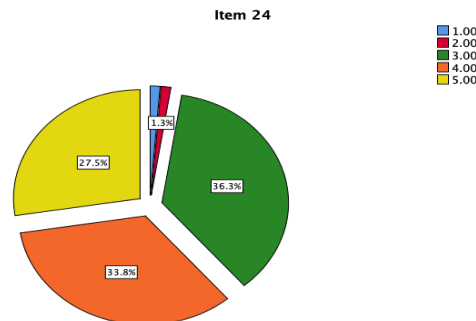
Figure 12 shows that there are a total of 32.5% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 22. Majority of the respondents with 41.3% agree and 21.3% strongly agree about being more motivated to improve their speaking skills with the ample of time given for practice. Some respondents did not become motivated even with the flexibility of time given by the instructor to practice with 3.8% disagree and 1.1% strongly disagree.



**Figure 13: I Did Not Feel The Pressure To Learn To Speak The English Language Because Asynchronous Learning Allows Me To Learn At My Own Pace.**

Figure 13 shows that there are a total of 31.3% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 23. Some of the respondents with 1.1% agree and 1.3% strongly agree that they did not feel the pressure to learn to speak English language when learning at their own pace. Most of

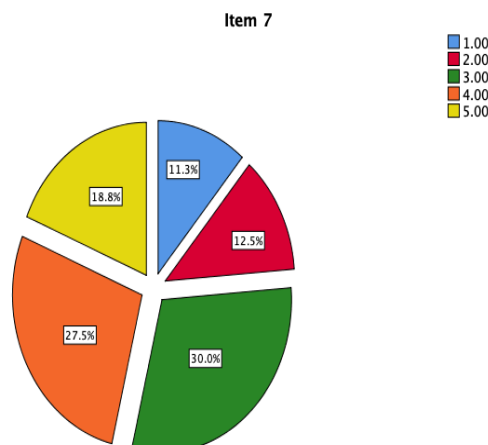
the respondents feel the pressure to learn to speak English language even when learning at their own pace where 40.0% disagree and 26.3% strongly disagree.



**Figure 14: I Can Understand Better All The Materials For Oral Communication Because I Can View Them At Anytime And Anywhere In Asynchronous Mode.**

Figure 14 shows that there are a total of 36.3% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 24. Most of the respondents with 33.8% agree and 27.5% strongly agree that they they understand the course materials better as they can view it anytime and anywhere. Some respondents did not understand the course materials even though the materials are accessible anytime and anywhere with 1.3% disagree and 1.1% strongly disagree.

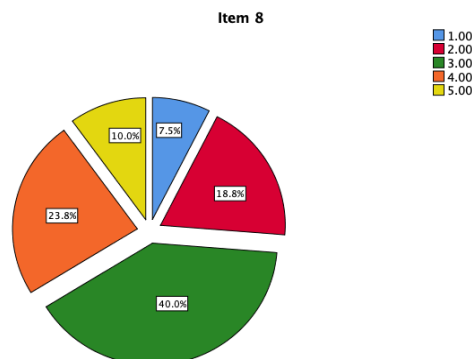
### *Preference*



**Figure 15: I Prefer Asynchronous (Pre-Recorded, Self-Paced, Without Real Time Interaction) Lessons Compared To Synchronous (Face To Face, Real Time Interaction) In Learning Oral Communication.**

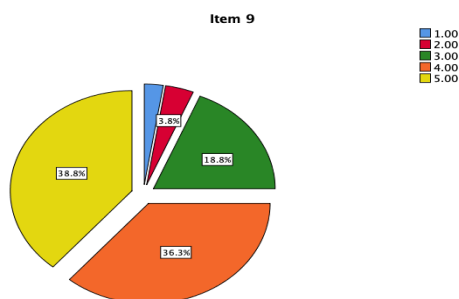
Figure 15 depicts that there are a total of 30.0% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 7. Most of the respondents with 27.5% agree and 18.8% strongly agree that they preferred

asynchronous lessons. Some respondents preferred synchronous lessons with 12.5% disagree and 11.3% strongly disagree.



