

New Perspectives in EFL Learning: The Rise of the Digital Age

الاستراتيجيات المستحدثة لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية في العصر الرقمي

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Reçu le:30/12/2021 Accepté le:17 /01 /2022 Publié le:23/01/2022

ABSTRACT:

ملخص البحث

The aim of this study is to delve into the new strategies of English language learning in the era of digitization. It attempts to analyse the major challenges faced by EFL students in switching from face-to-face learning into online learning. The sample of the study involved university students from the University of Relizane and their EFL teachers. Two research instruments were used: (a) a student questionnaire and (b) a semi structured interview. The data collected from these research instruments were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings of the study revealed that digital technologies and students' awareness of self-learning development impact on their learning success and self-organizing skills acquisition.

Keywords: Online learning; Digital age; EFL students; Information technology proficiency; Tertiary education

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو الخوض في الافاق المحدثّة لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في العصر الرقمي. يحاول البحث تحليل التحديات الرئيسية التي يواجهها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية في التحول من التعلم وجهًا لوجه إلى التعلم عبر الإنترنت. تضمنت عينة الدراسة طلاب جامعيين من جامعة غليزان ومعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية. تم استخدام أداتين للبحث: (أ) استبيان الطالب و (ب) مقابلة شبه منظمة. تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها من هذه الأدوات البحثية كما ونوعا. كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن التقنيات الرقمية ووعي الطلاب بتنمية التعلم الذاتي تؤثر على نجاحهم في التعلم واكتساب مهارات التنظيم الذاتي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعلم عبر الإنترنت: العصر الرقمي: طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية: إتقان تكنولوجيا المعلومات: التعليم العالي .

1. INTRODUCTION

The advent of the third millennium has instigated a rapid development of technology and a spread in eLearning practices worldwide. In the field of education, being the theme of interest in this study, more and more learning content has been going online and becoming available anytime and anywhere. Indeed digitization has endowed the 21st century learners with better opportunities to reinforce their pursuit of knowledge and seek extensive academic performance. The innovative online learning platforms have provided students with flexible learning and self-organizing skills. Though the instructional process is still regulated by teachers and a schedule of classroom activities, learners, today, have the extra opportunity to decide on the time and place for self-study.

Such a new interactive pedagogy emerged out of what the world has witnessed over the past few years. The incessant global threats have prompted researchers to examine counteractive channels to ensure continuous knowledge transmission and skill training. Perhaps the most significant example to illustrate these extreme circumstances has been the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. During this period, students, worldwide, had to experience eLearning as an alternative to their physical presence at school. The real challenge, for both teachers and learners, was to re-establish the learning experience.

In response, Algeria, as many countries worldwide, implemented some form of remote learning. This urgent education response set an immediate objective to lessen the dramatic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. This emergency plan was intended to reach all students. As the pandemic evolved, educational responses were more and more required to limit the number of students congregated in one place, a fact that affected the normal functioning of schools and universities.

In seeking to make educational institutions fit for learning in a safe environment, the Algerian Ministry of higher education has established alternative methods for students and teachers to continue with their tuitions. The sanitary protocols set up learning to occur with a limited number of students attending classes. This rotational form implied the introduction of a form of distance education founding on active principles of hybrid learning. As a more concrete example, the University of Relizane adopted a sanitary protocol implemented by all Universities in Algeria. It regulated right from the start of the academic year 2021/2022 that students and teachers attend physically following strict rules of protection to limit the expansion of the Covid - 19 pandemic. In fact the whole population of students was reduced to the half constituting two sections: Section A and Section B. Every section has a scheduled timetable fixed for each of the two teaching delivery methods. In other words, students have to attend classes for two weeks that is complemented by a similarly managed schedule for online learning during which students receive direct instruction from their teachers via the association of the Moodle platform and different social networks. The only existing variance lies on the human and technological potential of every university to execute the online delivery form of the hybrid learning model.

This study aims at exploring the actual academic challenges faced by EFL students at the department of English, University of Relizane, during their online learning. It seeks to understand their degree of engagement in digital learning, and above all, to familiarize both the EFL learners and their teachers with the most adequate practices that can assist in enhancing and reinforcing their online experience. The study attempts to answer the following research questions:

RQ₁: To what extent are EFL students satisfied with online learning effectiveness as compared to conventional face-to-face classes?

