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G Shraavan Kumar

Professor and University Head,
Department of English &
Controller of Examinations,
Professor Jayashankar
Telangana State Agricultural
University, Rajendranagar,
Hyderabad, Telangana, India

Azeezuddin Mehmood

Professor and Head,
Department of English, College
of Agriculture, Rajendranagar,
Telangana, India

English language labs: A gateway for confidence through communication

G Shraavan Kumar and Azeezuddin Mehmood

Abstract

It is the responsibility and onus of the institutions to foster the language skills in tune with the industry needs in general and society needs in particular. Ample scope shall be given to the students to acquire language skills and comprehension of dialects and idiolects. Hence, schools and colleges must establish language labs to equip the students to have full-fledged personality. PJTSAU has accomplished this objective by establishing English Language Labs in its various degree colleges for the benefit of the students and providing an excellent platform to the students (89.4%) to realize the importance of the labs for better communication and understanding that vocabulary and word building are essential (84.6%). Further 86.1% of the students have expressed that the labs are useful in exceling in group discussions and interviews that pave a way for their career development. This clearly shows that the language labs in higher education institutions have to be established and further maintained for the overall development of the students.

Keywords: English, language labs, institutions, communication

Introduction

The English language has baffled all for centuries. The mastery over the language became a sine qua non in the present day scenario. We are rather moulded in to one particular race *i.e.*, English speaking race in an already shrunk global space. English language is such a vehicle, which can transcend and transport us in to a higher plane cutting across the class creed and region. It is not only a social leveller but also has potential transformational capabilities.

In view of globalization and privatization of various sectors in the world, the importance of English language gained its vast significance and it is an essential commodity in the present day world. Despite mother tongue, English language and fluency over it is necessary to gain a job and survival in the present social set up. Due to the exodus of many students to the other countries for want of placements where they are offered language. To get through interviews and group discussions, language is needed for which labs and work spaces have to be created at least at higher education institutes. To exhibit immaculate performance, the student needs vocabulary with basic knowledge of English grammar.

Most of the students of Agricultural University are from rural backdrop and pursued their education through vernacular background. Suddenly they experience a large vacuum and may get perplexed with English medium of education.

The 40% of total intake of the University in each course is earmarked for rural students and most of them have studied in vernacular language. The change of medium of Institutions suddenly cause inconvenience in the comprehension of the courses. To make the students understand and how to equip them in English language the University has established English language labs in all its Colleges to enhance the language potential of the students grooming for the competitive examinations. The software was procured as per the needs of the students and staff to give adequate impetus for language, since the majority of the students are from rural areas.

The students hailing from rural background in particular and to those who are from vernacular system of learning right from their primary level of education, fundamentals of the language are of paramount importance which is well defined and every effort is made to make it intelligible by various examples and exercises. However, it is a fact that language cannot be learnt only through reading and writing but always with constant practice.

In the present day society, despite the importance of mother tongue, English language can't be ignored as the scientific and technical advancement of the Universe is being documented in English version only.

Corresponding Author:

Azeezuddin Mehmood

Professor and Head,
Department of English, College
of Agriculture, Rajendranagar,
Telangana, India

Fluency, perfection with an accent and pronunciation claim significant consideration to be on top priority in certain activities like group discussion and interface. In other words, all around development is quite possible with personality development and with effective communication skills. Labs certainly cater to the needs of the students aspiring to learn right from basics of the language. The student community may find labs most useful for equipping themselves with required knowledge in English language which may ultimately fetch them multiple advantages, one of them being their academic pursuits.

Methodology

After the establishment of English language labs in various UG colleges of the University, a survey has been made about the functioning of language labs by circulating a google form to all the students with the following questionnaire:

1. How do you feel about the establishment of Language Lab in your college?
 - Useful
 - Entertaining
 - User friendly
 - All the above
2. Are you able to understand the pronunciation in the conversation?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes can't understand
3. Are you practicing the pronunciation in your conversation in your daily life?
 - Yes
 - No
4. Are you learning vocabulary through language tests and vocabulary tests?
 - Yes
 - No
5. Labs will help immensely to read and understand English.
 - Yes
 - No
6. Labs enables students to write errorless English
 - Yes
 - No
7. Have you understood the difference between American English and British English?
 - Yes
 - No
8. Have you gained confidence to speak English after the establishment of Lab?
 - Yes
 - No
9. Do you think that Lab will be useful to train for public speaking?
 - Yes
 - No
10. Are you able to understand grammar better than before the lab establishment.
 - No difference
 - Only some difference
 - Substantial difference
11. Language learning is made easy by the establishment of the Lab
 - Yes
 - No
12. Have you been asked to see the exercises for finding the error in sentences?
 - Yes
 - No
13. Labs are essential for preparing for competitive examinations
 - Yes
 - No
14. Have you improved language proficiency?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not that much
15. LSRW skills can be acquired with language labs
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know
16. Have you realized that Labs are useful for better Communication
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not that much
17. Vocabulary is important and word building is essential. Have you seen these facilities in the lab
 - Yes
 - No
18. Impact of Greek and Latin words on English language is evident. Have you noticed such words?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not so far
19. Labs are useful for group discussion and interviews. Have you been advised to utilize lab for such needs
 - Yes
 - No

