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Fostering Distance Learning in the Age of Digital Globalization and Artificial Intelligence: A Case Study of Third-year Students of English at 8 May 1945 University-Guelma

تعزيز التعليم عن بعد في عصر العولمة الرقمية و الذكاء الاصطناعي: دراسة حالة طلبة السنة الثالثة إنجليزية في جامعة 8 ماي 1945 قالمة

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- **Abstract**

Artificial Intelligence has reshaped the landscape of education in the age of digital globalization through the use of intelligent systems and Deep Learning. AI technologies have witnessed a growing use by learners in Distance Learning. The aim of the current research is to explore students' attitudes towards the integration of AI tools and applications in Distance Learning. It provides valuable insights into the most used AI tools by EFL learners. To achieve this aim, the descriptive method was adopted by administering a semi-structured questionnaire to 142 third-year students at the Department of English, University of 8 May 1945, Guelma. Results indicated that 91.54% of the participants utilize personal AI assistants like ChatGPT to support their learning; while, 77.46% of them rely on copywriting and Grammar checker assistants. Findings also displayed that 59.85% of the informants agreed on the necessity to integrate ChatGPT in Moodle Platform. However, 62.67% of the informants preferred face-to-face learning over AI driven Distance Learning.

Keywords: AI technologies, AI tools, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Globalization, Distance Learning.

ملخص:

أعاد الذكاء الاصطناعي تشكيل مشهد التعليم في عصر العولمة الرقمية من خلال استخدام الأنظمة الذكية والتعلم العميق، حيث شهدت تقنيات الذكاء الاصطناعي استخداما متزايدا من قبل المتعلمين أثناء التعليم عن بعد. يهدف البحث الحالي الى استكشاف اتجاهات الطلبة نحو دمج أدوات وتطبيقات الذكاء الاصطناعي في التعليم عن بعد. كما يوفر أفكارا قيمة حول أدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي الأكثر استعمالا من قبل متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، تم اعتماد المنهج الوصفي من خلال إجراء استبيان شبه منظم ل 142 طالبا في السنة الثالثة بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية ، جامعة 8 ماي 1945، قالمة. و قد أشارت النتائج الى أن 91.54٪ من المشاركين يستخدمون أدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي الشخصية مثل ChatGPT لدعم تعلمهم. بينما يعتمد 77.46٪ منهم على الأدوات المساعدة على الكتابة و التدقيق النحوي. كما بينت النتائج أن 59.85٪ من المشاركين وافقوا على ضرورة إدماج ChatGPT في منصة موودل. غير أن 62.67٪ منهم فضلوا التعليم التقليدي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الذكاء اصطناعي، العولمة الرقمية، تقنيات الذكاء الاصطناعي، التعيلم عن بعد، أدوات الذكاء الاصطناعى

• Introduction

Digital globalization has significantly influenced foreign languages' instruction in Algeria. Digital technologies have revolutionalized teaching English as a Foreign Language by upgrading teaching methods, techniques, and tools. Access to various digital platforms has facilitated Distance Learning for learners after the COVID-19 pandemic. Interestingly, new technologies like Artificial Intelligence tools and applications have reshaped language Learning classrooms. Apparently, Technology-based Learning has enabled learners to direct their own learning through the use of AI applications and tools which fostered Remote Learning and indulged learners in motivating AI-driven experiences. AI-powered tools have also provided teachers with new ways of assessment and automated scoring of learners' tasks and activities. Eventually, AI is greatly shaping the future of Distance Learning.

In Algeria, Distance Learning emerged after the creation of the University of Continuing Formation (Université de la Formation Continue/UFC) in 1990 by using printed sources (handouts) as well as audiovisual sources through radio and television channels. After that, UFC adopted Online Learning for the first time during the academic year 2001-2002 by enrolling 8236 students, among 56842 inscribed students, in Online Learning as E-learning has become a necessity within the Digital Age. As Technology-based Learning (TBL) is a new approach in the Algerian classroom, learners' readiness to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the Internet was seriously questioned (Djoudi, 2010). In this respect, the University of 8 May 1945-Guelma (Algeria) adopted Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) as a Learning Management System (LMS) in 2010 as a way to provide students with electronic educational resources (asynchronous learning). However, it did not attract much attention by teachers and learners till the spread of the Coronavirus Pandemic in the academic year 2019-2020, which pushed both teachers and learners to use the Moodle Platform as a matter of obligation to digitalize learning due to the closure of the university and the necessity of Distance Learning. Teachers can upload courses in different formats and use *Big Blue Button* and *Google Meet for Moodle* to run their online sessions.

