

Learning EFL Listening and Speaking Skills via Blackboard: Students' Attitudes, Challenges, and Assessment

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Online learning can be considered an important means of education during emergencies. However, educational institutions, including students and teachers, need to have enough preparation, as a result, many issues, such as challenges, the effectiveness of assessment methods, and attitudes toward learning online, have emerged. This study describes the reality of using the Blackboard platform to learn EFL listening and speaking skills from a student perspective. It examines students' experiences and attitudes in learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard. Also, it reflects students' views on the acquired EFL listening and speaking skills, challenges of learning via Blackboard, and the effectiveness of assessment methods. The study followed the descriptive-diagnostic approach to achieve its objectives. The results showed that students highly valued the Blackboard platform to learn listening and speaking skills. Also, they liked to be assessed using the online assessment methods. In addition, students' most technical problems were recorded during exams and virtual classes due to poor Internet. Furthermore, they improved their learning of listening and speaking skills via Blackboard.

Keywords: listening and speaking skills, EFL context, online learning, attitudes, challenges, assessment

INTRODUCTION

The sudden shift of learning from traditional to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic has posed many issues that need more investigation. EFL students' experiences about learning listening and speaking skills via Blackboard (management learning system) are worth examining to highlight the attitudes, effectiveness of assessment methods, challenges, and degree of improvements. There is adequate research on learning English as a foreign language (EFL) online. Nevertheless, few studies have comprehensively examined students' views on learning listening and speaking skills via Blackboard, especially in the Saudi higher education institutions. Therefore, the current study delineates students' attitudes toward the online learning of listening and speaking skills. Also, it concentrates on the effectiveness of the assessment methods employed by teachers via Blackboard. Additionally, it highlights the challenges of learning listening and speaking via Blackboard. The current study hopes to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights and solutions to help students and teachers overcome the problems teaching and learning listening and speaking skills online. Also, educational institutions will benefit from the current results of the study to handle the problematic issues of management learning systems (Blackboard). The study attempts to achieve the following objectives:

1. to examine students' attitudes to learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard.

2. to identify the effectiveness of assessment methods in learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard.
3. to describe the challenges of learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard.
4. to reflect students' views on the acquired EFL listening and speaking skills.
5. to correlate the participants' responses by their gender.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The online teaching and learning process in general and that of listening and speaking skills has received the researchers' attention, especially during the sudden transfer to online education due to the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, the review of literature has focused on most studies during and after the pandemic.

E-learning is learning that is based on technology in which learning materials are electronically distributed to remote learners over a computer network. E-learning can be given considerably more quickly and used by a big population distributed around the globe simultaneously. It may also be accessible when it is convenient for the student, and he can move around the course to examine information that is relevant to his needs. A student can use E-learning courses to select the course and engage just in the relevant sections to his present position. This can save time and effort for him. The online student benefits from increased efficiency by covering the same information in roughly half the time of a traditional session. Moreover, E-learning may reach a huge number of learners in a short period of time. It can provide fast access to knowledge at precisely the right time. Anybody, at any time and from any location, may access learning when it is convenient, whether at home or work (Goyal, 2012).

Online learning has numerous advantages in the EFL context. Megat Abdul Rahim et al. (2021) showed that students at UiTM Perak Branch, who learned through the MOOC platform, viewed as interesting, and it can provide them space to progress at their own pace. Wang (2020) explored the effects of video serving as online group work on students' English learning and showed that the videos online and virtual interaction enabled the students to learn from one another and to reflect on their own learning. According to Gördesliolu and Yüzer (2019), blending courses benefits both teachers and students by increasing classroom instruction time and encouraging learners to enhance their learning. Kashghari and Asseel (2014) indicated that using Blackboard included easy access to course material, Blackboard not being complicated to use, and effectiveness of using computers. Some challenges were observed, such as technical problems, lack of training, and infrastructure.

