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**Teaching EFL Online via MOODLE Platform: Students' and Teachers'
Perceptions vis-à-vis Lessons and Evaluation Mode**

A case study of 3rd year EFL Students in the Department of Foreign Languages,
Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center-Mila

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Master Degree in
Didactics of Foreign Languages

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Dedications

- ❖ *I dedicate this work to my precious parents for supporting me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve. Without your support, none of this would have been accomplished; your words of encouragement and push for tenacity always ring in my ears.*
- ❖ *To my sisters Anfel, Ikhlas, and Tesnim who embraced me with love, and care and provided me with confidence and support.*
- ❖ *My sunshine “Aroua” whom I see as my daughter. My source of joy, happiness, and motivation, I love you to the moon and back, sweetie girl.*
- ❖ *To all my extended family members, Guidoum and Kebch, for supporting me with their prayers and trust, especially my aunt Houria. In addition to my favorite cousins Mounib and Mouad whom I consider as my brothers.*
- ❖ *My lovely supportive friends with whom I shared the most memorable moments at university Bochra, Nesrin, Assala, Ibtissem, and Sofia; I will never forget what you have done for me. So glad to have you in my life and so glad for the moments.*
- ❖ *To all my friends for their insightful words that pushed me to pursue my dreams, without exception, namely Boutheina, Soulef, and, Ibtissem, and to all my precious childhood friends Ghada, Imen, and Nour.*
- ❖ *To the memory of my beloved maternal grandfather, and my paternal grandmother who raised me and her love for me knew no bounds. Although they passed away, their memories continue to regulate my life. I love you and I will never forget you.*
- ❖ *To myself above all.*

Salsabil GUIDOUM

Dedication

❖ *I dedicate this work to the dearest people to my heart: my beloved mother, and my dearest father who have always been by my side and have provided me with their love, encouragement, and support.*

❖ *To all my brothers and sisters.*

❖ *To all my friends without exception especially my dear friend Salsabil who was more tired than me in this work, it was my pleasure to be your partner and I am thankful to you.*

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Abstract

The current study aims to scrutinize EFL teachers' and students' attitudes toward online teaching via the Moodle platform and their perceptions vis-à-vis lessons and evaluation mode at Mila University Center. Accordingly, within the context of this study, two research questions are raised: (1) Has Moodle been an efficient platform for teaching EFL online? (2) How do teachers and students from the Department of Foreign Languages at the University Center of Mila perceive the use of the Moodle platform? In response to the questions, a descriptive method has been opted for the completion of the present research. To obtain the necessary data, two questionnaires have been submitted to a sample composed of 85 third-year students, in addition to another questionnaire for 08 teachers from the Department of Foreign Languages at Mila University Center. The findings indicate that the overwhelming majority of teachers and students are not satisfied with online education via the Moodle platform; they declared that it is not as effective as regular education due to a diverse range of reasons, such as lack of computer knowledge, lack of training on how to use Moodle, technical issues, poor internet connection, and lack of body interaction. Besides, the teachers' questionnaire analysis revealed that most of the informants agreed on the difficulty of evaluating students remotely because it lacks validity and reliability in the Algerian context. The students' questionnaire, likewise, demonstrated that the vast majority of the participants suffered from the lack of teachers' explanation; this made them focus more on memorizing the lessons rather than understanding them. In the light of the findings obtained from the questionnaires, one can say that the results are in the direction of our hypotheses.

Keywords: online teaching, EFL learners, the Moodle platform, teachers' and students' perceptions, difficulties faced.