The aim behind the current research is to explore EFL learners' views about the influence of digital globalization and Artificial Intelligence on Distance Learning. Within this scope, it addresses the following main research question: What are students' attitudes towards the integration of Artificial Intelligence in Distance Learning? The study further endeavors to answer these questions:

- Do EFL learners agree that it is necessary to adopt AI-driven Distance Learning in the Age of Globalization?
- What are the most used AI assistants by students in Distance Learning contexts?
- Could Learners increase their self-reliance through the use of AI Tools and Applications in Distance Learning?

1. Literature Review

1.1 Distance Learning: History and Attitudes

Distance Learning (DL) and Remote Learning are two terms that are used interchangeably. DL is also referred to as Tele-learning, E-learning, Virtual Learning (VL), and Open and Distance Learning (ODL). Peters (1994) described DL as a rationalized method that enables learners to be involved in learning despite of their far location. In this respect, It can be either synchronous (online) or asynchronous (not online). Online Learning is also called Internet Learning. It is defined by Ally (2005) as providing sources through the Internet in a situation where learners could communicate with each other. Thus, Online Learning is not an equivalent of E-learning because the latter could be either synchronous or asynchronous, which is the same case for Virtual Learning and Tele-learning. Developing countries still need many efforts to improve Online Learning because of the slow Internet connection, the lack of the different technological devices, and digital illiteracy. The use of virtual/live classrooms in addition to traditional classrooms could facilitate learning by enabling students to record the courses and raising their motivation through online discussions (Kaur, 2013). Therefore, learners' adaptation with a new learning system/approach is not easy. It requires an effective design of a remote teaching methodology.

The first form of DL in American Universities was correspondence study that dominated education for many years (Pittman, 2003). The University of Chicago was pioneer in this field with its correspondence programs in 1892. The *International Council for Open and Distance Learning* (ICDE) was created as a result of the first conference about Distance Learning that was held in 1938 (Bunker, 2003). Later, it was called the *International Council on Correspondence Education* (ICCE). In the United States of America and Canada, distance education dates back to the late 1800s. The first *American Journal of Distance Education* was issued in 1987 after the organization of a Symposium of the *American Center for the Study of Distance Education* under the direction of *Dr. Moore.* In the 1920s, the radio was used as an educational means in the world (Kentnor, 2015). Later on, the educational television proved to be efficient as a means of distance education in the 1950s and 1960s (Saba, 2003). In the 1990s, teaching programmes were designed through Computer-mediated Communication (CMC) to provide learners with printed sources within continuing education. With access to the Internet, online university libraries provided rich sources for students (Peters, 2003). Then, the first online course was offered in 1991 by the University of Phoenix (Kentnor, 2015). Furthermore, Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) was coined by Dave Cormier and Bryan Alexander (2008) as a description of a course entitled *connectivism and connective knowledge* presented by Downes and Simens at the University of Manitoba in USA (as cited in Fasimpaur, 2013). The aim behind MOOC was to provide learners with interactive large-scale online courses.

Although DL has become a necessity in the digital age, learners still favour face-to-face learning as the best mode of instruction (Alhamami, 2018; Bali & Liu, 2018; Adarkwah, 2021). Thus, some learners have negative attitudes towards DL and Online Learning due to many reasons such as lack of teachers' collaboration (Rannastu-Avalos & Siiman, 2020). Since Learners' attitudes are related to motivation, access to the Moodle Platform may be due only to *identified regulation* which is a type of extrinsic motivation introduced by Hartnett, George, and Dron (2011) where learners study just for the sake of good marks and academic success. It could also be the result of *introjection* that indicates obligation to log in the Platform because of others' expectations, for example, parents, family, and peers. This reflects the absence of what is labelled by Hartnett et