However, there are challenges to employing online learning in the EFL context. Sulistyowati et al. (2022) studied the possibility of applying socio-affective instruction in online learning in Indonesia during the pandemic. The results indicated that socio-affective instruction significantly influenced students' listening and speaking proficiency. Also, students valued a comfortable environment during online learning. However, online learning caused learning collaboration to have many disadvantages, including students working individually. Sim et al. (2021) investigated online learning for university students and discovered a moderately high level of acceptance of online learning among university students. Among the challenges of online learning were students' improved English language skills, enthusiasm, self-efficacy, satisfaction, delivery speed of teaching and learning, students' attitudes, challenges, and stress. Teo et al. (2022) examined the online listening difficulties faced by EFL learners in preparing for the IELTS listening test. Many difficulties, such as listening text content, failure to concentrate, listener, speaker, and environmental factors, affected their listening performance. Famularsih (2020) examined students' utilization of online learning applications in English as a Foreign Language classroom, which proved effective in urgent situations. Yet, problems, such as slow-speed internet connection, so many tasks, not all teaching material can be taught through online learning, and lack of interaction between lecturer and student were cited. Atmojo and Nugroho (2020) investigated how EFL teachers carry out online EFL learning. The activities that were conducted via learning management systems ranged from taking attendance to assessing students' works. Yet, lack of preparation and planning were among the most challenges for online learning.

Online learning has improved the acquisition of ELF listening and speaking skills. Ghonivita et al. (2021) described students' listening skill and vocabulary mastery through contextual teaching and learning using online learning that improved their listening skill and vocabulary mastery. Ayyat and Al-Aufi (2021) examined students' perspectives of the use ESL-lab.com and Youglish.com. The study revealed positive feedback, and the two websites proved to be highly interactive and effective in enhancing students' listening, speaking, and pronunciation skills. Ordoñez and Holguín (2021) determined the impact of Online Conversation Clubs on undergraduates' listening and speaking skills. All students had low levels of pronunciation and high motivation to self-correct their mistakes. Students also improved their communication skills significantly. Mulyadi et al. (2021) examined the impact of online Task-Based Language Teaching on ESP learners' listening comprehension and speaking performance. The findings revealed that the use of technology influenced students' listening comprehension. Also, the learners' speaking performance improved highly, yet, online presentations and group discussions did not significant improvement. Kashghari and Asseel (2014) indicated that using Blackboard has improved students' listening skills; however, the improvement of speaking skills was not certain. Gördeslioğlu and Yüzer (2019) found that using language management systems, i.e., Blackboard Learn could improve the learning process and the effectiveness of a listening and speaking course.

Online learning has contributed to improving students' learning of listening and speaking skills in the EFL context. Mohammed (2022) presented a fully online course model for teaching speaking and listening skills for students learning Arabic as a foreign language at the International Peace College South Africa on the NEO learning management platform. The results revealed that the respondents' attitudes towards the online course were positive and statistically significant. Novita et al. (2022) showed that students engaged cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally in the online learning of the Academic Listening and Speaking course. They understood teaching materials and activities, enjoyed classroom-learning activities, and participated in discussions and problem-solving. In addition, students' engagement was affected by student and teacher rapport, peer support, and learning passions. Alzamil (2021) investigated students' attitudes toward online teaching of English speaking and online learning and teaching of English. The author found that respondents had positive attitudes toward and appreciated the benefits of online learning. Similarly, Rerung (2018) found out the students' perceptions towards online and face-to-face learning in listening and speaking classrooms through the Cambridge Learning Management System. The result shows that most students perceive online learning as an alternative tool to help them during their learning process. Likely, Hussain (2016) investigated students' perceptions on the accessibility, usability, and effectiveness of using Blackboard in a web-enhanced listening and speaking course. The results showed positive attitudes toward using Bb to help them improve their linguistic skills and communication. Salbego and Tumolo (2015) investigated teachers' and students' perceptions regarding synchronous Skype classes, who perceive web-conferencing as potential for language learning, with emphasis on speaking and listening skills. Among the advantages, web-conferencing pays more attention to online interaction, helps make oneself more understandable, lowers affective filter, develops speaking and listening skills, gives more comfort, and access to learning from anywhere. The participants reported technical problems, the impossibility of lips and body gestures reading, and lack of social contact.