RQ₂: What factors challenge EFL students' online learning experiences?

RQ₃: How can EFL teachers support student online learning?

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The 21st century education has reinforced the application of technologies and digital literacies that have been developed and improved considerably (Kaware & Sain, 2015)). Current pedagogies require that modern teaching and learning approaches respond to technology and how it can consolidate the learning process. Many theories have been involved in educational processes. The ‘activity theory’ is, conceivably, the finest theoretical perspective that recognises the significance of various forms of resources used in teaching and learning including human and nonhuman elements (Mwanza & Engeström, 2005). In fact, the actual trend is on the interaction between humans and computers. This theory highlights the potential impact of the new digital tools on teaching and learning processes.

2.2 The Digital Age

With the time period starting in the 1970s and the introduction of the personal computer, a new revolutionary age has started. It has been defined as the *information age* (also known as *the Computer Age, Digital Age, or New Media Age*). Zimmerman (2017) illustrates this idea stating, “*It is a historical period that began in the mid-20th century, characterized by a rapid epochal shift from traditional industry established by the Industrial Revolution to an economy primarily based upon information technology*” This technological shift has set the first background for the free and rapid transmission of information, a fact which is well presented by the definition in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, “*a time in which information has become a commodity that is quickly and widely disseminated and easily available especially through the use of computer technology*”.

2.3 Distance Learning

The concept of distance education is not novel. It has been developed since the first beginnings of the 20th century. Nonetheless, its value did not intensify until the world has witnessed this explosive growth in technology. Technology-based distance education has emerged as an effective solution to the different challenges facing education. Educators have, thus, the opportunity to design, and manage effective teaching and learning delivery courses at distance far away from the standard classroom environment.

Distance learning, also known as *distance education, e-learning* or *online learning*, is “*a form of education where there is physical separation of teachers from students during the instruction and learning process*” (Simonson, 2016). The 21st new generation of learners are able to obtain instruction and learn with ease at home without having to be physically present in a classroom. Distance education has progressed in concept and practice “*from an “anywhere” to an “anytime” education delivery method*” (Shah, 2016).

Distance education has proved to be a very decisive resolution in critical situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic. “*The rapid virtualization process is taking place in education*” (Leonardi, 2020). Thus, it provides health security in an effort to stop the spread of this deadly epidemic.

2.4 Distance Learning in Higher Education in Algeria

The rapid wide spread of the Covid-19 has completely transformed the education landscape worldwide and slowed down the learning experience (Marginson, 2020). It has acted upon student mobility, academic capacities and even their psychological aptitudes to endure the various consequences of this pandemic. The abrupt shift from classroom instruction to distance

learning has thwarted student academic progress and readiness to carry on with their learning experience.

The different Algerian universities, following the major global wave, were not an exception. The Ministry urged all actors in the field of higher education to engage in all necessary measures to ensure acceptable management of the academic year. The challenge, then, has been to ensure the continuity of courses without constraining students with physical presence. Students and their teachers have been involved in a virtual experience of course presentation and assessment. A variety of technological tools have been employed ranging from the Moodle platform to the different social network applications. These digital technologies can sustain learning providers to plan, deliver and track the teaching and learning process (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2020).

What raises polemic with engaging distance learning in tertiary education is the lack of awareness on the part of students regarding the actual challenge of taking charge of their own learning. In fact, students expressed a variety of causes for concern that Friedman (2020) summarizes as a lack of options for students to determine whether they take online courses or not, the lack of access to free technology hardware, software and internet services on campus due to social distancing, a lack of motivation to learn, and the new course workload.

2.5 EFL Learning in the Era of Digitization

The advent of the third millennium has marked all domains of life in general and education in particular. Information and communication technologies have become the most dominant media tools in almost every aspect of the daily life. Digital practices have become a global culture. They have greatly influenced education in general and language teaching and learning in particular.