al. (2011) *integration* as a core element in autonomous extrinsic motivation. Learners' attitudes towards Moodle could also be affected by their tech-illiteracy. In this respect, Assareh and Bidokht (2011) proclaimed that the lack of expertise in using computers could lower learners' confidence. Tuncay and Uzunboylu (2010) confirmed this fact by stating that *technology/computer anxiety* is the cause behind learners' problems in DL. Leso and Peck defined computer anxiety as the state of fear and lack of comfort when using computers (1992, as cited in Tuncay & Uzunboylu, 2010). The word *resistance* is utulized to describe students' non-interest and non-involvement in Remote Learning (Tuncay & Uzunboylu, 2010). This reflects learners' lack of motivation in DL contexts. Assareh and Bidokht (2011) concurred that although learners lack computing facilities both in institutions and at home, most of them have a positive attitude towards computer use and ICTs. Within this scope, teacher-learner collaboration is highly advocated to reinforce DL (Garrison, 2003). Thus, teachers need to be cooperative and available whenever needed. In short, learners' attitudes towards DL could be negative because of the lack of autonomy and self-direction. Self-direction in DL denotes that learners have to take control over their learning remotely. This could be implemented through self-reliance, self-assessment, and responsibility for one's own learning.

1.2 Digital Globalization and Artificial Intelligence in Distance Learning

Digital Globalization is the digital format of globalization that provides the world with flows of data and information (Luo, 2021). Digital platforms have facilitated learning enormously by making it more accessible and flexible. In the Age of digitalization, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is inevitable as a dynamic tool for learning. AI was coined by McCarthy in 1956 as a result of his research project at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire (USA). It is defined as "the imitation by computers of the intelligence inherent in humans" (Sheikh, Prins, & Schrijvers, 2023, p. 15). Wells (2023) differentiated between strong AI and weak AI. The former can achieve all the tasks that are done by humans, while the latter has a limited ability sinceit is related just to some specific tasks and activities. AI helps humans solve problems through the computers' information-processing system and the use of algorithms.

Artificial Intelligence for Education (AIED) has emerged as a dynamic field that stimulates learning through different applications and tools that support personalized learning and individual differences. Generic technologies like ChatGPT (General-Purpose Technology) has become an effective tool in DL (Pennell, Reimer, Rumig, & Valani, 2023). Learners rely on generic technologies for understanding lessons or conducting research. However, over-reliance on ChatGPT is threatening the reliability of research and academic writing (Anders, 2023).

The use of AI technologies in Distance Learning can have positive effects in the field of education (Göçmez & Okur, 2023). Shilowaras and Amizam (2022) supported the idea of integrating ChatGPT in Moodle Platform to support students' learning. Accordingly, AI-powered education may help students overcome the challenges encountered in Distance Learning such as limited interaction and lack of teachers' guidance and feedback. It can replace the teacher by providing automatic feedback and guidance to students as well as ensuring a supporting virtual immersive learning environment.

2. Research Method and Tools

The current research was conducted through the descriptive method by administering a

semi-structured questionnaire to one hundred forty-two (142) students during the academic year 2021-2022. The sample was selected randomly among one hundred sixty-five (165) third-year License students. Although most of the questions are closed, open-ended questions are occasionally used to elicit a rich understanding of the participants' viewpoints and attitudes.

The questionnaire consists of three sections. *Section One* gathered general information about the sample including age and years of experience with Distance Learning. *Section Two* surveyed the format of Distance Learning courses and the obstacles faced by learners during the implementation of this mode of instruction. It also explores learners' views about the necessity of Distance Learning in the post-COVID era. It further investigates the problem of lack of teachers' collaboration as well as the possibility to promote self-guidance and responsibility in Distance Learning. *Section Three* tackles the integration of AI tools and applications in Distance Learning. It inspects learners' favorite mode of instruction. It further probes learners' views about the necessity to adopt AI-driven Distance Learning in the Age of Globalization. This section also examines whether learners' self-reliance can be increased through the use of AI tools and applications in Remote Learning. It surveys the most used AI Assistants by EFL learners as well as their attitudes towards integrating ChatGPT in Moodle Platform.