To sum up, although the online teaching and learning of EFL skills have challenges and obstacles, the review of literature has showed that EFL students and teachers perceive it positively, and it can help students improve their listening and speaking skills through making the process of learning more engaging, interactive, enjoying. This study adds to the existing body of knowledge by examining pre-university students' experiences with learning listening and speaking skills through Blackboard. The current study comprehensively attempts to describe students' points of view the effectiveness of assessment methods, challenges, attitudes, and acquisition of listening and speaking skills through Blackboard during the complete transfer of learning due to the pandemic. The study problem was formulated in the following research questions:

1. What are the pre-university students' attitudes toward learning listening and speaking skills via Blackboard?

2. How effective are the assessment tools through Blackboard in learning listening and speaking skills?
3. What are the technical problems that pre-university students face when learning listening and speaking skills via Blackboard?
4. What are the listening and speaking skills that pre-university students learned via Blackboard?
5. Do the participants' responses to learning listening and speaking skills via Blackboard differ by gender?

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted the descriptive approach to collect data due to its suitability to identify the reality of the pre-university students' points of views about learning listening and speaking skills via Blackboard in the Saudi higher educational institutions. Students' attitudes, assessment methods, level of improvement, and challenges were collected through a closed-item questionnaire, and then they were described and reported as reported by the study participants.

Population and Sample of the Study

The study population consisted of preparatory year students from Najran University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They numbered (1000) male and female students. Students, who are in the science stream in high school join the Preparatory Year. They study different subjects, namely, mathematics, computer skills, thinking and communication skills, and four English skills over two semesters. After that, they specialize in medical, computer, and engineering science colleges. Their average age is eighteen, and their English background is almost similar; they studied English for eight years at school. Also, they are Saudi, and their first language is Arabic. The sample included exploratory and main samples. The exploratory sample consisted of (30) male and female students from outside the study sample to ensure the validity and reliability of the study tool. The main sample was selected following the convenient sampling technique. An electronic link for the questionnaire was created for the study tool and circulated to the target group. The participants' consent form was attached to the questionnaire. Those wishing to participate in the study had to click the participation agreement. After determining the response period of (30) days to receive responses, the number of respondents reached (366) male and female students: (201) male students, at a rate of (54.9%), and (165) female students, at a rate of (45.1%).

The Study Instrument

The study used a quantitative tool (Questionnaire). Based on the literature review and the researcher's experience in teaching EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard, the researcher developed the 60-itemed questionnaire. It included four sections: attitudes (26 items), assessment (11 items), learned listening and speaking skills (10 items), challenges (13 items).

Validity and Reliability

The researcher presented the questionnaire to five College of Languages and Translation faculty members. The faculties specialize in English language learning and computer-assisted language learning. Also, they have enough experience in teaching the English language for non-native speakers. In addition, they received sufficient training program on teaching online using different learning platforms such as Blackboard, Zoom, and Google Classroom. The jury of judges were asked to check the questionnaire in terms of content, i.e., items belong to their domains, and the tool can collect the related data to the research questions and objectives. Also, they verified the questionnaire from in terms of wordiness, language, clarity, and errors. Their comments and suggestions were taken into account. They included deleting and modifying inappropriate items and placing some items in their correct field. Also, the experts maintained the clarity of drafting, integrity of the language, and items are free from linguistic and typographical errors. The final version of the questionnaire consisted of (56) items. To verify the internal consistency of the questionnaire, the researcher applied it to an exploratory sample of (30) students, who were excluded from the main study.

