

Towards a New Trend: On-Line Teaching/Learning Benefits and Drawbacks. The case of Second Year English Master Students at Dr. Moulay Tahar University- Saida, Algeria

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ABSTRACT:

The present study attempts to highlight the new trend of on-line teaching/learning adopted for the benefits of second year English master students at Dr. Moulay Tahar university in Saida as a case study. The study is mainly based on the extent to which those students' academic achievements are affected by the new way of their learning that is on-line or distance learning. Moreover, the study aims at exploring how this trend would alter the future of their English learning process. To reach this target a descriptive research was conducted in order to investigate the previous stated aims. For data collection, a questionnaire was addressed to the target students in addition to a semi-structured interview that was conducted with three teachers . The results revealed that the new trend of teaching/learning has some drawbacks and then needs more improvements to meet students' needs and interests.

KEYWORDS: on-line teaching/learning, master students, academic achievements, English learning process, drawbacks

الاتجاه الجديد: التعليم عن بعد فوائده وسلبياته عند طلبة السنة الثانية ماستر انجليزية بجامعة د. مولاي الطاهر - سعيدة الجزائر

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ملخص البحث

في هذا المقال نناقش ظاهرة الاقتراض اللغوي التي تؤثر على جميع لغات العالم، ومن بينها اللغة الأمازيغية (القبائلية)، والتي نجد فيها اتصالا مع العديد من الحضارات السابقة على أرض شمال إفريقيا. لكل لغة طريقتهما في ترك آثارها وطريقتهما في نقش مفاهيمها على اللغة الأمازيغية. ندرس أصل الافتراضات التي أخذناها من مجموعة تعبيرات الوقاحة التي تم جمعها لأطروحة الدكتوراه الخاصة بنا. نقوم بتحليل لغاتهم الأصلية، ثم نكشف الأسباب الرئيسية للاقتراض نحو اللغة الأمازيغية (القبائلية).

الكلمات المفتاحية: قرض، تعبيرات الوقاحة، أصل الكلمة، أسباب، لغة.

1. INTRODUCTION

The appearance of covid 19 pandemic has affected all fields. As it has quickly spread in different areas, also it has rapidly shifted from one field to another. One of the main and strategic domains is the educational field which has noticed remarkable negative effects of this pandemic. Hence, urgent decisions have been required. In deed, this new and serious pandemic has given birth to new trends in teaching all over the world. Taking into consideration the risks this pandemic has caused, both teachers and learners had to change their path of their teaching/learning process from classes to on-line/distance setting. Yet, this new pedagogy has shown some benefits and drawbacks that have made call to new strategies in order to overcome the difficulties that both teachers and learners have faced.

Previously, teaching or learning English as a specialty required three main elements so that the teaching/learning process could take place: a teacher, learners and the setting which is the classroom.. Moreover, whenever the learner could not understand something, the teacher was there to explain, clarify or even repeat that is why the major concerns of researchers to embetter were about the programs or the approaches adopted in teaching.

Actually, with the shift from face-to-face teaching to online teaching/learning , the two first elements have remained that is the teacher and learners whereas the setting has changed from a real setting which is the classroom to a virtual setting that is the online or internet setting. This latter has uncovered a set of teaching/learning challenges that need important remedies in order to empower and ensure good results. For this sake three research questions have been suggested:

- Is there a real on-line teaching/learning process?
- Are the students knowledgeable enough in using ICT?
- How do both teachers and students alter their future teaching/learning?

From a methodological perspective, a descriptive analytic research has been adopted. The needed data were gathered using two instruments. First, a questionnaire was addressed to English master students at Dr. Tahar Moulay university. Second, a semi-structured interview was conducted with teachers from the English department in the same university. The collected data were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

2. Education in Algeria

2.1 Teaching before the Pandemic

Previously, teaching /learning process used to take place in ordinary context where the presence of both the teacher and learners in a classroom was crucial. Indeed, during the traditional classes environment or face-to-face teaching, the most important issues to be taken into consideration were to seek for good methods and fruitful approaches to improve good teaching and learning outcomes. Therefore, researchers, specialized in education, were mainly interested in making learners' motivation, needs and interests their target. (Berge & Collins, 1995, p 22-30).