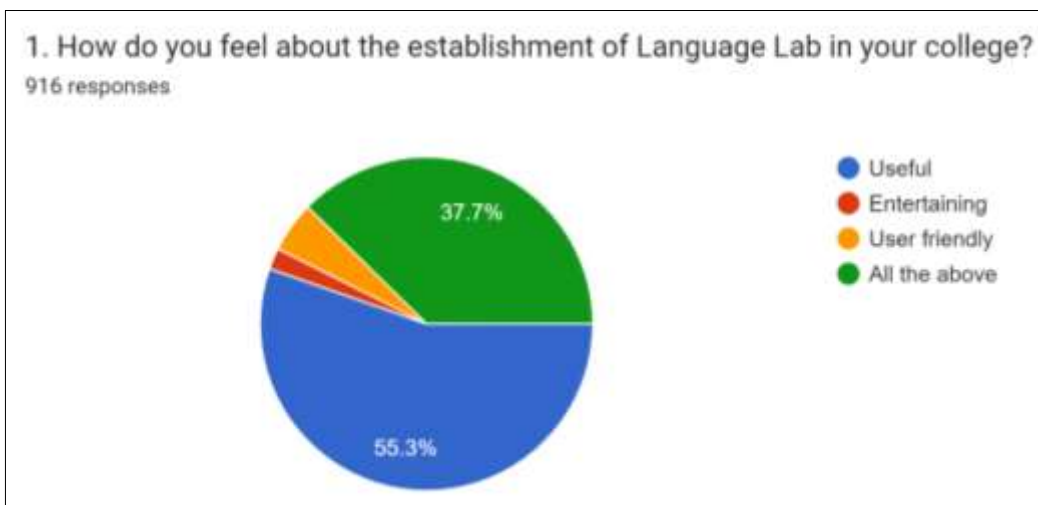
A total of 916 responses received from the students were tabulated and analysed to assess the functioning of the English Language Labs established in the University.

Results and Discussion

There was an overwhelming response by the students in participating the survey. College of Agriculture, Rajendranagar (425 students), Agricultural College, Jagtial (150 students), Agricultural College, Aswaraopeta (43

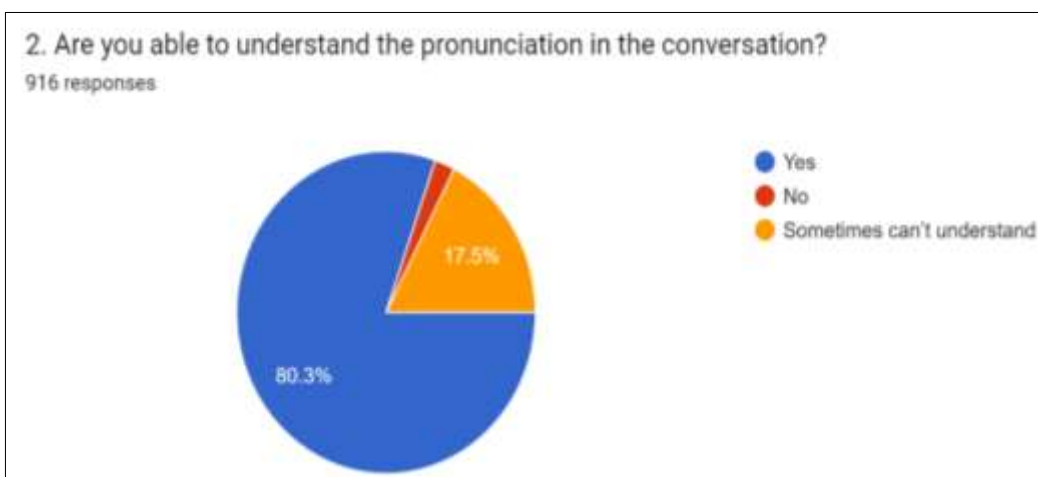
students), Agricultural College, Warangal (76 students), Agricultural College, Sircilla (65 students), College of Agricultural Engineering, Sangareddy (76 students), College of Food Science and Technology, Rudrur (53 students), and College of Community Science, Saifabad (28 students) were the participating colleges in the survey.

The students responded that the establishment of language labs were useful (507 No's), user friendly (45 No's) and entertaining (19 No's). However, 345 students have appreciated all the features of the language lab *i.e.*, useful, user friendly and entertaining.