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between the items and the domain to which they belong. The correlation coefficients were statistically significant at (0.01), as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
INTERNAL CONSISTENCY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE (PEARSON CORRELATION)

No.	Domain	Pearson correlation (items)
1	Attitudes toward learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard	.562**-- .831**
2	EFL listening & speaking skills	.680** -- .872**
3	Assessment of learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard	.471** -- .824**
4	Technical Problems of learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard	.640** -- .872**

Based the pilot study, the exploratory sample confirmed the clarity of the questionnaire items. The questionnaire average time was 15 minutes.

The reliability coefficient was also calculated using Cronbach’s alpha equation for the domains of the questionnaire and the whole scale. The results were as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
CRONBACH’S ALPHA RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS (QUESTIONNAIRE)

N	Domain	N of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
1	Attitudes	25	0.95
2	EFL listening & speaking skills	9	0.88
3	Assessment of learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard	10	0.95
4	Technical Problems of learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard	12	0.83

Table 2 shows that Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients on the domains ranged between (0.83 - 0.95). These coefficients are high and suitable for the study.

Statistical Processing

The statistical software (SPSS) version (23) was adopted to analyze the study’s results and answer its questions. The following equations and test were used:

- Pearson correlation coefficient was used to check the validity of consistency.
- Cronbach Alpha were employed to verify the reliability of the study tool (Questionnaire).
- Means, standard deviations, and ranks were extracted for answering the research questions.
- Independent sample t-test was computed to correlate the participants’ responses by their gender.
- The following grading was adopted for the items and domains of the study tool to determine the degree of agreement based on the range equation according to Table 3.

TABLE 3
STANDARDS FOR INTERPRETING THE VALUES OF THE MEANS ACCORDING TO THE FIVE-POINT LIKERT SCALE

Degree of agreement	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Mean	1-1.80	>1.80-2.60	>2.60-3.40	>3.40-4.20	>4.20-5

Study Procedures

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the following procedures were followed:

- The study problem and its components were identified, the research questions and objectives were formulated.
- The official sources Najran University were referred to determine the study population and calculate the potential participants to participate, following the appropriate sampling technique.
- After that, the researcher prepared the study tool and extracted its validity and reliability indications.
- The study tool was applied to the sample to collect and verify data. Then, the data was entered into the computer memory, and results were drawn using the Social Statistical Package (SPSS), version 23.
- The results were put into tables and commented on, and finally, the results were discussed, and recommendations were written.

RESULTS

Attitudes Toward Learning Listening and Speaking Skills via Blackboard

The collected data on students' attitudes toward learning listening and speaking skills via Blackboard were descriptively analyzed in terms of means, standard deviations, and ranks. Table 4 shows the results.

TABLE 4
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS VIA BLACKBOARD

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
Blackboard enhanced my confidence in learning EFL listening and speaking skills.	3.98	.951	large
I could send and receive extra links related to EFL listening and speaking content via Blackboard.	4.01	.932	large
The delivery of EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard was smooth and better.	4.05	.999	large
Blackboard promoted my self-learning of EFL listening and speaking skills.	4.07	.879	large
Learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard saved time and efforts.	4.25	1.741	large
I could interact with my teacher and classmates in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard regardless of time or place.	4.12	.902	large
I could review EFL listening and speaking lessons in Blackboard to prepare well for exams.	4.10	.898	large
Blackboard provided a calm environment for learning EFL listening and speaking skills.	4.11	.949	large