List of Abbreviations and Symbols

CMS: Classroom Management System

CMS: Course Management System

COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease of 2019

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ICT: Information and Communication Technologies

LMS: Learning Management System

MHESR: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

MOODLE: Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment

MUC: Mila University Center

OMLS: Online Management Learning System

PDF: Portable Document Format

Q: Question

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

URL: Uniform Resource Locator

VLE: Virtual Learning Environment

WBT: Web-Based Training

%: Percentage

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General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

The spread of the coronavirus pandemic around the world has made many countries adapt to new situations in different sectors, including education. In Algeria, the first case of COVID-19 was diagnosed on February 25, 2020. To restrain the transmission of the disease, the Algerian government authorities imposed a national lockdown and curfew measures starting from March 12, 2020. This unexpected lockdown forced teachers and students alike to work and study remotely from home for the rest of the semester. To complete the second semester's syllabi, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research urged Educational Departments to consider alternative teaching methods. Consequently, many Algerian universities implemented the Moodle online learning platform to continue the academic work and engage students during the pandemic. The University Center of Mila also opted for this educational online platform and started using it as of March 2020. The platform as such was created for the first time in 2012, to upload courses and assignments and provide tests and quizzes. This research is tailored to examine how Mila University Center has used the Moodle platform to facilitate the teaching process during the COVID-19 and to get teachers' and third-year students' perceptions and attitudes towards it. Therefore, it stresses the issues of online teaching and learning that have persistently challenged both teachers and students alike such as technical issues, poor internet connection, and the lack of training on how to use the Moodle platform.

2. Aims of the Study

The current study has striven to investigate the efficiency of the Moodle platform in teaching EFL online. In addition, this research work has been designed to determine EFL teachers' and students' perceptions vis-à-vis lessons and evaluation modes with the Moodle platform, taking the department of English at the University Center of Mila as a case in point.

3. Research Questions

This research has sought to answer the following research questions:

- Has Moodle been an efficient platform for teaching EFL online?
- How do teachers and students from the Department of Foreign Languages at the University Center of Mila perceive the use of the Moodle platform?

4. Research Hypotheses

Based on the above research questions, we propose the following research hypotheses:

- If students from the Department of Foreign Languages at the University Center of Mila were provided with the necessary explanation by their respective teachers, they would be better empowered to perform in the online learning process.
- If students and teachers from the Department of Foreign Languages at the University Center of Mila mastered sufficiently enough the use of the Moodle platform, it would be an efficient tool for teaching EFL online.

5. Means of Research

In order to verify to what extent the proposed hypotheses are valid and correct, we opted for a qualitative approach for this research. The data collection method that has been deployed is a questionnaire, which has been administered to both teachers and third year students at the Department of Foreign Languages at Abdelhafid Boussouf Mila University Center, respectively. The questionnaires aim at gathering the necessary data about students' and teachers' points of view about teaching online via the Moodle platform, and their perceptions vis-à-vis lessons and evaluation mode.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

The present study tackles the two basics of theoretical and practical parts in conducting research. The theoretical part is divided up into three sections, which reflect the organization of the literature review of the researched variables. The first section, entitled “The Notion of Online Teaching”, presents an overview of the historical background of distance learning, its definition, types, strengths, drawbacks, and some of its instructional strategies. The second section, entitled “The Use of the Moodle Platform”, introduces the learning management systems (LMSs) and the rationale behind using them in language teaching. It is subsequently devoted to the history of the Moodle platform by providing its philosophy and some clarifying definitions for the term. In addition, it accounts for Moodle resources, activities and its various roles. The third section, entitled “Teaching EFL Remotely via the Moodle Platform”, deals chiefly with the implementation of Moodle for EFL classes and the constraints routinely faced by the lecturers, in addition to teachers’ and students’ challenges and attitudes towards the use of this platform. Furthermore, it investigates its efficiency. In like manner, the second chapter in this work is devoted to practical implications, which is a profound exploration of our variables. In this chapter, we will focused on analyzing the data collected from the teachers’ and students’ questionnaires, in addition to discussing the obtained results.