2.2 Teaching during the Pandemic

The appearance of covid 19 has resulted in remarkable changes mainly in the higher educational field in Algeria where noticeable and rapid shifts have been brought to the teaching/learning context as an urgent rescue. Indeed, due to the risks covid 19 has brought students were unable to attend classes which led to schools and universities closure then teachers, in order to maintain their students learning, adopted the on-line teaching as an alternative way to face-to-face classes. In this vein, "distance learning affords educational opportunities to individuals unable to attend conventional classroom settings" (McNaughton, 2001, p1). Yet, the "unplanned school closures can cause severe problems for students, educators, parents and the society at large. It could lead students to ..., loss of interest in learning, and poor academic performance" (Onyema et al,

2020, p108-121).

Nevertheless, universities and other educational institutions had to adapt to the new trend of on-line teaching/learning environment. Later on, applying the ministry decisions, universities in Algeria have adopted various e-learning platforms such as “Moodle platform”. Indeed, many universities have adopted both face-to-face classes as a periodic solution and on-line teaching/learning as an alternative operation. In this perspective, some researchers have pointed out that educational outcomes would be less satisfactory due to the lack of preparation, training and support (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010, p 533-541).

Others claimed that students and teachers who are living in rural areas may not have the network capacity which would hinder against their teaching/learning process. From another side, it was argued that the use of new technologies such as ICT might be another obstacle for both students and teachers. Although, the Algerian government has integrated the use of ICTs in the schools and universities during the last decade, technologies have seldom been made accessible for both teachers and students (Mekkhokh, 2012). Moreover, students and teachers, as users of ICTs, are not ready to use ICT in their teaching/learning processes because they are not well knowledgeable in this field.

Indeed, readiness is a key success of efficiency and then improvement and achievement. In the higher educational environment, for instance, all the members of this community are concerned with the good implementation of the ICTs in on-line teaching/learning environment. Teachers who represent the source of knowledge face a set of obstacles that hinder against their readiness to use ICT in their teaching among which Nedjah has stated: attitudes, fear, belief, confidence and motivation (Nedjah, 2010, p 74-76)

Therefore, in order to ensure successful on-line teaching/ learning outcomes in our universities, this requires the collaboration of different members so as to provide a good implementation of this new trend. Then, what does ICT mean?

2.2.1. The Use of ICT in Teaching

Actually, ICT is the abbreviation that stands for Information Communication Technology. It refers to the use of digital tools such as computers, tablets and smartphones in teaching with the access to the internet resources and websites. Indeed, the use of ICT in teaching has consolidated face-to-face teaching as it has empowered students learning and motivation. In other words, adapting the teaching to students’ different leaning styles like the visual, the auditory and the kinesthetic, ICT has provided the necessary and needed means such as videos, images, audios, podcasts and interactive tables.

2.3. Teaching after the Pandemic

Actually, after the pandemic 19 has disappeared, online teaching/learning has become part in higher educational context. Indeed, previously this trend was considered as an emergent way to keep on teaching/learning yet it has become a permanent learning model later on which has been adopted as a new structured and developed technology. Besides, a new learning trend has appeared. It is blended learning. This new type is also called hybrid learning. In fact, after the pandemic, teaching has become more efficient since it is not done only through face-to-face but distant teaching has become part of the educational system and the use of ICT tools has increased such as Google classroom and Zoom. Next, types of on-line teaching are stated