**Figure 16: In My Opinion, Asynchronous Lessons Are More Effective Than Synchronous Lessons In Learning Oral Communication.**

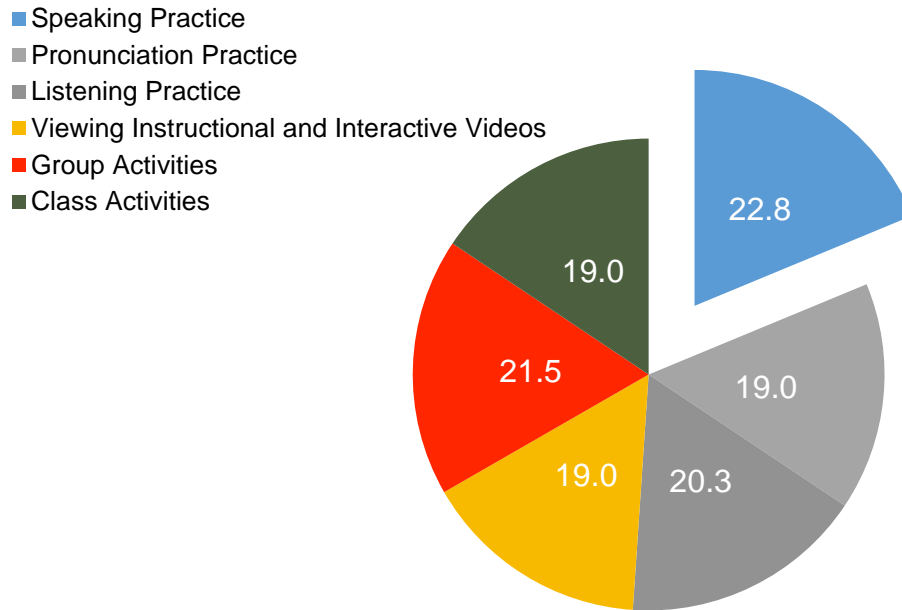
Figure 16 shows that there are a total of 40.0% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 8. Most of the respondents with 23.8% agree and 10.0% strongly agree with asynchronous lessons being more effective compared to synchronous lessons. Some respondents did not agree with asynchronous being more effective than synchronous lessons with 18.8% disagree and 7.5% strongly disagree.



**Figure 17 I Think Face To Face Interaction With My Instructor Is Necessary For Oral Communication Course.**

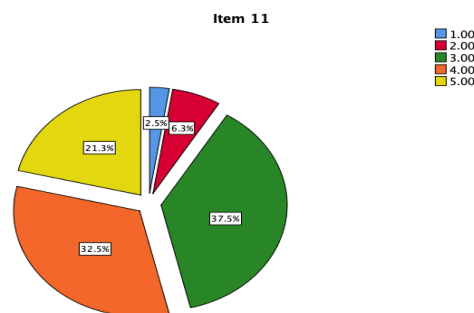
Figure 17 shows that there are a total of 18.8% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 9. Most of the respondents, 36.3% agree and 38.8% strongly agree with having face to face interaction with the instructor is necessary. Some respondents does not think face to face interaction is necessary for the course with 3.8% disagree and 2.3% strongly disagree.





**Figure 18: Types Of Oral Communication Activities Students Prefer Doing In Asynchronous Mode.**

Figure 18 illustrates the number of percentages on the types of activities students preferred when they are doing asynchronous mode. The number is accumulated based on the choices made by the students. Based on the chart, most students preferred the speaking practice (22.8%) followed by group activities (21.5%). Some students also preferred listening practices (20.3%). The rest of the activities with a total of 19.0% each are class activities, pronunciation activities and viewing instructional and interactive videos.