Chapter One: Online Teaching and the Use of the Moodle Platform

Introduction

Internationally, the first semester of 2020 marked a turning point in the field of education due to the emergence of a new disease that was in a number of weeks classified by the World Health Organization as a pandemic, known as the Coronavirus. Because of its contagious and widespread nature, teachers around the world have found themselves in an exceptional situation, as they become obliged to rely entirely on online education. As an essential preventive measure against the horrific spread of the pandemic, the Algerian government ordered an immediate shutdown of many institutions (Herman, Maarek, & Wilde, 2020). Therefore, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) started for the first time since its establishment adopting online teaching and learning as the sole mode of instruction of all national universities. To ensure the continuity of the educational process, the Department of Foreign Languages at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center, Mila, Algeria, had to adopt online education. Among the main technological tools used was the Moodle platform, which aims at creating an effective collaborative online environment between teachers and learners (Chourishi, Buttan, Chaurasia, & Soni, 2011). It was not until the outbreak of COVID-19 that the Algerian teachers were compelled to use Moodle to deliver their courses and assignments, it was used previously but fast deployment of the site were minimal and mostly of purely supplementary value. This chapter is divided into three sections that are devoted to the theoretical part of the research work. To begin with, the first section sets out to offer some exploratory insights into the notion of online teaching. It provides an overview of the historical background of distance learning, its definition, types, strengths, drawbacks, and some of its instructional strategies. Moreover, the second section attempts to introduce the learning management systems (LMSs)

and the rationale behind using them in language teaching. In addition, it is devoted the history of the Moodle platform by providing its philosophy and some clarifying definitions for the term. In addition, it accounts for Moodle resources, activities, and roles. The third section discusses the implementation of Moodle in teaching EFL online and the constraints faced by the teachers; furthermore, it investigates its uses challenges, attitudes, and efficiency.

Section One: The Notion of Online Teaching

4.1.1 Historical Background of Online Teaching

Online teaching is not a new term. A scholar named Caleb Phillips has the honour of being the first registrant to offer distance education. In an advertisement published in the Boston Gazette on March 20, 1728, Phillips offered weekly courses by mail to students interested in shorthand courses (Bower and Hardy, 2004). However, it was not until the middle of the 19th century that distance education began to take hold. In the 1840s, Isaac Pitman taught shorthand by mail in Britain, while in 1858 the University of London began offering distance learning degrees. Moreover, after developing the concept of extensive education while serving as the president of the University of Chicago in 1892, William Rainey Harper promoted the idea of correspondence school lessons. A few years later, at the beginning of the 20th century, in 1911, the University of Queensland in Australia established a department of correspondence studies.

Delving into the history of distance teaching does much more than satisfy our curiosity; it gives us much-needed insight into how the development of technologies that work in synergy with an effective pedagogy enhances distance learning (Anderson, 2012). At least, until the middle of the 21st century the evolution of online learning was generally divided into three definite but overlapping phases of generations described by Kaufman (Bates, 2005a; Kaufman, 1989).

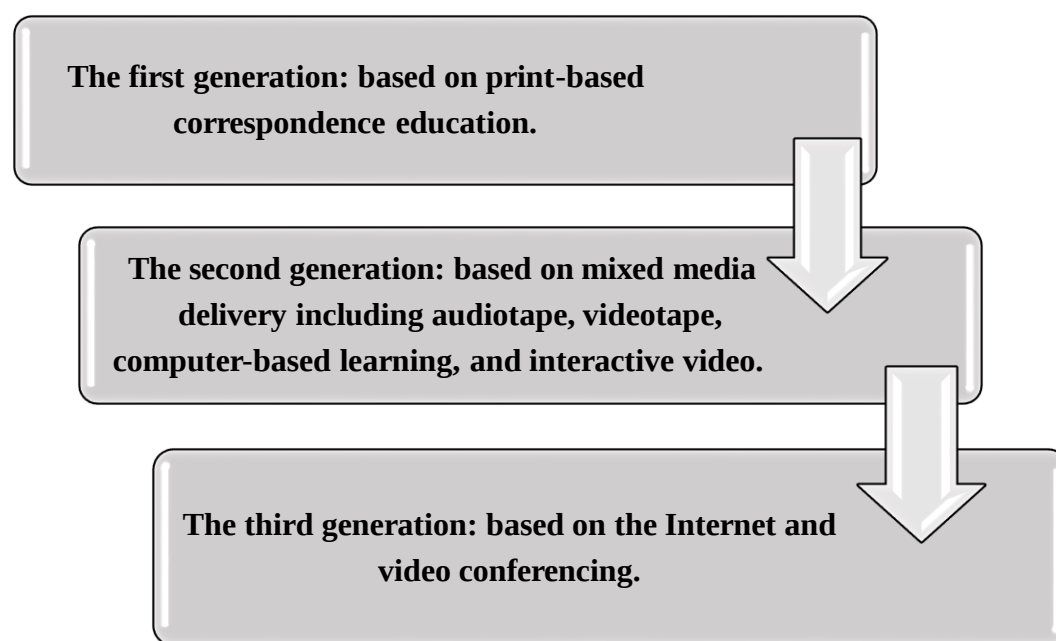


Figure 1: *Generations of Distance Education* (According to Kaufman, 1989)

Each generation is associated with a significant change in the way remote learning has been mediated.