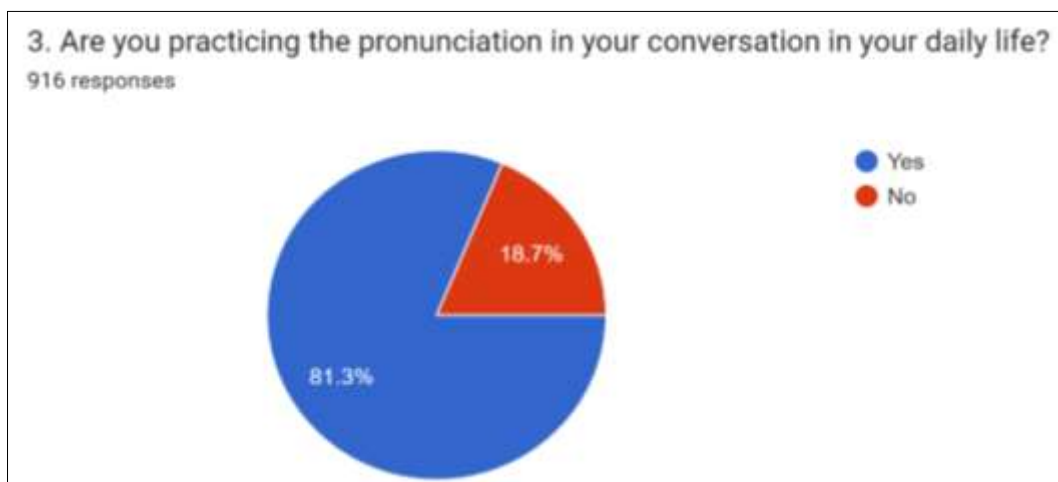
With respect to understanding the pronunciation in the conversation using language labs, 736 out of 916 students

have replied positively which helps them to speak and understand the language confidently.



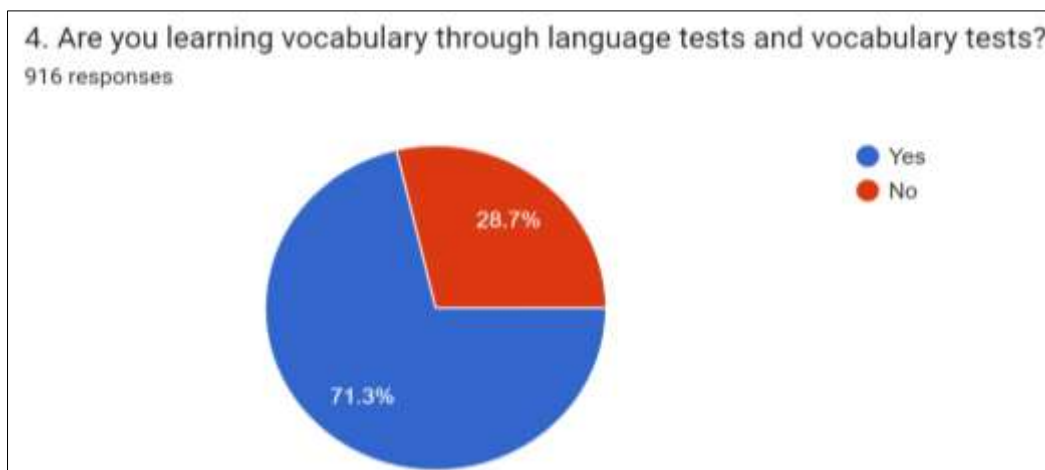
In addition to understanding the pronunciation of the language 81.3% of the students are also using and practicing them in

their day-to-day conversations thereby making it a habit and learning in the process.