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
I could access EFL listening and speaking learning materials via Blackboard easier.	4.20	.860	large
The teacher could better deliver the classes of EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	4.19	.915	large
I could listen to the recorded lectures of EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard many times regardless of time and place.	4.17	.927	large
I could concentrate better in EFL listening and speaking virtual sessions via Blackboard.	4.12	.962	large
I was more motivated to learn EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard.	4.07	1.003	large
Learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard was more competitive.	3.96	1.013	large
I could discuss important points freely with the teacher and classmates in the discussion forum in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	3.96	.977	large
I could send EFL listening and speaking assignments via Blackboard at anytime.	4.29	.840	very large
Learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard could be facilitated using smartphones that helped me to learn at any place.	4.18	.962	large
Virtual classes via Blackboard in EFL listening and speaking course were enjoyable.	4.12	.930	large
I was not given enough time to participate in EFL listening and speaking virtual sessions via Blackboard.	3.78	1.242	large
Time allotted for speaking was not enough during virtual classes of EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	2.86	1.317	medium
The teaching methods of EFL listening and speaking course were not appropriate via Blackboard.	2.74	1.352	medium
Virtual classes reduced my fear of speaking in front of my classmates.	3.79	1.263	large
Learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard can lead students to cheating and other unethical practices.	3.75	1.256	large
I felt bored in learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard.	2.75	1.386	medium
I benefited from the teachers' feedback via Blackboard in learning EFL listening and speaking skills.	4.13	.951	large
Total	3.69	.533	large

Table 4 shows that students' attitudes towards learning EFL listening and speaking via Blackboard was large ($M=3.69$, $SD=.533$). This result means that students highly valued the Blackboard learning platform to learn listening and speaking skills. It is also shown that students used Blackboard to learn listening and speaking skills. They could send assignments at any time ($M=4.29$, $SD=.84$), save time and efforts ($M=4.25$, $SD=1.741$), and access learning materials via Blackboard easier ($M=4.20$, $SD=.860$). Also, the teacher's delivery for the course was better ($M=4.19$, $SD=.915$). However, students had medium disadvantageous attitudes in learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard. The disadvantages were related to not enough time to participate in EFL listening and speaking virtual sessions via Blackboard ($M=3.78$, $SD=1.242$), and Blackboard can lead students to cheating and other unethical practices ($M=3.75$, $SD=1.256$).

Effectiveness of the Assessment Tools through Blackboard in Learning Listening and Speaking Skills

The collected data on students' effectiveness of the assessment tools via Blackboard in learning listening and speaking skills via Blackboard were descriptively analyzed in terms of means, standard deviations, and ranks. Table 5 depicts the results.

TABLE 5
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOLS VIA BLACKBOARD

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Level
Assessment of learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard	3.81	.745		large
Written exams and assignments are very good means to assess students' real level in in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	3.85	1.113	6	large
Learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard improved my academic achievement.	4.07	.890	1	large
The teacher should force students to speak during live lectures of EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	3.46	1.220		large
Group work during live lectures helped assess students' real level in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	4.05	.898	2	large
Questions outside the textbook would help assess students in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	3.34	1.308	9	medium
Question banks where students have random sets of questions may help assess students in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	3.70	1.096	8	large
Continuous discussion during live sessions in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard helped in assessing the real level students.	4.00	.962	3	large
Oral speaking exams helped in assessing the real level of students in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	3.75	1.058	7	large
The teacher could distinguish students' levels in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	3.97	.968	4	large
Speaking exercises were delivered as per the syllabus of EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	3.93	.969	5	large

According to Table 5, it is shown that students highly assessed the use of the assessment tools for learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard ($M=3.81$, $SD=.745$). This result means that students liked to be assessed using the online assessment methods via Blackboard. To explain further, Blackboard assessment tools improved students' academic achievement ($M=4.07$, $SD=.890$). Group work during live lectures helped assess students' real level in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard ($M=4.05$, $SD=.898$). Continuous discussion during live sessions helped assess the real level students ($M=4.00$, $SD=.962$). Questions outside the textbook would help assess students in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard was least assessed by students ($M=3.34$, $SD=1.308$).

Technical Problems for Learning Listening and Speaking Skills via Blackboard

The collected data on students' views about technical problems for learning listening and speaking skills via Blackboard were descriptively analyzed in terms of means, standard deviations, and ranks. Table 6 displays the results.