The introduction of digital devices has become the new standard of education in the 21st century. Moreover, the traditional methods of language teaching and learning are no longer applicable to the new generations of learners. English language teaching, today, is not only a work of art but also science (Rose & Meyer 2002). The new model of online instruction have gone beyond the classroom physical environment to provide *“continuous processes of more free materials and activities of learning and assessment that never ends and give a real chance to practice the language beyond the walls of classrooms”* (Barber, 2021). Furthermore, Balakrishnan and Lay (2016) report, *“teachers, today, are using digital devices within and outside classrooms for teaching purposes, such as to upload educational videos or learning materials for students”*. Such a measure has been deemed appropriate for students’ new learning styles who resort to it as a supplement to enhance learning in the classroom due to its ease and availability.

3. Materials and Methods

The focal point of the present study is to explore the new strategies of English language learning in the era of digitization. It attempts to identify the major challenges EFL students are facing with their academic work especially in switching from face-to-face learning into online learning and finally recommend the most appropriate strategies to tackle the problem of online transition as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis.

In order to answer the formulated questions, the following steps were followed for the selection of participants, research tools and procedures.

3.1 Setting, Participants and Sampling Procedure

The sample population of the study comprised university students and their EFL teachers. A random sampling technique was employed to select a representative sample that involved 113 EFL student informants issued from both ‘Licence’ and ‘Master’ levels. The students, in fact, are

pursuing their studies at the English Department of Relizane University. The participants' gender and level of study are shown in table 1:

Table 1. The participants' gender and level of study

	Licence	Master	Total	Percentage
Male	25	15	40	35.39
Female	41	32	73	64.61
Total	66	47	113	100.0

The study included, also, five EFL teachers (2 males and 3 females) teaching at the department of English - University of Relizane. All teachers hold a PhD degree. They are full time teachers with varying experience ranging from three to ten years.

3.2 Research Instruments

To achieve the main objectives of the present study, a mixed method design was employed to address the formulated research questions. Two research instruments entailed the use of a student survey questionnaire and EFL teachers' semi structured interview sessions.

The students' survey questionnaire was designed to evaluate EFL learners' online learning experiences, including their online learning effectiveness, and challenges. It was started with a pre-section about the students' demographic information along with two sections. Section A: EFL students' online learning experiences where they were required to answer items related to their personal experience with e-learning. Section B: EFL Students' satisfaction with E-learning designed to gather information about their online learning satisfaction which is believed to have a direct impact on their online learning effectiveness.

The second tool consists of semi-structured interview sessions to report EFL teachers' insights into their students' online learning experiences along with possible reinforcement intervention strategies that can enable EFL learners to improve their online experience and develop necessary 21st century skills.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

The survey questionnaire was piloted within the researcher's affiliated institution after obtaining ethical approval. Once the purpose of the study was clearly explained, the participants were requested to complete the different items of the questionnaire during class time. They had about 20 minutes to go through the different items. The EFL teachers' interviews were conducted in their respective classrooms. Each session lasted approximately 30 minutes and was captured through handwritten notes. The EFL teachers were invited to reflect on their online teaching methods, learners' aptitudes and effectiveness of this method to learn the target language.

3.4 Data Analysis

The survey questionnaire, completed by the respondents, was coded according to (male/female; high /moderate /low IT proficiency groups) then analysed descriptively to compute quantitate data. The second qualitative analytic method was used to examine the different emerging themes out of the EFL teachers' semi-structured interview sessions.

4. Results

4.1 Respondents' Background Information

Referring to the respondents' background information, (64.61%) of them were female informants, whereas (35.39 %) were males. Regarding their study level, this research study covered both 'Licence' and 'Master' students pursuing their studies at the department of English-University of Relizane. In terms of respondents' information technology proficiency level, the majority of informant students (49.8%) stated that they had general proficiency, whereas (32.08%)

of them indicated to have a good level of IT proficiency. The remaining (18.12 %) showed less confidence in their ability to cope with technological tools.

4.2 EFL Students' Online Learning Experiences

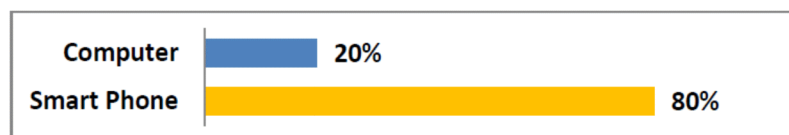
The aim of this section was to record students' individual experiences while involved in online learning.

4.2.1 Students' Internet Access and Connectivity

In an attempt to conceive a global idea about students' connection capacities, the EFL informants were requested to report whether or not they had access to the Internet along with the devices they used.. 93 students affirmed to have access to internet either using their smart phones or at home whereas 20 informants stated to have no connection.