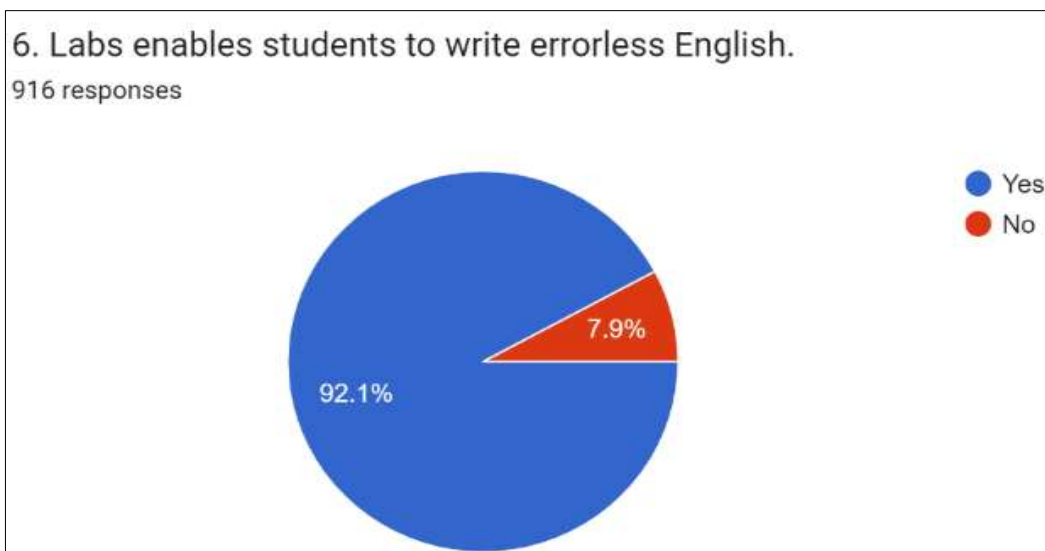
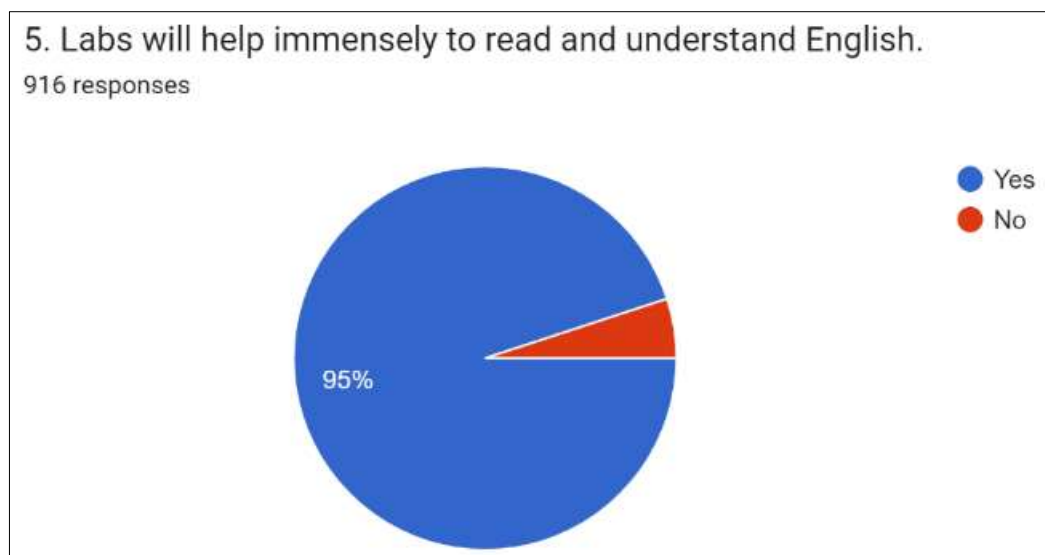
Among the students who participated in the survey, 71.3% of them responded that they are learning vocabulary through the

language and vocabulary tests conducted by the language labs and it is very useful.



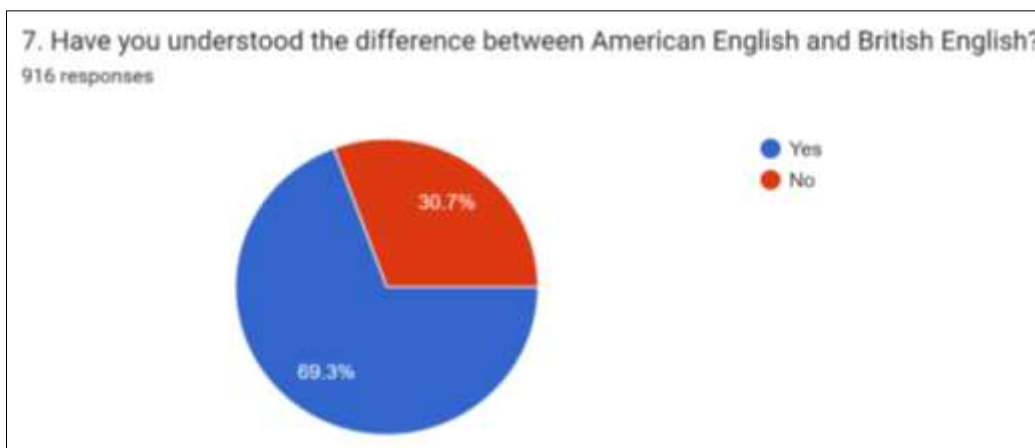
Majority of the students have expressed that labs were of immense help to read and understand English language (95%)

and also to write errorless English (92.1%).