3. Types of Online Teaching

Actually, there are four types of e-learning : a) informal, b) self-paced, c) leader-led and d) performance support tools. Each type is distinct in matter of user and context. Informal e-learning, for instance, refers to all users who may get access to any website or join groups of learners on-line in order to get relevant information whereas in self-paced e-learning, learners get access to web-based training on their owns and learn by themselves which means they are autonomous in their learning. As for, the third type is leader-led e-learning which consists of two main kinds of on-line

courses : a) Synchronous on-line courses and b) Asynchronous on-line courses in addition to hybrid courses. It is worth noticeable to mention that both types have been widely used in teaching particularly since the appearance of the pandemic of Covid 19. Though synchronous and asynchronous on-line courses differ in many points, they share the same basic components ; the teacher, the students and the bridge that connects them which is the internet. Next, a brief definition for each type is stated.

3.1 Synchronous Online Courses

Indeed, this type of on-line teaching takes place in real time. This means that both teacher and students interact with each other at the same time (in real time); while the teacher is teaching the students are there, they watch and listen. Synchronous on-line courses have the following characteristics :

- √ Students may interact in real time like in face-to-face classes.
- √ Teacher can see learners and vice versa.
- √ Learners can see each other and can even interact with each other.
- √ Teacher may ask questions and students may respond and vice versa.
- √ Learners may be assessed by their teacher in real time.

3.2 Asynchronous Online Courses

Unlike synchronous on-line courses, asynchronous on-line courses do not Take place in real time The teacher in such an environment may put or Deliver the courses at a certain point of time then students may get access to those courses later on Yet, asynchronous on-line courses have the Following drawbacks:

- Unlike synchronous on-line courses, asynchronous on-line courses do
- √ No direct interaction between the teacher and the students.
 - √ Teacher may not be knowledgeable in technology field.
 - √ Students may not be skillful in computer use.
 - √ Lack of high bandwidth
 - √ No motivation from the side of students.

In the Algerian universities, for instance, the asynchronous on-line courses were mainly done through MOODLE, then what does this latter mean?

3.2.1. MOODLE Platform

Moodle is a widely used platform designed to create and deliver on-line courses to students. It is free, open-source and flexible. Most universities use Moodle for the advantages it has, for example teachers can:

- √ Create online support e.g., lessons, courses, videos, links.
- √ Communicate with their students through forums, chats and messages.
- √ Upload needed materials like PDFs, PPTs and links.
- √ Design tests, quizzes, exams and assignments.
- √ Track students results (marks).

The fourth type, which is performance support tools, refers to the needed material that help learners perform their learning tasks and activities such as PCs, internet access etc.

4. Research Methodology

For the current study, a sample of 70 respondents who are second year English master students at Dr. Tahar Mouley university in saida have been selected as a case study. 30 Students in literature and 40 students in didactics have been asked to respond to a questionnaire. Among 70 samples of questionnaire, 55 samples have been filled and returned back with a percentage of in addition to a semi-structured interview that was conducted with three teachers from the same department. Indeed, both data collection instruments completed each other in a way that the questionnaire helped have an insight on students' difficulties in using ICTs technology in their on-line learning and the interview helped know about the teachers' perspectives about the future of on-line teaching. For data analysis, a mixed method approach has been used.

4.1. Questionnaire's Analysis

The questionnaire comprises three rubrics. The first rubric concerns the students' personal information in matter of gender, specialty and their personal ICT devices used in their on-line learning. The second rubric explore more the opinions of the target students in matter of on-line learning methods , environment, conditions and effects in addition to the difficulties they are facing throughout their studies. The third rubric is offord to involve the target respondents as partners by expressing their points of view and suggesting solutions for the future promotions.