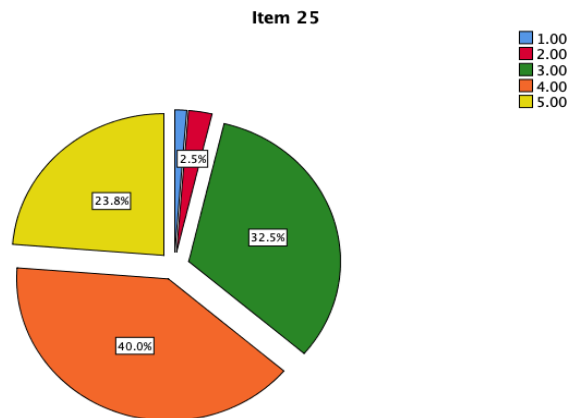


**Figure 19: I Prefer The Flexibility Of Learning Oral Communication In Asynchronous Mode Than Synchronous Mode Because It Can Be Done Anytime, Anywhere.**

Figure 19 illustrates that there are a total of 37.5% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 11. Most of the respondents 32.5% agree and 21.3% strongly agree as they preferred

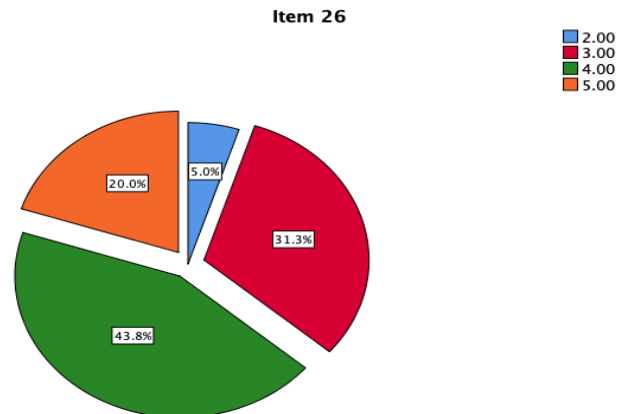
the flexibility of learning oral communication in asynchronous than synchronous mode. Some respondents still preferred synchronous mode with 6.3% disagree and 2.5% strongly disagree.

### *Performance*



**Figure 20: I Think I Performed Better In Oral Communication Tasks As I Could Do Several Retakes Before Submitting The Final Tasks.**

Figure 20 indicates that there are a total of 32.5% respondents who neither agree or disagree with item 25. Most of the respondents, 40.0% agree and 23.8% strongly agree that they performed better in their oral communication tasks by having the chance to do several retakes before submitting the final tasks. Some respondents did not feel that they perform well in their oral communication tasks with 2.5% disagree and 1.2% strongly disagree.



**Figure 21: Overall, I Was Satisfied With The Asynchronous Activities Conducted In The Oral Communication Course.**

Figure 21 depicts that most of the respondents (43.8%) neither agree or disagree with item 26. Some of the respondents were not satisfied with 31.3% who have chosen to disagree and 5.0% strongly disagree with the statement. On the other hand, there are some respondents (20.0%) agree that they are satisfied with the asynchronous activities conducted in Oral Communication course and none of the respondents have chosen strongly agree.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this study aims to investigate students' perceptions on the impact of asynchronous learning in oral communication course. As a result of Covid-19, the students were introduced to learning oral communication asynchronously. This method of learning is quite new to most because they are used to learning face-to-face especially for speaking. Therefore, this study has revealed a mixed reaction in the students' perceptions. But mostly, positive feedbacks were received from them. They enjoy activities that they can personally do and re-do according to their convenience. Therefore, asynchronous learning can be an ideal way for students to engage higher learning from the comfort of their homes, with the flexibility that allows them to work on their own schedule and around the many other responsibilities that they may have. It especially appeals to those who are good independent learners, and to those whose schedules would keep them from being able to pursue education in a traditional course structure. It does have weaknesses, and those should be considered and seriously considered by instructors and students alike. The identification of interesting asynchronous oral communication activities may pave the way for improvement of oral skills among ESL students. Instructors can provide students with speaking practice by including these activities in their lesson plan. The findings will inform instructors on the types of speaking activities that students prefer to do asynchronously which hopefully can able the students to improve their oral communication skills.

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