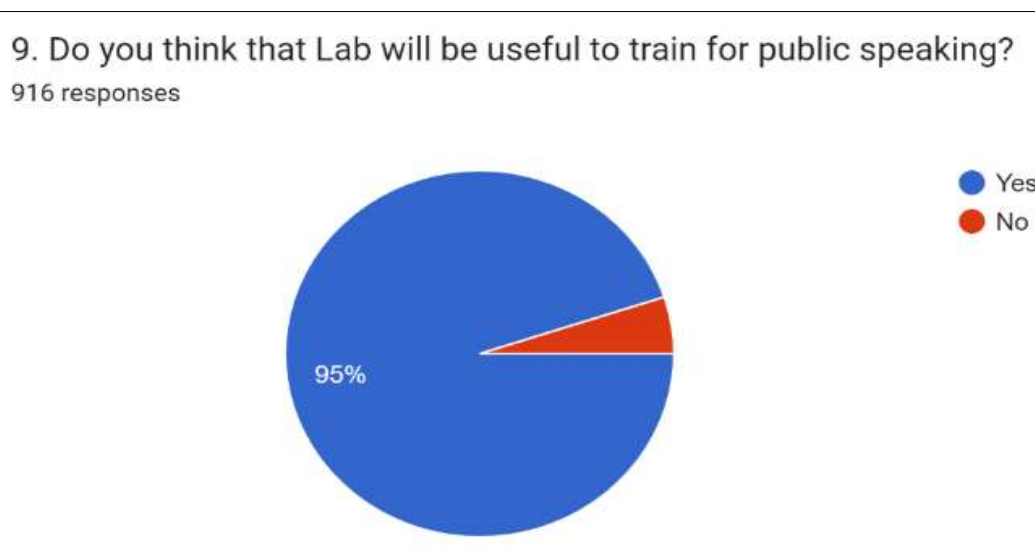
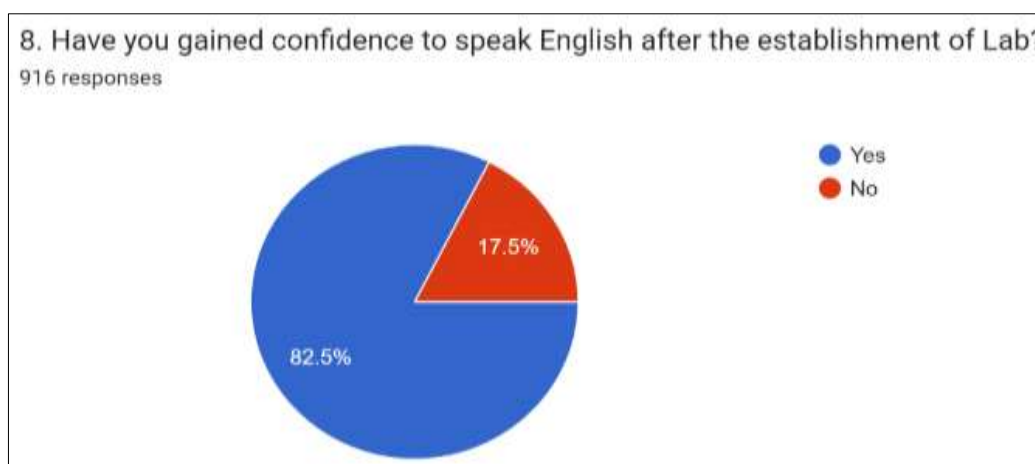
Among the 916 students who have participated in the survey, 635 of them stated that they have understood the difference

between American and British English, with the use of language lab at their colleges.



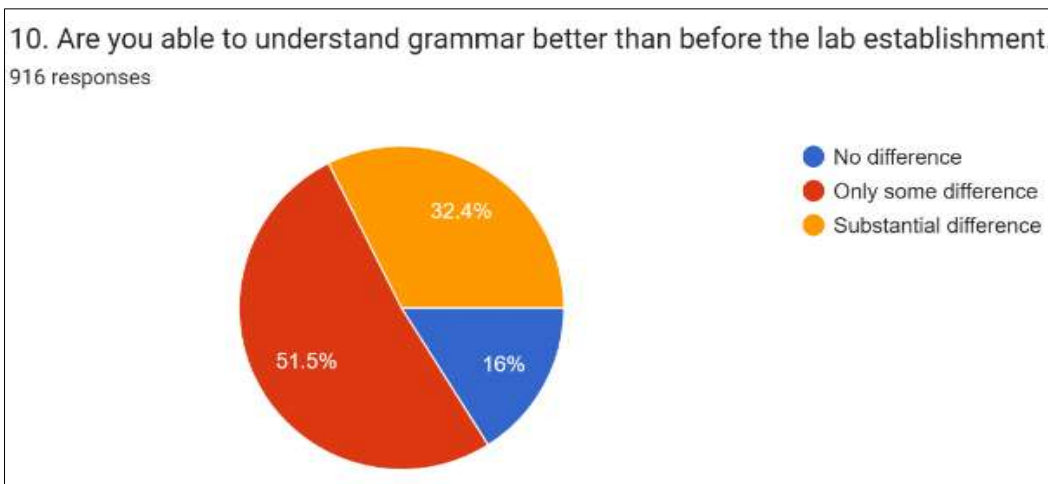
With all the above features of the labs, 82.5% of the students gained confidence to speak English fluently and to write with

minimal mistakes and further 95% of them opined that the labs would aid them in public speaking.