Table 1. Personal Information of the Target Students

	YES	%	NO	%
Gender	Male	20	Female	35
Specialty	Lit	30	Didactics	25
Earn PC	26	47.27%	29	52.72%
Earnsmartphone	24	43.63%	31	56.36%

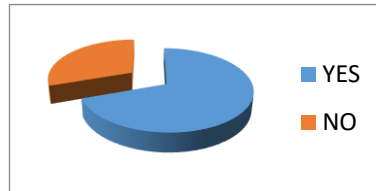
Source: the authors (2025)

As the table above shows, among 55 students 63.63% are females whereas only 36.36% are male which explains that females are more interested in learning English than males. From another side more than 54% study literature besides 45.45% study didactics . This may indicate that most of the students are interested in carrying on their studies because those who study didactics are intended to join education later on.

From another side, the table indicates that 29 of the students do not earn a computer with a percentage of 52.72% which is required in their on-line learning and this is one of the obstacles students face in their learning environment. Moreover, 31 (56.36%) of the students do not have a smart phone which may be useful instead of a computer. After having highlighted the personal environment of the target students as on-line learners, the next table offers a deep insight in their learning environment.

Q1: Do you agree to adopt on-line learning as new trend?

Fig.1. Students' Opinions about On-line Learning

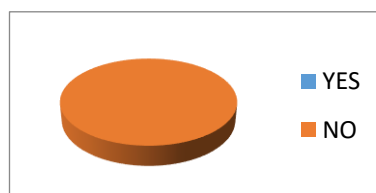


Source: The authors (2025)

According to the figure above, 64.28% of the students find it difficult to cope with the new path which is on-line learning and this indicates the reason for which they are alienated from on-line learning. Hence, in order to rise students' interest and motivation there ought to be new strategies in implementing on-line learning for the benefit of learners.

Q2 : Have you been trained on how to use Moodle platform ?

Fig.2. Students' Training to use Moodle Platform

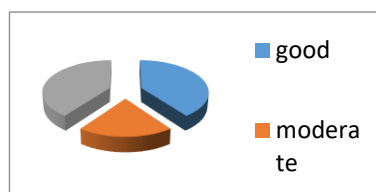


Source : The authors (2025)

As the figure indicates, no one from the respondents has done a training on how to use Moodle platform neither from the university nor from their teachers. Though this platform is full of different useful options, students find it difficult to learn via Moodle. As they have claimed about their weakness in using PCs (master the use of hardware and software such as Goole Meet or Google Zoom)

Q3 : Are you good at using ICTs technology ?

Fig.3. Students' ICT Competencies



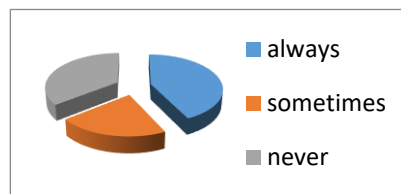
Source : The authors (2025)

As far as students' level in using ICTs technology, 28.57% only argued that they master the

basic notions in computer science such as getting access to the on-line courses, sending and receiving files downloading or uploading documents because according to them since they own a computer or smartphone they have enough time to master such operations. Besides, 14.28% argued that they have a moderate level and it is fair enough since they can access to the platform easily. Yet, 28.57% have claimed about the lack of training in using ICTs because they said that they have no computers nor smart phones the fact that hinder against their will to learn about that technology. 28.58% did not reply to this question.

Q4 : Is the internet available for you ?

Fig.4. Internet Availability



Source : The authors (2025)

Concerning the availability of the internet, 42.85% said it is available and they have no problem. Yet, it is important to mention that these students live in the town where there is high degree and good bandwidth. 21.42% claimed about the cut of the internet from time to time that is why, according to them, it is difficult to learn from the platform particularly the modules which comprise many courses and within each course many pages.

Finally, 35.71% of the students claimed that they have no internet at home for they live in rural areas so they have to go to the cybercafe to print the courses which requires from them to pay. They have claimed about the responsibility of the university to provide them with internet access in the library which is a right.

Q5 : How much time do you spend in accessing to Moodle a day ?