TABLE 6
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOLS
VIA BLACKBOARD

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Level
Technical problems of learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard	3.01	1.011		medium
I faced a problem in moving from one question to another during EFL listening and speaking exams via Blackboard.	3.52	1.360	1	large
I could not find extra handouts for the EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	2.97	1.245	7	medium
Technical issues such as poor Internet and slowness in Blackboard caused delay in the completion of EFL listening and speaking course syllabus.	3.44	1.293	2	large
I faced a problem in recording and uploading the audios in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	3.17	1.377	4	medium
I faced a problem in receiving assignments and exams notifications in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	2.90	1.385	9	medium
Blackboard was so slow during EFL listening and speaking virtual classes via Blackboard.	3.02	1.317	6	medium
I sometimes faced a problem in logging in virtual classes of EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	2.91	1.310	8	medium
The lecturer's voice was not clear in EFL listening and speaking live sessions via Blackboard.	2.62	1.280	11	medium
There was a problem in playing the audio tracks in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	3.10	1.363	5	medium
I could not review the questions during exams in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	3.24	1.318	3	medium
I could not interact with the teacher and classmates in the discussion forum of EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	2.67	1.226	10	medium
I had a problem in reaching the EFL listening and speaking course contents via Blackboard.	2.58	1.264	12	small

In Table 6, students' technical problems of learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard was medium ($M=3.01$, $SD=1.011$). This result means students sometimes faced problematic technicalities while learning listening and speaking skills via Blackboard. Students' most technical problems were recorded in moving from one question to another during exams via Blackboard ($M=3.52$, $SD=1.360$), and poor Internet and slowness caused delay in the completion of EFL listening and speaking course syllabus ($M=3.44$, $SD=1.293$). The least technical problem was reaching the EFL listening and speaking course contents via Blackboard ($M=2.58$, $SD=1.264$).

Listening and Speaking Skills That Pre-University Students Learned via Blackboard

The collected data on students' learned listening and speaking skills via Blackboard were descriptively analyzed in terms of means, standard deviations, and ranks. Table 7 demonstrates the results.

TABLE 7
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE LEARNED LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS VIA BLACKBOARD

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Level
EFL learned listening & speaking skills via Blackboard	4.11	.738		large
I learned to make inferences in conversations in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	4.08	.873	5	large
I learned many definitions of new vocabulary in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	4.06	.877	6	large
I learned to identify the main idea and details in conversations in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	4.17	.868	2	large
I learned to pronounce word and sentence endings in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	4.16	.847	3	large
I learned to pronounce new words in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	4.20	.818	1	large
I learned to express opinions in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	4.03	.872	8	large
I learned to comprehend dialogues in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	4.11	.818	4	large
I learned to preview conversations in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	4.05	.868	7	large
I learned to ask for information in EFL listening and speaking course via Blackboard.	4.02	.949	9	large

As shown in Table 7, students' total degree for the learned listening and speaking skills via Blackboard was high ($M=4.11$, $SD=.738$). This result means that students improved their learning of listening and speaking skills via Blackboard. To further detail, Blackboard helped students highly to pronounce new words ($M=4.20$, $SD=.818$), identify the main idea and details in conversations ($M=4.17$, $SD=.868$), pronounce word and sentence endings ($M=4.16$, $SD=.847$), comprehend dialogues ($M=4.11$, $SD=.818$), and make inferences in conversations ($M=4.08$, $SD=.873$). Also, Blackboard improved students' listening and speaking skills to learn many definitions of new vocabulary ($M=4.06$, $SD=.877$), preview conversations ($M=4.05$, $SD=.868$), express opinions ($M=4.03$, $SD=.872$), and ask for information ($M=4.02$, $SD=.949$).

The Impact of Gender on the Participants' Responses to Learning Listening and Speaking Skills via Blackboard

The t-test was used to show any differences between students' responses to learning listening and speaking skills via Blackboard based on their gender. Table 8 shows the results.