On the issue of the use of technological devices, (80 %) of students reported using their personal smartphones while (20 %) of them used computers. Those who did not have access to the internet stated that they resorted to the university library and cybercafés. Figure 1 illustrates the recounted data:

Fig.1. EFL students' use of technological devices

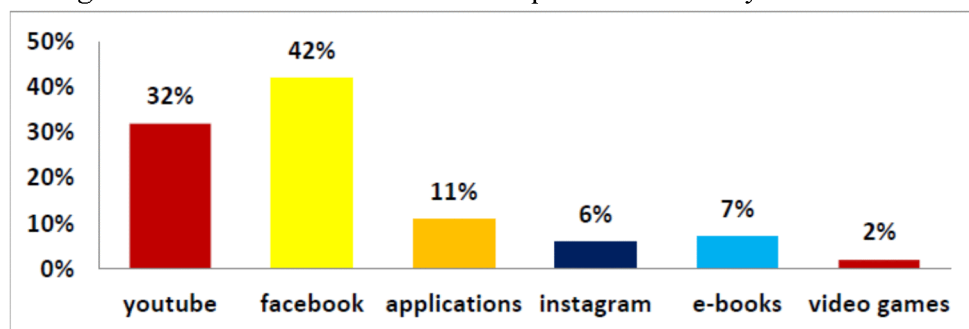


4.2.2 Students' E-learning Background and Access to Moodle Platform

In an attempt to categorize students depending on their awareness of eLearning before the Covid-19 lockdown, informants were asked to report if they had any experience with eLearning previously. 18 respondents admitted to have little knowledge about the concept of eLearning before Covid-19 pandemic while the great majority of respondents were familiar with this concept and even had varying experiences in this domain. Indeed these confessions demonstrate that students are aware of the new technological development of both learning and teaching methods.

When prompted to report the frequency of their access to the Moodle platform, set by the university's eLearning board to ensure continuity of courses during pandemic lockdown and physical presence restrictions, only (03%) of respondents said it was good. (35%) of the sample students stated that the access to the platform was quite acceptable while (62%) of them alleged that it was poor because of many difficulties related to their user codes and internet connectivity. Having identified the informants' difficulties to connect to the Moodle platform, the respondents were asked whether they were opting for other platforms besides Moodle to improve their English (See Figure 2).

Fig 2: Alternative online educational platforms used by EFL students.

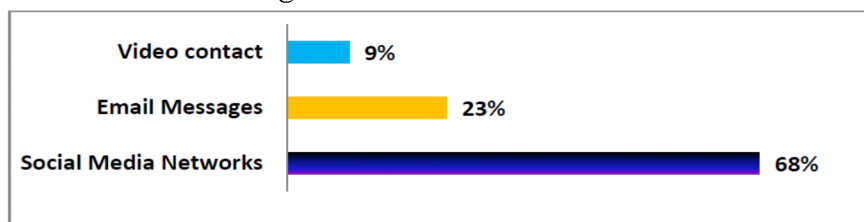


The findings show that the majority of respondents managed to diversify their personal techniques to improve their English performance through numerous digital platforms, for instance, (42%) of the students used YouTube, (32%) of them preferred Facebook by the time (11%) practised their language through learning applications (such as Duo lingo, Busu, Italk...), (07%) favoured e-books, while (06%) of the respondents enhanced their English language learning through Instagram, and (02%) improved their language through video games. Such data point towards the important role that information technologies play in the domain of learning in general and language acquisition in particular.

4.2.3 Student-Teacher Online Interactions

The most decisive factor in determining the effectiveness of students' online experiences is the degree of student-teacher online interactions. When asked whether they had regular online contacts with their teachers, half of respondents (49 %) replied affirmatively. In fact, (68 %) of them stated that they interacted with their instructors via social media networks while nearly a third (23 %) declared having regular contacts with their teachers through email messages. The remaining (9 %) asserted having video contacts with their teachers (Figure 3). Referring to the respondents' answers, it is observed that (51 %) of informants were having no direct online interaction with their instructors except for the uploaded courses on the Moodle platform. Such a fact creates a form of isolation and causes learners to develop negative attitudes towards distance learning.