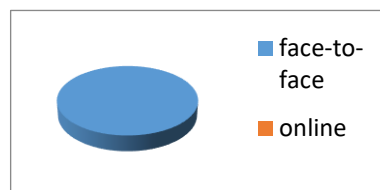
For this question, very few students said that they access to Moodle platform everyday. And even they spend some minutes just to have a look on what their teachers deliver whereas, the majority demonstrated their burden to access to the courses because all their learning is asynchronously.

Q6 : How often do you get access to the platform a week ?

Most of the students said that they access to the platform once or twice a week whereas the others said that it is not necessary to access to the courses since they are available all the time ; they prefer to get access one week before the exams in order to revise.

Q7 : What do you think is better on-line or face-to-face courses ?

Fig.7. Students' Opinion about their Learning



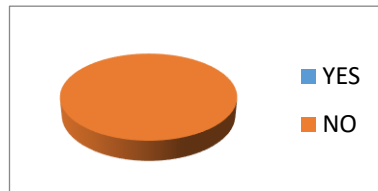
Source : The authors (2025)

The figure shows that 100% of the students prefer face-to-face courses and no one is

interested in e-learning. This demonstrate that the students are aware of the importance of their teacher presence in class. According to them, teaching/learning cannot take place unless it happen in a realistic situation where the teacher, the students are present together in class.

Q8 : Do you think that on-line learning can be an alternative to class courses ?

Fig.8. Students' Opinion about their Future Studies



Source : The authors (2025)

From the figure above, it is obvious that students are aware that on-line learning cannot be an alternative to face-to-face classes because they have recognised the difference between the two trends in matter of understanding, interacting, assessing. They have claimed about their actual level of their academic achievements which is lower than three year ago when teaching/learning took place in the classroom with the presence of their teachers. They said that a computer cannot replace the teacher.

In short, the questionnaire responses have demonstrated a set of drawbacks that require serious decisions to be taken for the benefit of students.

4.2. Interview's Analysis

As far as the second data collection instrument is concerned, a semi-structured interview was conducted with three teachers from the department of English in Dr. Moulay Tahar University, it means the respondents teach in the same department as the students. It is worth noticeable that the choice of the teachers was done randomly. The teachers are specialised in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), psychopedagogy and British Literature.

The interview comprised two rubrics. The first concerned professional information of the teachers so as to have a clear image of the respondents, the second part concerned the teaching/learning environment they are working in in matter of difficulties, positive and negative aspects of the on-line education.

Table2. Teachers' Professional Information

	Teacher1	Teacher2	Teacher3
Module	Britlit	ESP	Psychopedagogy
Teaching experience	20 years	7 years	14 years
Grade	Dr	Assistant	Dr

Source : The authors (2025)

As the table indicates, among the respondents two teachers are doctors and one is an assistant.. The most experienced has spent twenty year in teaching whereas the least experienced has been teaching for seven years. Therefore, the respondents are well experienced to give reliable responses.

The second part of the interview explores the environment in which teaching/learning takes place. The first question tackled the way on-line teaching was done whether synchronously or asynchronously. All the respondents confirmed that courses were taught asynchronously which means they deliver their courses via Moodle platform and students can access to them at any time.

The second question was about whether they have done any training on using ICTs technologies. The interviewees argued that they have conducted two trainings on how to use ICTs technologies particularly the use of Moodle platform however they have pointed out that they need more trainings about how to use the PCs as Garrison has stated that using software in transmitting the information to learners is not an easy task to accomplish (Garrison, 2009, p 95). Besides, students have never been trained in such a field and this is the reason why students are not satisfied with on-line learning. In other words, students are now facing two main obstacles; the first is the absence of their teacher in their asynchronous learning and second their weak level in using the platform.

Another question about the effects of on-line teaching on students' academic achievements, the respondents agreed on that on-line teaching/learning in their actual educational environment has more negative effects than positive ones. According to them, there is low motivation, low interest, low satisfaction and no interaction on the side of the students on one hand. On the other hand, their level of improvement, competence and performance is lower than three years ago when they used to study in face-to-face courses and this is due to the important role teachers play in their classes.