3. Results

Students' opinions about the necessity of Distance Learning in the post-COVID era were surveyed. The following table displays statistics about this issue:

Table 1. ***The Necessity of Distance Learning in the Post COVID-19 Era***

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	27	19.01%
No	115	80.98%
Total	142	100%

As shown in Table 1, 80.98% of the participants argued that Distance Learning is not a necessity in the post COVID-19 era. However, merely 19.01% of them claimed the opposite. This reflects learners' resistance to Remote Learning. To know more about DL in the post-COVID era, learners were asked about courses' format used by teachers in Moodle Platform. Informants' responses are indicated in the following table:

Table 2. ***Distance Learning Courses' Format***

Options	Frequency	Percentage
PDFs	125	88.02%
Word Documents	51	35.91%
PPPs	3	2.11%
Videos	8	5.63%

Audios	3	2.11%

Table 2 indicates that the most common course format that is posted online is PDFs (88.02%). Then, the second format is Word documents (35.91%). Videos are ranked third (5.63%), while Power-Point Presentations and audio materials or recordings are ranked in the fourth position (2.11%). In this respect, much attention should be paid to videos by raising both teachers and learners' consciousness about the importance of using authentic materials that help the learner feel involved and motivated. Concerning the obstacles faced in Distance Learning, EFL learners argued that they are suffering mainly from technical problems related to logging in the Moodle Platform, which are due to Internet low speed as shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3. ***Students' Most Common Difficulties in Distance Learning***

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of motivation	55	38.73%
Lack of engagement	41	28.87%
No mastery of technology	17	11.97%
Technical problems (inability to log in the platform)	67	47.18%
Technical problems (not enrolled in some courses)	41	28.87%
Insufficient interaction with the teacher	67	47.18%
Low Internet speed	19	13.38%
Computer/Technology anxiety	1	0.7%
Other(s)	1	0.7%

Table 3 displays that less than half of the informants (47.18%) faced the problem of inability to log in the Moodle Platform, which is probably due to limited Internet speed. The same proportion of participants (47.18%) maintained that a lack of teacher-student interaction is prevalent in Distance Learning. As classroom interaction is different from virtual interaction, learners cannot discuss all the matters related to lessons' comprehension especially when learning is asynchronous. 38.73% of the respondents admitted that their motivation is low, while 28.87% of the population does not feel engaged in Distance Learning. Motivation and engagement differ from an individual to another. Some factors like technical problems could lead to demotivation and lack of engagement. 28.87% of the sample faced a problem of non-enrollment in some courses/modules. This is due to the fact that enrolling a large number of students is really time-consuming. 13.38% of the informants asserted that there is a problem in Internet speed which is very limited in some places. This is the problem of many developing countries which need to improve their access to the Net. 11.97% of the participants admitted that they lack the expertise in using technology (tech-

illiteracy), which could reduce learners' engagement in Distance Learning. 0.7% of the population affirmed that computer anxiety stands as a barrier in using the Internet and studying remotely. The same percentage (including just one student) suggested another obstacle to Distance Learning which is "long lessons". Some teachers upload chapters and books instead of handouts, which complicated the issue for many students. The following table displays the importance of Distance Learning in helping the learner move from teacher-guidance to self-guidance:

Table 4. ***Distance Learning as a Way to Move from Teacher-guidance to Self-guidance***

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	100	70.42%
No	42	29.57%
Total	142	100%

In contrast to traditional learning, the learner in Distance Learning is more detached from the teacher. In Table 4, the majority of the respondents (70.42%) advocated the use of Distance Learning as an effective way to promote learners' self-guidance. However, some informants (29.57%) disclosed that Distance Learning could not facilitate learners' adherence to self-guidance. This reflects their lack of awareness about the importance of working independently from the teacher. Furthermore, collaboration is very important in both traditional and online classrooms. It is worth mentioning that online collaboration in Distance Learning differs from face-to-face collaboration in the traditional classroom. In Table 5, students were asked about teachers' lack of collaboration in Distance Learning, results are displayed as follows:

Table 5. ***Lack of Teachers' Collaboration in Distance Learning***

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	108	76.05%
No	34	23.94%
Total	142	100%