Fig 3: Student-teacher online interactions channels



When elicited to rate their online interactions with their teachers, (71 %) of the informants stated that it was acceptable enough to ensure online assistance and guidance whereas (29 %) affirmed it was quite supportive to them.

4.3 EFL Students' Satisfaction with their Online Learning Experiences

This section proposes to examine the effectiveness of online learning compared to face-to-face classes, the challenges facing online learners, and the overall satisfaction of the respondent students with this newly adopted digitized delivery mode.

4.3.1 Overall Satisfaction with Online Learning Experiences

The degree of students' acceptance of learning delivery methods defines the level of their satisfaction. (26.72 %) of respondents felt satisfied with their new online learning experiences whereas (40.60 %) of them felt neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and one-third (32.68%) felt dissatisfied.

When comparing the obtained responses with the self-reported students' level of information technology proficiency (Table 2), it was found that the respondents with high proficiency levels felt more satisfied with their overall online learning experiences. In comparison, nearly half of the respondents indicating general level of proficiency felt neutral with their online learning experiences. Those who indicated less confidence in their ability to cope with technological tools felt completely dissatisfied with this newly adopted learning delivery method.

Table 2. Respondents' IT proficiency levels and their satisfaction with online learning

	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
High IT level	88.49 %	9.7 %	1.7 %
General IT level	50.4 %	44.2 %	5.3 %
Low IT level	2.6 %	7.4 %	90%

4.3.2 Online Learning vs. Face-to-Face Class

When queried to compare online learning with their conventional face-to-face classes, the majority of respondents (68.72%) indicated that online learning was worse than face-to-face classes. Despite this overall negative attitude towards online learning, it was determined that this disagreement among respondents does not exist within those who displayed higher information technology proficiency levels. Specifically, the majority of informant students who stated that they had a good IT proficiency level supposed that the online delivery mode was better than face-to-face classes. Those who displayed less confidence in their information technology proficiency levels believed it to be ineffective and worse than face-to-face classes (See Table 3).

Table 3. Respondents' IT proficiency levels and perceptions of online learning

	Online learning is better	Same	Online classes is worse
High IT level	79.6 %	20.4 %	0%
General IT level	33.6 %	50.4 %	15.9 %
Low IT level	11.5 %	10.6 %	77.7%

4.3.3 Factors Influencing Online Learning Effectiveness

The third survey question in Section B prompted respondents to assess the influence of factors such as Internet connectivity, online teacher-student interaction, availability of materials, and IT competence on the effectiveness of online learning (Table 4). Based on the percentage of respondents' choice of the most influencing factor having a stronger impact on their online experiences, the order was as follows: 'information technology proficiency' (81.86%), 'teacher-student online interaction' (60.44%), 'internet connectivity' (64.33%), and 'availability of materials' (55.61%).

Table 4. Factors impacting on EFL students' online learning effectiveness

Factors	Percentage	Degree of Impact
<i>Information technology proficiency</i>	81.86%	<i>Strong</i>
<i>Internet connectivity</i>	64.33%	<i>Strong</i>
<i>Teacher-student online interaction</i>	60.44 %	<i>Strong</i>
<i>availability of materials</i>	55.61%	<i>Strong</i>

The recorded data demonstrate clearly the high impact that digital literacy and internet connectivity can have on respondents' online learning effectiveness. The third and fourth influencing factors accentuate the significance of student-teacher interactions in student learning. Moreover, the lack of effective materials and inappropriate use of learning resources affect considerably the success of online learning.

4.3.4 Challenges to Online Learning

In addition to respondents' online learning prior experiences and digital literacy, the main challenges to EFL students' online learning, as reported by the informants, were the limited or no access to the internet, increased academic workload, low motivation to learn due to poor student-teacher online interactions and lack of self-discipline, improper use of technological devices, and the poor quality of learning materials. Some respondents stressed, also, economic, and psychological factors that prevented them from fully integrating into this learning delivery method.

In all, the abrupt change from face-to-face pedagogy to online learning has challenged students' ability to adapt.