When the interviewees were asked about whether on-line teaching may be an alternative to the traditional system, they all agreed on that it cannot be an alternative but both trends may complete each other if all the requirements of on-line education are fulfilled from providing internet access at the university for both teachers and students to training which should be conducted with both teachers and learners. In this sense, Clark and Mayer argue that teaching and learning in an online context is distinct from traditional face-to-face teaching/learning and may present challenges to both instructors and learners (Clark & Mayer, 2016, p 24).

5. DISCUSSION

All in all, according to the obtained feedback though online teaching/learning has saved a generation of learners as it facilitated their learning during a very difficult period which is the pandemic 19. And despite its flexibility and accessibility, it has some drawbacks that hinder against its effectiveness. These shortcomings can be stated as follow:

√ No real human interaction: the absence of real communication has led to less engagement and involvement of the students.

√ More pressure in teaching: online teaching requires more efforts in preparing digital tools and more time in managing the platforms such as Moodle, Google Classroom, Google Meet and ZOOM.

√ Technical Problems: according to the students' responses, in most cases there is the problem of Internet connectivity. Moreover, many students do not have access to stable internet or they do not own computers.

√ Assessment problem: the probability of cheating and plagiarizing among students. Furthermore, teachers cannot be sure about student's identity.

√ Academic Integrity: online teaching results in students' weak skills like critical thinking, less practice and these learners may become passive learners as they rely on copy-paste in their learning.

6. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the current paper attempted to shed light on the new path teaching/learning has gone through. Moving from face-to-face classes to on-line teaching/learning has had noticeable shortcomings on both students and teachers. The objective of this study was to highlight the benefits

and drawbacks of on-line education mainly with the rapid implementation of this new trend. This makes call to urgent strategies so as to overcome the difficulties teachers and students are facing.

It is worth noticeable that each year there is a new application that both teachers and students are asked to adapt to and use such as BLUE BOTTON, JITSY ...etc yet, this requires training for both of them and then new strategies ought to be looked for.

Among the important measures the ministry of higher education ought to take into consideration is providing all the universities with internet access, besides students need an urgent training on how to use different ICTs technologies. Moreover, in the current situation blended teaching/learning would be a reasonable solution because no one knows what would happen in the future so students ought to adapt with the new trend of on-line teaching. At last, researchers and even teachers have to seek for better methods to raise students' autonomy, motivation and interest in their on-line learning.

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Appendices

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is intended to highlight the environment in which you are leaning particularly with the appearance of the pandemic covid 19 and the new trend of on-line teaching/learning that has been implemented for you. I would be thankful if you accept to fill in the samples and return them back

a. Part one: Tick the right bow

Male

Female

Literature

Didactics

- Do you own a PC?

Yes

No

- Do you own a smartphone?

Yes

No

b. Part two: Answer the following questions

- Do you agree to adopt on-line learning as a new trend? Yes No

- Have ever been trained on how to use Moodle platform? Yes No

- Are you good at using ICTs technologies? Yes No

- Is the internet available for you? Yes No

- How much time do you spend in accessing to Moodle platform a day?

.....
.....

- How often do you get access to the platform a week?

.....
.....

- What do you think is better on-line or face-to-face courses?

.....
.....

- Do you think that on-line learning can be an alternative to class courses? Justify.

.....

Interview

Thank you for accepting to devote your time in order to conduct this interview

- What module are you teaching?
.....
- How long have you been teaching?
.....
- What is your grade?
.....
- Concerning your on-line teaching, is it done synchronously or asynchronously?
.....
- Have you ever done a training on how to use ICTs technologies?
.....
- How does on-line teaching/learning affect students' academic achievements?
.....
.....
- Do you think that on-line education may be an alternative to face-to-face education?
.....