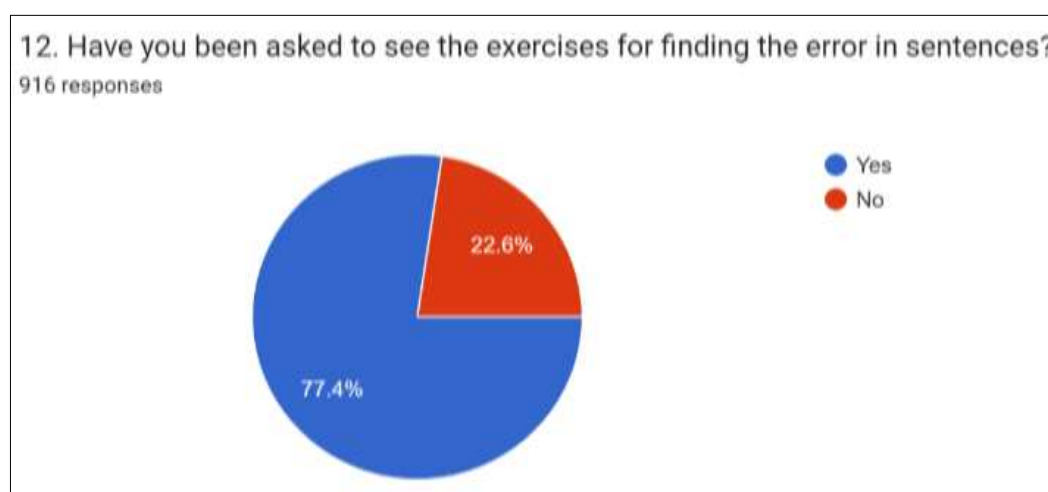
With regard to understanding grammar better than before the establishment of the language lab, 83.9% of the students have expressed that there was substantial to some difference