TABLE 8
T-TEST ANALYSIS FOR GENDER-BASED DIFFERENCES

Domain	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	P -value
Attitudes	Male	201	3.75	.571	2.586	364	.010
	Female	165	3.61	.473			
Learned skills	Male	201	4.22	.746	3.280	364	.001
	Female	165	3.97	.707			
Assessment tools	Male	201	3.95	.736	3.882	364	.000
	Female	165	3.65	.725			
Technical problems	Male	201	2.96	1.110	-1.031-	364	.303
	Female	165	3.07	.875			

Table 8 shows that students' gender played a significant role in their responses to attitudes ($t_{(364)}=2.586$, $p<.05$), learned skills($t_{(364)}=3.280$, $p<.05$), and assessment tools ($t_{(364)}=3.882$, $p<.05$)for learning listening and speaking skills via Blackboard. However, the domain of technical problems had no differences attributed to the participants' gender ($t_{(364)}=1.031$, $p>.05$).

DISCUSSION

The study results are discussed according the research questions.

Discussion the First Research Question: What Are the Pre-university Students' Attitudes Toward Learning Listening and Speaking Skills via Blackboard?

The results showed high student attitudes towards learning EFL listening and speaking via Blackboard. This result means that students highly valued the Blackboard platform to learn listening and speaking skills. Students used Blackboard to send assignments at any time, save time and effort, and access learning materials via Blackboard easier. Also, the teacher's delivery for the course was better. The current result is attributed to the adequate utilization of interactive tools integrated into Blackboard learning management systems. Also, students could cope with the abrupt pedagogical transition from traditional teacher-led teaching to technologically enhanced learning. Students are accustomed to the virtual presence of their instructors and feel more comfortable learning listening and speaking skills via Blackboard. This result is in line with that of Megat Abdul Rahim et al. (2021) who showed that students who learned through the MOOC platform, viewed as interesting, and it can provide them space to progress at their own pace. The result is also consistent with that of Gördesliolu and Yüzer (2019), who revealed that blended courses increased classroom instruction time and encouraged learners to enhance their learning. In addition, Kashghari and Asseel (2014) indicated that Blackboard included the easy access of course material and was not complicated to use. According to Sulistyowati et al. (2022), students valued a comfortable environment during online learning. The results also showed that students in the current study had medial attitudes toward learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard in terms of not having enough time to participate in virtual sessions and the possibility of cheating and other unethical practices, which may not reflect students' real performances (Alzubi et al., 2022; Nazim & Ali, 2022). This result accords with that of Alzamil (2021), who found that respondents had positive attitudes toward online learning in EFL speaking. Hussain (2016) also showed that learners had positive attitudes toward using Backboard to improve their linguistic skills and communication. In addition, Mohammed (2022), found that the respondents' attitudes towards the online course were positive. Finally, technology helps students manage their time in assignment delivery by contacting their teachers (Al-Mwzajj & Alzubi, 2022; Al Zumor et al. (2013).

Discussion the Second Research Question: How Effective Are the Assessment Tools Through Blackboard in Learning Listening and Speaking Skills?

The study revealed that students highly assessed using the assessment tools for learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard. This result means that students liked to be assessed using the online assessment methods via Blackboard. Blackboard assessment tools improved students' academic achievement, group work helped assess students' real level, and the continuous discussion helped assess the real level students. This result is supported by that of Al Zumor et al. (2013) showed that technology assisted students in doing their assessment activities. However, students' medially liked the ideas of having questions outside the textbook. Atmojo and Nugroho (2020), who showed that EFL teachers used learning management systems to assess students' works, yet, lack of preparation and planning were among the most challenges for online learning.

Discussion the Third Research Question: What Are the Technical Problems that Pre-University Students Face When Learning Listening and Speaking Skills via Blackboard?