4.4 EFL Teachers' Role in Supporting Students' Online Learning

The EFL teachers' interview sessions were conducted so as to provide answers to the last research question investigating the EFL teachers' insights into their learners' online experiences. They were set in a way to consider the possible enhancement strategies that can boost higher education students' academic interest and motivation to go through this emergency online learning pedagogy. The thematic analysis of the data out of the different interview sessions identified the following themes:

4.4.1 EFL Teachers' Perception of their Online Teaching Experience

The five EFL teachers, involved in this study, represent a sample of the teaching staff of the department of English at the University of Relizane. Their overall experiences in teaching varied from three to ten years. The academic year 2020/2021 was the first time when both teachers and learners experienced eLearning as an emergency online learning pedagogy. When asked about their perceptions of online teaching and use of technology, EFL teachers had varied opinions. They acknowledged that they were not ready to engage in such a digital experience, nor were their students. When requested to justify this attitude, they retorted that they did not receive any training for online teaching and lack the necessary equipment for the success of this operation. A teacher explained *"Unfortunately tools are not available except the data show at times"*. Another teacher added, *"I honestly prefer face-to-face learning. It is easier to address students; interaction becomes easier and more effective. Online courses are not successful because of technical issues"*. When asked about the procedures of delivering courses online, EFL teachers answered that the university provided the Moodle platform and faculty' websites to upload courses and lectures. A teacher clarified, *"I present live lectures via Google Meet and teach also via Google classroom"*. Though being reluctant in adopting new technological techniques within their teaching, most of the teachers managed to follow the general trend and stated that they were exploiting the afforded means such emailing and social networks to involve their students in this virtual experience.

4.4.2 EFL Teachers' Perceptions of their Roles and Methods in Online Teaching

When asked about their online interactions with their students, three teachers revealed that they avoided having direct contact with students in informal settings. One teacher justified, *"Most students use pseudo names and could cause offense to teachers"* while another teacher added, *"I want to preserve my privacy"*. On the other hand, two teachers observed that Facebook was quite helpful for them to contact their learners. They stated that they generated student groups to join their discussions and expand their learning experiences. Nevertheless, all teachers granted the use of the Moodle platform as a safe way to interact with students. All teachers agreed upon stimulating their learners' linguistic experience and cultivate their competencies. On commenting on the appropriate strategies they were employing to reach successful online teaching, a teacher developed, *"I cheer students to develop mobile learning, collaborative work, group chat, group motivation, and research presentation"*

4.4.3 EFL Teachers' Perceptions of the Dynamics that can Support their Students' Online Linguistic Experience

The EFL teachers believed that a complete understanding of the short-, medium- and long-term implications of distance education is constituting the laying background of future instruction but it cannot totally replace the traditional learning. Regardless of the learning modality, all agreed upon the crucial role they can play to develop digital and pedagogical tools to

teach effectively. A teacher declared, *“Remote learning is successful when it allows for meaningful two-way interaction between students and teachers”* Another teacher added, *“Effective interactions can be enabled by using the most appropriate technology. Information technologies are operational if teachers introduce them into teaching practice”*

In sum, it was concluded that the majority of EFL teachers were not entirely satisfied with this online delivery method due to the lack of appropriate technological materials and insufficient field training. They perceived that face-to-face classes were more effective for instruction. However, teachers did not deny the effectiveness of online learning in extreme circumstances as those imposed by Covid-19 pandemic.

5. Discussion

The study was conducted to report EFL learners' evaluation of their online experiences as well as to identify the actual challenges they experienced as a result of the abrupt transition to online courses in response to Covid-19 health issue.

The findings out of the students' survey questionnaire revealed that the participants were not totally satisfied with online learning effectiveness, particularly as compared to their conventional face-to-face classes where they appreciated their teachers' immediate feedback, tutoring and guidance. However, the newly adopted emergency online learning pedagogy has emphasized the need to develop the new required skills for the 21st century education. Furthermore, technology has become an essentially effective construct in both the teaching and learning processes. The above presented analysis has evidently indicated the learners' need to take part in online learning though most of them preferred some form of face-to-face learning.

The findings, also, indicated that online learning challenged EFL students' learning habits, specifically underlining their difficulty to keep engaged and motivated when studying alone through online platforms. The learners were mainly defied by the limited or no access to the internet, increased academic workload, a dearth of student-teacher interactions and improper use of technological devices. In addition, participating in online learning causes many of the respondents to feel helpless due to the insufficient academic support. The sudden Covid-19 pandemic burst has resulted in stress, anxiety and pressure among students and instructors.