As indicated in Table 5, most of the participants (76.05%) announced that the teacher is less collaborative in Distance Learning. Contrary to that, 23.94% of the respondents proclaimed that they did not witness teachers' lack of collaboration in Distance Learning. Overall, the majority of the participants preferred face-to-face collaboration. The informants were further asked about their attitudes towards the Design of the Moodle Platform, their responses are mentioned in Table 6:

Table 6. ***Learners' Attitudes towards the Design of the Moodle Platform***

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	78	54.92%

Negative	64	45.07%
Total	142	100%

As displayed in Table 6, 54.92% of the informants revealed that they have a positive attitude towards the platform's design. Whereas, 45.07% of them confessed that their attitude is negative. The participants who have a negative attitude towards the design of the Moodle Platform justified their responses as follows:

-Using the Platform is too complicated.
-Limited contact with most of the teachers; thus, no understanding.
-The Internet flow is not good…I could not even log in!
-Some teachers upload books not lessons! no online videos/lessons.
-The platform is not well-organized/The design of the site is not attractive!
-Not everyone has access to Internet and technological tools.
-It is similar to Facebook Groups where PDFs are published.
-I feel lost, there is no one to guide me.
-We do not get notifications when a teacher posts a new lesson, we need to re-check each module to see the updates.

To sum up, some students need both guidance and training on Learning Management Systems' use. Furthermore, they lack self-reliance, self-direction and autonomy as they want teachers to upload just handouts, and short lessons instead of books. Since some learners have negative attitudes towards E-learning Platforms, the researcher needs to know their favourite mode of instruction. Students' answers in relation to this issue are indicated in Table 7:

Table 7. ***Learners' Favourite Mode of Instruction***

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Face-to-face Learning	89	62.67%
Distance Learning	6	4.22%
AI-driven Distance Learning	47	33.09%
Total	142	100%

As shown in Table 7, 62.67% of the informants claimed that they like face-to-face learning. Interestingly, 33.09% of the participants favored Distance Learning which relies on AI tools and applications. Only 4.22% of the respondents preferred Distance Learning in which learners do not use any AI tools or applications. This implies that a large percentage of the population do not accept new trends in teaching and learning. In the following table, learners were asked about the necessity to use AI-driven Distance Learning in the Age of Digital Globalization:

Table 8. ***The Necessity to Adopt AI-driven Distance Learning in the Age of Globalization***

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	86	60.56%
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	56	39.43%
Total	142	100%

As displayed in Table 8, 60.56% of the respondents strongly agreed on the fact that it is necessary to use AI-driven Distance Learning in the Age of Digital Globalization; whereas, 39.43% of them strongly disagreed on this fact. This implies that some students are not aware of the importance of AI technologies in learning distantly. Concerning whether AI tools and applications can increase learners' self-reliance in Distance Learning or not, responses are indicated in the following table:

Table 9. ***Increasing Learners' Self-reliance through the Use of AI Tools and Applications in Distance Learning***

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	99	69.71%
No	43	30.28%
Total	142	100%

As Table 9 shows, more than two thirds of the population (69.71%) agreed on the idea that self-reliance can be fostered through using AI technologies in Distance Learning. However, 30.28% of the participants opposed this idea. This can be due to the fact that some learners are not self-reliant whatever mode of learning is used. In short, learners' awareness about the importance of autonomy and self-reliance should be raised in both traditional and Technology-based Learning environments. Furthermore, various types of AI assistants are available for learners. The following table shows the most used AI assistants by EFL learners:

Table 10. ***The Most Used AI Assistants by EFL Learners in Distance Learning***

Options	Frequency	Percentage

-Personal assistants (ChatGPT, Capilot, Cortana, Gemini…)	130	91.54%
-Management assistants (Notion AI, Taskade AI…)	0	0%
-Copywriting assistants (QuillBot, Writesonic, Genepe, Writesonic, Rytr, Copy.ai…)	110	77.46%
-Grammar Checker assistants (Grammarly, LanguageTool…)	110	77.46%
-Reading document assistants (genei, Lateral App…)	10	7.04%
-Text speech generators (Murf, DeepAI, ElevenLabs…)	20	14.08%
-Applications for speaking and improving pronunciation (ELSA speak, SmallTalk, Talkpal…)	30	21.12%
-Voice-based assistants (Siri, Bixby,…)	60	42.25%
-Recording and automatic transcription assistants (Otter.ai, Veed.io, Descript…)	5	3.52%