The study showed that students' technical problems of learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard was medium. This result means students sometimes faced problematic technicalities while learning listening and speaking skills via Blackboard. Students' most technical problems were recorded in moving from one question to another during exams via Blackboard and poor Internet and slowness causing delay in the completion of EFL listening and speaking course syllabus. Comparing the current result with previous research, Salbego and Tumolo (2015) investigated teachers' and students' perceptions regarding synchronous Skype classes and reported technical problems, such as the impossibility of lips and body gestures reading and lack of social contact. Also, Famularsih (2020) reported some technical problems that students experienced like slow-speed internet connection. In addition, Kashghari and Asseel (2014) indicated some technical problems, lack of training, and infrastructure. Furthermore, according to Aborisade (2013), insufficient technical infrastructure, limited facilities, and high student enrollments put even the most motivated students and staff under a lot of strain. Finally, Al Zumor et al. (2013) revealed students' most technical problem related to Internet issues to their successful learning via Blackboard.

Discussion the Fourth Research Question: What Are the Listening and Speaking Skills That Pre-University Students Learned via Blackboard?

The results concluded that students' total degree for the learned listening and speaking skills via Blackboard was high. This result means that students improved their learning of listening and speaking skills via Blackboard. Blackboard highly helped students to pronounce new words, identify the main idea and details in conversations, pronounce word and sentence endings, comprehend dialogues, and make inferences in conversations. Also, Blackboard improved students' listening and speaking skills to learn many definitions of new vocabulary, preview conversations, express opinions, and ask for information. In addition, Blackboard maximized interaction opportunities, ultimately improving students' listening and speaking skills. The current result is in line with that of Novita et al. (2022), who showed that students understood teaching materials and activities. Likely, Ghonivita et al. (2021) showed that online learning improved students' listening skill and vocabulary mastery. Also, Ayyat and Al-Aufi (2021) found that the two websites proved to be highly interactive and effective in enhancing students' listening, speaking, and pronunciation skills. Mulyadi et al. (2021) showed that the use of technology influenced students' listening comprehension, and the learners' speaking performance improved highly. In addition, Gordeslioğlu and Yüzer (2019) found Blackboard could improve the learning process and the effectiveness of a listening and speaking course.

Discussion of the Fifth Research Question: Do the Participants' Responses to Learning Listening and Speaking Skills via Blackboard Differ by Gender?

The results deducted significant differences in students' responses attributed to their gender in the attitudes, learned skills, and assessment tools for learning listening and speaking skills via Blackboard. However, the domain of technical problems had no differences attributed to the participants' gender. This

result is because students, regardless of their gender agree that there were technical problems that they faced during learning the listening and speaking course via Blackboard. Also, learning via Blackboard was new to both genders, and they did not receive enough training using the system. These technical problems are related to exams and the Internet speed, previewing questions, playing audio tracks, and overload in Blackboard during virtual classes. This result is in line with Ayyat and Al-Aufi (2021), who found that both gender, males and females, found that the learning website was interesting, and the classes were useful and enjoyable.

CONCLUSION

The study provides a comprehensive picture of learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard from a student perspective regarding their experiences, attitudes, views on the acquired EFL listening and speaking skills, challenges of learning via Blackboard, and the effectiveness of assessment methods. The results showed that students had positive attitudes toward learning listening and speaking and highly assessed the use of the assessment tools for learning EFL listening and speaking skills via Blackboard. Also, they improved their listening and speaking skills via Blackboard. In addition, they had some technical issues related to the Internet's low speed and overload on Blackboard during virtual classes. The results implicate that online learning via learning management systems like Blackboard can be an effective means of learning listening and speaking skills, provided that some technical issues must be solved out. The result generalization limits the study to EFL students at Najran University, where the study was applied. Also, the study is quantitative. In addition, the result validity relies much on students' seriousness in answering the questionnaire. In light of the current result, the researcher recommends conducting further studies on using Blackboard to teach reading and writing skills. Also, qualitative studies are suggested.

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