Qualitative interpretation of data from semi-structured teacher interviews showed that EFL teachers had little response to their new online teaching role. They, still, advocated for the traditional methods of teaching closely tied to principles of teacher-centred approach. They need to adhere to the global wave. Teachers should, therefore, be enthusiastic and develop innovative strategies and skills to instil interest in their learners. They need training that empowers them to identify and choose the most available options for teaching and learning, and apply them in meaningful contexts.

Therefore, it appears to be quite reasonable to adapt the teaching methods in a way that online learners acquire linguistic competencies in a more communicative and supportive environment. Indeed, it becomes a duty for learners and their instructors to cope with the advancement of technology especially in the field of language teaching and learning. Both should develop positive attitudes toward the use of technology. Hence, EFL teachers can help establish an effective online interaction with their learners by encouraging collaborative learning. It is recommended that EFL learners accept the new online delivery method and be wholeheartedly engaged in an expressive training to master the new technological tools in order to promote their online learning and reach positive academic outcomes. It is, equally, important for teachers to focus on more communicative language teaching approaches in an adequate online learning

environment so that they can overcome their learners' lack of motivation and negative perception of distance learning.

6. CONCLUSION

Covid-19 pandemic crisis has caused the inevitable to happen. Sooner or later, educational institutions have had to adhere to the global digitization wave. The new generations of learners are eager of hi-tech tools. For a truly transformational learning experience, higher education institutions could offer opportunity to students to step away from everyday work and update their skillset. Well-arranged online sessions are a chance to meet both EFL students' internal and external needs, embrace new practices, and experience innovative instructional accomplishments. Seamless integration of offline and online activities is crucial for enhancement of EFL learning outcomes.

This study was limited in some ways to the participants who represented a small portion of higher education population. Further research may incorporate a larger sample of participants from a more representative number of specialties. Secondly, other variables that may influence language learning could be used extensively to compare and contrast the actual results.

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8. Appendices

APPENDIX A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS:

This survey questionnaire is designed to help you discover your real aptitudes towards online learning. All the information provided by you is of great use and only for the study purpose. Thank you!

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Are you? ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Specify your study level ☐ Licence ☐ Master
3. How would you rate your information technology proficiency level?
Good ☐ General ☐ Poor ☐

Section A: EFL Students' Online Learning Experiences

1. Do you have access to the internet?
Yes ☐ No ☐
3. If yes, specify the device you use
Smart phone ☐ Computer ☐ Tablet ☐
4. If no, how do you manage to surf online?
University ☐ Cybercafé ☐
Others:
5. Did you have a background about e-learning before?
Yes ☐ No ☐
6. Your access to the Moodle platform is:
Poor (10%) ☐ Acceptable (50%) ☐ Good (70%) ☐ Excellent (90%) ☐
7. Besides Moodle, what other platforms are using to improve your English learning?
.....
.....
8. Do you have regular online contacts with your teachers?
Yes ☐ No ☐
If so, specify the type of contact.
7. How do you rate your online contacts with your teachers?
Very helpful ☐ acceptable ☐ Not helpful ☐

Section B: EFL Students' Satisfaction with Online Learning Experiences

1. Please rate your overall satisfaction with online learning.
Satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Not satisfied ☐
2. Compared with the face-to-face classes, how do you view the learning effectiveness of online classes?
Online learning is better ☐ Same ☐ Online classes is worse ☐
3. To what extent will the following factors impact your online learning effectiveness?

	Strong impact	Neutral	No impact
Internet connectivity			
Teacher-student online interaction			
Availability of materials			
Information technology proficiency			

4. What challenges have you encountered in online learning?

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.....
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Thank you

APPENDIX B

EFL Teachers' Interviews

- 1- How long have you been teaching at university?
- 2- Last year was the first time when both teachers and learners experienced e-learning at the level of your department. How was your experience?
- 3- Did you receive any training for online teaching? If yes, how long did it last?
- 4- Which platforms have you used to deliver the lessons to your students?
- 5- Did you have online interactions with your students?
- 6- How did you manage to reach successful online teaching?
- 7- What is your attitude towards using such platforms as a supporting tool to enhance the students' linguistic proficiency?