As indicated in Table 10, nearly all the participants (91.54%) admitted that they use personal assistants like ChatGPT and both copywriting and Grammar checker assistants (77.46%). Less than half the participants (42.25%) declared that they utilize voice-based assistants; while 21.12% prefer the use of applications for speaking and improving pronunciation. Text speech generators and reading document assistants are used by 14.08% and 7.04% of the participants respectively. A small minority (21.12%) preferred to use recording and automatic transcription assistants. The following table explores students' attitudes towards the integration of ChatGPT in Moodle Platform:

Table 11. ***Students' Attitudes towards the Integration of ChatGPT in Moodle Platform***

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Negative	57	40.14%
Positive	85	59.85%
Total	*142*	*100%*

Statistics in Table 11 indicate that 40.14% of the informants have a negative attitude towards the integration of ChatGPT in Moodle Platform; nonetheless, more than half of the participants (59.85%) have a positive attitude towards the issue. In this respect, learners' readiness to integrate generic technologies in DL is still limited. Learners who have a negative attitude about integrating ChatGPT in Moodle Platform justified their view as follows:

-ChatGPT sometimes provides inaccurate information.

-Artificial Intelligence cannot replace the teacher, it is just a supporting tool.
-Some teachers accuse us of plagiarism when we use ChatGPT since we do not know how to use it appropriately.
-Frequent use of ChatGPT will lead to over-reliance on it.
In short, learners are aware that ChatGPT is not always helpful as it requires a careful use that does not violate academic honesty. More importantly, the teacher's role is so prominent that it cannot be replaced by AI tools and applications.

4. Discussion

Quantitative data revealed that 80.98% of the participants opposed Distance Learning as a mode of instruction in the post-COVID era. More precisely, 62.67% favored face-to-face instruction over AI-driven Distance Learning due to teachers' presence and guidance. This is consistent with findings from various studies (Alhamami, 2018; Bali & Liu, 2018; Adarkwah, 2021). However, 60.56% of the respondents acknowledged the necessity of AI-driven Distance Learning in the Age of Digital Globalization, which contradics with the previous opinion. This implies that EFL learners may not fully recognize the potential benefits of AI technologies in enhancing Remote Learning by fostering self-reliance, motivation, engagement, and interaction among learners. Machine feedback and automatic grading can also have a positive effect on learners' Distance Learning by providing a supportive environment in which machine can substitute the role of the teacher.

As reported by 88.02% of the participants, the PDF format was the predominant choice for Moodle Platform courses. Therefore, it is crucial to enhance teachers' awareness regarding the significance of audio and video tools in Distance Learning. Limited Internet access has led to technical issues, with 47.18% of respondents indicating they frequently struggle to log into the E-Learning Platform. Consequently, there is a need to improve internet infrastructure to ensure better access to the platform. The same percentage of participants (47.18%) noted a lack of online interaction with teachers. Thus, promoting remote study through the incorporation of AI technologies within the Moodle Platform could engage learners more effectively and enhance online interaction. Although 91.54% of the participants reported using ChatGPT as a personal assistant in Remote Learning, only 59.85% of the respondents expressed a positive attitude towards the incorporation of ChatGPT in Moodle. In this respect, Shilowaras and Amizam (2022) endorsed the integration of ChatGPT in the Moodle Platform to address student inquiries and facilitate understanding.

Furthermore, 69.71% of the informants advocated the use of AI-driven Distance Learning as an effective way to foster learners' self-reliance as they can move from teacher-guidance to self-guidance through Learning remotely. Nonetheless, 76.05% of the respondents maintained that the teacher is less collaborative in Distance Learning. This aligns with the findings of Rannastu-Avalos and Siiman (2020). Therefore, new ways of collaboration should be introduced to support learners' education in Distance Learning. In this regard, tele-collaboration and online collaboration could be highly effective to sustain Online Learning. Meanwhile, automatic collaboration through the use of AI tools is highly advocated to support learners by providing them with automatic scoring and AI-powered feedback.