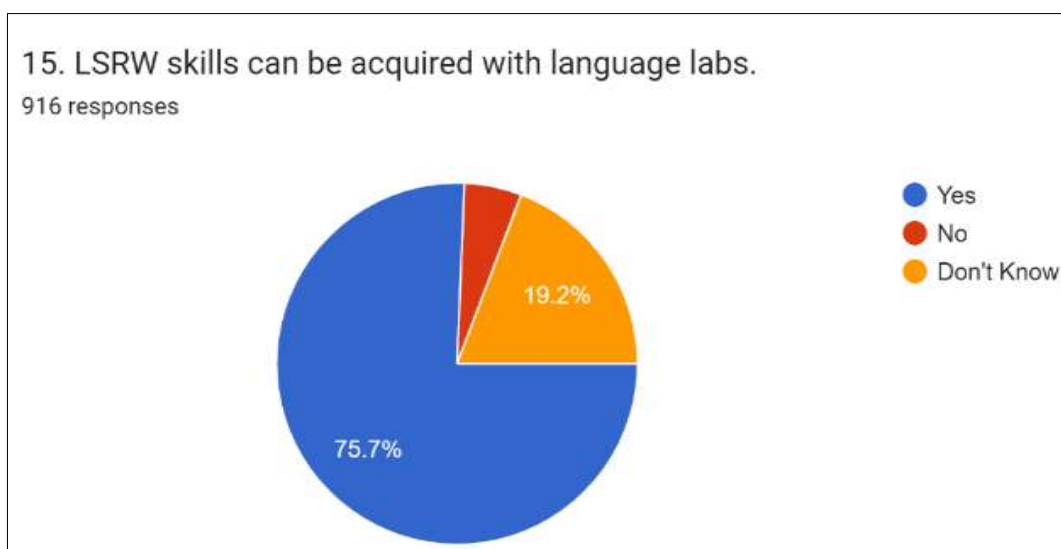
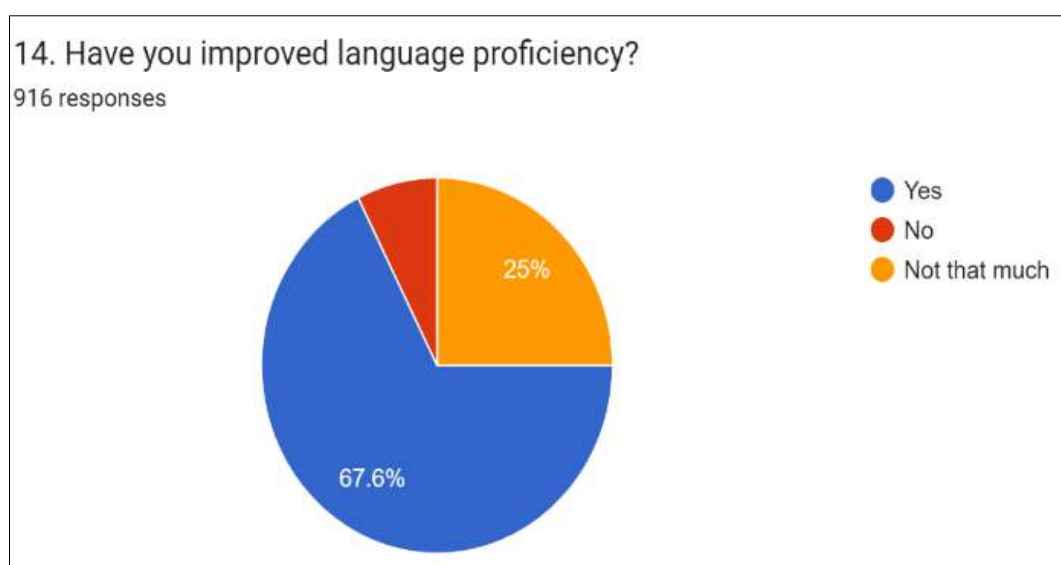
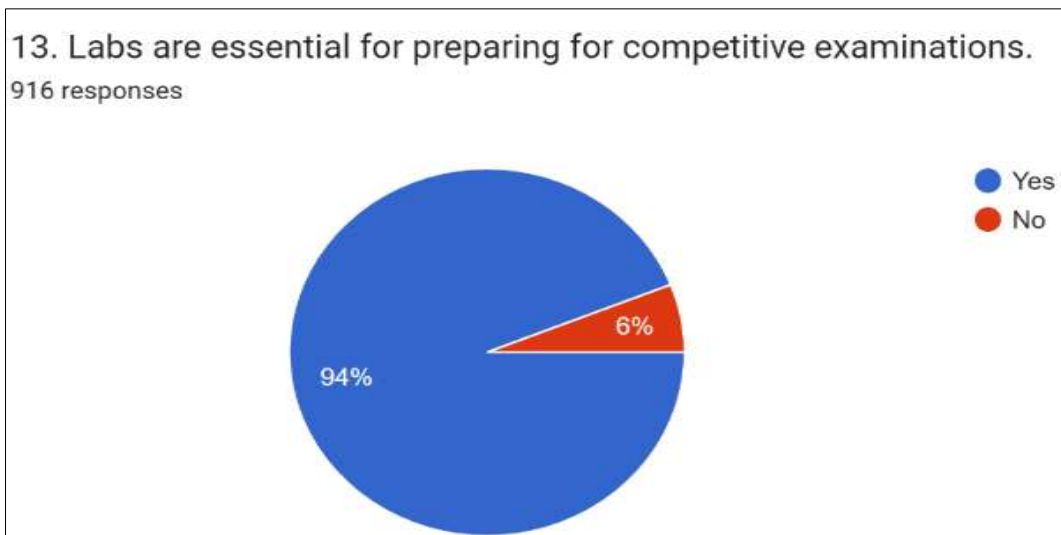
towards better understanding and 93.4% of them felt that language learning was made easy by the establishment of the lab.