Overall, learners' training is needed to facilitate the use of AI technologies in Distance Learning. Some modifications are required in the design of the Moodle Platform by including

different AI tools in its design to make it more practical and up-to-date. Eventually, the rapid progress in technology has firmly established Artificial Intelligence as a cornerstone in academic institutions. AI continues to transform how English as a Foreign Language is learned in an unpredictable manner.

- ## Conclusion

Findings from the present research indicated that nearly all EFL learners use personal AI assistants like ChatGPT to support their learning. They also rely on copywriting assistants and Grammar checker assistants in academic writing. Furthermore, many learners are convinced that integrating ChatGPT in Moodle Platform can foster Distance learning by making it more flexible and interactive on one hand, and raising their self-guidance on the other hand. However, there are some learners who prefer face-to-face learning over AI-powered Distance Learning as they believe that Distance Learning is not conducive to teacher-learner collaboration. Significantly, the shift from traditional classrooms to virtual classrooms and Distance Learning requires much attention from teachers and policy-makers. First, it is highly recommended that EFL learners have to be trained about the use of Language Management Systems and AI tools and applications. Second, some modifications and adjustments should be made to the Moodle Platform especially its online assessment system which needs to be revised by integrating AI tools and applications. Third, Internet access has to be improved and classrooms ought to be equipped with technological facilities. Consequently, teachers' use of intelligent tutoring systems and automated assessment is highly recommended. However, learners need to be cautious in relation to issues related to academic writing and violation of ethical principles.

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Appendices

Appendix A : Students' Questionnaire

Section One: General Information

1-Age ..... years.

2-Learners' experience with Distance Learning:...year (s).

Section Two: Distance Learning

3-Do you think that distance learning is still a necessity in the post Covid-19 pandemic era?

Yes	
No	

4-Which courses' format is dominating Distance Learning courses in Moodle Platform?

PDFs	
Word documents	
Power Point Presentations	
Videos	
Audios	

5-What type of courses' format do you prefer the most?

PDFs	
Word documents	
Power Point Presentations	
Videos	
Audios	

6-What are the most common difficulties you have faced in Distance learning in relation to Moodle Platform?

Lack of motivation	
Lack of engagement	
No mastery of technology	
Technical problems (no ability to log in the platform)	
Technical problems (not enrolled in some courses)	
Insufficient interaction with the teacher	
Low Internet speed	
Computer anxiety	
Other(s),would you please specify below	

…….

7- What are your attitudes towards the design of the Moodle Platform?

Positive	
Negative	

-If negative, would you please mention why?

…….

8-Could Distance Learning help students move from teacher-guidance to self-guidance?

Yes	
No	

9-Could Distance Learning increase learners' responsibility for learning?

Yes	
No	

10-Do you think that the teacher is less collaborative in Distance Learning?

Yes	
No	

Section Three: Integrating AI Tools and Applications in Distance Learning

11-What is your favourite mode of instruction?

Face-to-face Learning	
Distance Learning	
AI-driven Distance Learning	

12- What AI Assistants do you use the most in Distance Learning?

Personal assistants (ChatGPT, Capilot, Cortana, Gemini…)	
Management assistants (Notion AI, Taskade AI…)	
Copywriting assistants (QuillBot, Writesonic, Genepe, Writesonic, Rytr, Copy.ai…)	
Grammar Checker assistants (Grammarly, LanguageTool…)	
Reading document assistants (genei, Lateral App…)	
Text speech generators (Murf, DeepAI, ElevenLabs…)	
Applications for speaking and improving pronunciation (ELSA speak, SmallTalk, Talkpal…)	
Voice-based assistants (Siri, Bixby,…)	
Recording and automatic transcription assistants (Otter.ai, Veed.io, Descript…)	

13-Do you agree that it is necessary to adopt AI-driven Distance Learning in the Age of Digital Globalization?

Strongly agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Strongly disagree	

14-Do you think that the use of AI tools and applications in Distance Learning could increase your self-reliance?

Yes	
No	

16- What are your attitudes towards the Integration of ChatGPT in Moodle Platform?

Positive	
Negative	

-If negative, would you please explain why?