Students have also expressed (77.4%) that they have been asked to regularly go through the exercises to find and correct the error in sentence formations and these language labs are

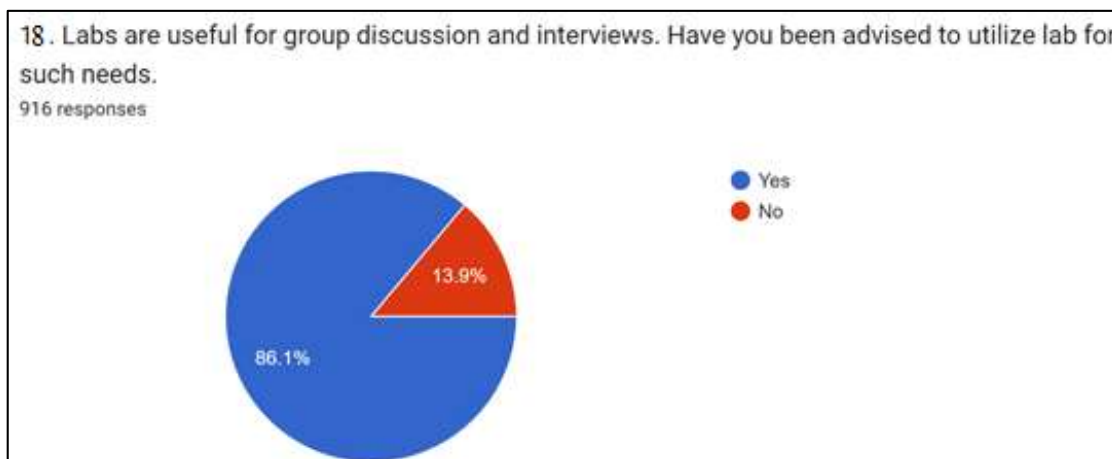
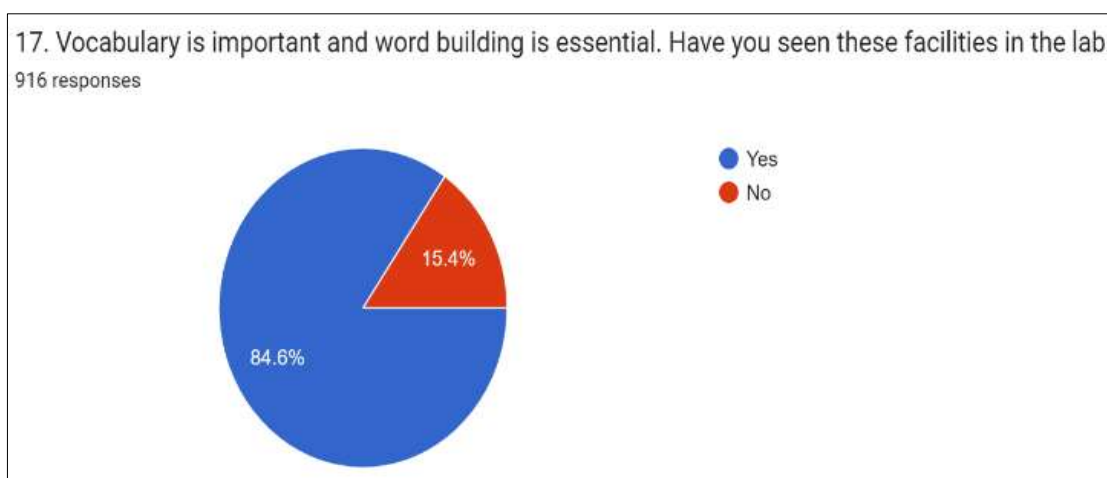
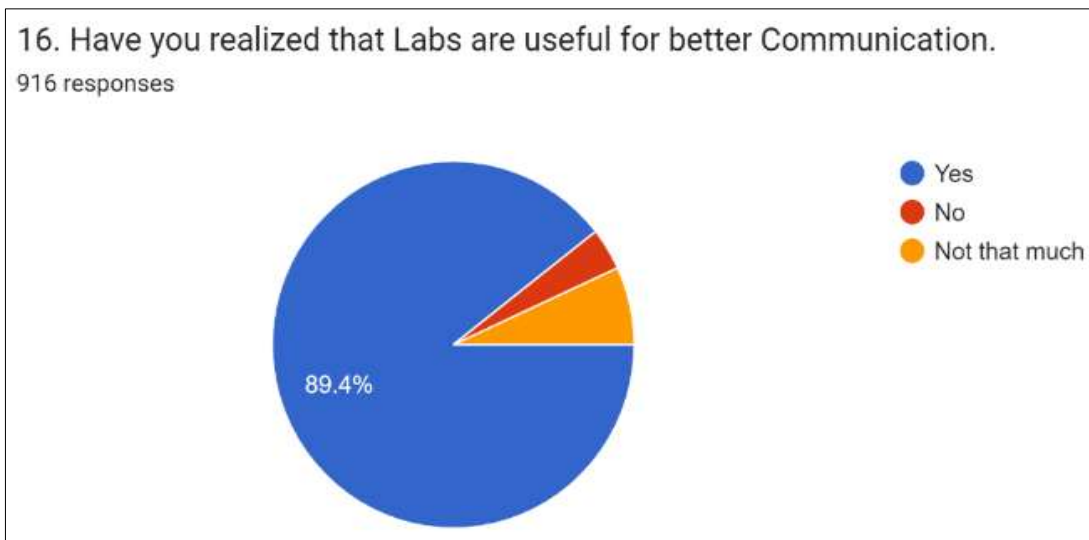
essential for preparing in competitive examinations (94%) and in improving language proficiency (92.6%) and in developing L-S-R-W skills (75.7%).





The establishment of English labs in various colleges of the University have made 89.4% of the students to realize the importance of the labs for better communication and that vocabulary in important and word building is essential

(84.6%). Further 86.1% of the students have expressed that the labs are useful in exceling in group discussions and interviews that pave a way for their career development.



Conclusion

The language laboratory is a very helpful tool for practicing and assessing one’s speech in any language. It provides a facility which allows the student to listen to model pronunciation, repeat and record the same, listen to their performance and compare with the model, and do self assessment. Since the language laboratory gives every learner of any language freedom to learn at their own pace, it is flexible and does not necessarily require a teacher all the time. At the same time, it is possible for teachers to provide assistance individually and collectively. The language laboratory allows every participant his or her privacy to speak

and listen. The establishment of language labs has played in significant role in improving the communication and writing skills of the students, as perceived by their feedback and perception. The students to the tune of 40% who seek higher education at PJTSAU are from rural background and children of farmers’, who need to be encouraged by building up their confidence in communication, reading and writing skills. Language labs provided an excellent platform in doing so and the establishment of English labs in various colleges of the University have made 89.4% of the students to realize the importance of the labs for better communication and that vocabulary in important and word building is essential

(84.6%). Further 86.1% of the students have expressed that the labs are useful in exceling in group discussions and interviews that pave a way for their career development. This clearly shows that the language labs in higher education institutions have to be established and further maintained for the overall development of the students.

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