The first generation of distance education lasted from 1850 to 1960. Its main characteristic was print-based correspondence education. In this generation, student-teacher interaction was individualized but slow and infrequent. As Bates explained, "The first generation is characterized by the predominant use of a single technology and a lack of direct student interaction with the institution providing the education or issuing the accreditation" (2005b). A person or institution would prepare and send study materials to students via mail or ship, together with a syllabus and a list of exam times and locations. As White mentioned "Interaction between teachers and learners was 'one-way', usually by posts, with a time lag between mailing and response" (2003, p. 14).

The second generation lasted from 1960 to 1985. It continued to use print but it was mainly characterized by the use of mixed media delivery including audiotapes, videotapes,

computer-based learning, and interactive video (Taylor, 2001). As with the first generation, direct student interaction was still fairly limited. As a result, the use of mass media to deliver course materials has greatly expanded the remote user base, in some cases to over 100,000 students.

The last generation has raised the researchers' interest in distance education, especially with the advent of the internet which led to the eventual emergence and expansion of what is now called Web-Based Training (WBT) which also caused novel options to enter into the existence of the educational spheres. This generation is based on two-way communication media such as the Internet or video conferencing which allow interaction between the teacher who provides the instruction and the remote learner. Most importantly, remote communication between students is facilitated, either individually or in groups. Third-generation technologies have led to a much more equivalent distribution of communication between students and teachers.

Kaufman (1989) characterized the three generations as a progressive increase in learners' control, opportunities for dialogue, and emphasis on thinking skills rather than on mere comprehension.

4.1.2 The Concept of Online Teaching

Online teaching is a type of e-learning that takes place at home through the use of various technologies without physical attendance in classrooms. It enables learners to exchange skills and knowledge at the same or at a different time with other people using technology. Negash and Wilcox (2008) recognized four types of e-learning: e-learning without presence and communication, occasional e-learning without presence but with communication, combined e-learning with occasional presence, and e-learning a tool used in classroom. For Marques (2006), e-learning is the use of technology to deliver learning and training programmes (E-learning portal, 2009).

UNESCO defines online instruction as an educational process and system in which all or a substantial part of the instruction is conducted by someone or something remote from the student in terms of space and time. Online teaching requires structured planning, well-designed courses, special instructional techniques, and methods of communication with specific delivery systems ranging from print to the internet and mobile phone (UNESCO, 1997).

Aladwan et al., (2018) defined distance learning as a form of education in which learners are bodily passive and receive lectures and lessons through the internet. Schedule flexibility is one of the most known characteristics of distance learning that organizes the study time for some students. Sometimes, when there are special courses that require online participation in limited hours or spaces, the schedule becomes fixed. To provide a network environment, we need information and communication technologies (ICT) which is another feature of learning through distances. This gives equal opportunities for the individual to independently attain knowledge.

While there is still debate about what distance teaching is, its growth is unquestionable. It can be defined in different ways based on different researchers with different perspectives. For this study, teaching online is defined as the facilitation of a group of students taking part in a wholly online course, as defined by Cuellar:

An online course is defined as one that is taken through a web-based learning platform using interactive teaching strategies. This involves no face-to-face interaction with classroom time, with students doing course work at a place and time convenient to the student (2002, p. 5).

3.1.3 Categories of Online Teaching

Asynchronous e-learning is similar to synchronous e-learning which is a learner-centered process that uses online learning resources to facilitate information sharing irrespective of the

constraints of time and place among a network of people. Regardless of the similarity, there are a few glaring differences between them as shown in the figure below:

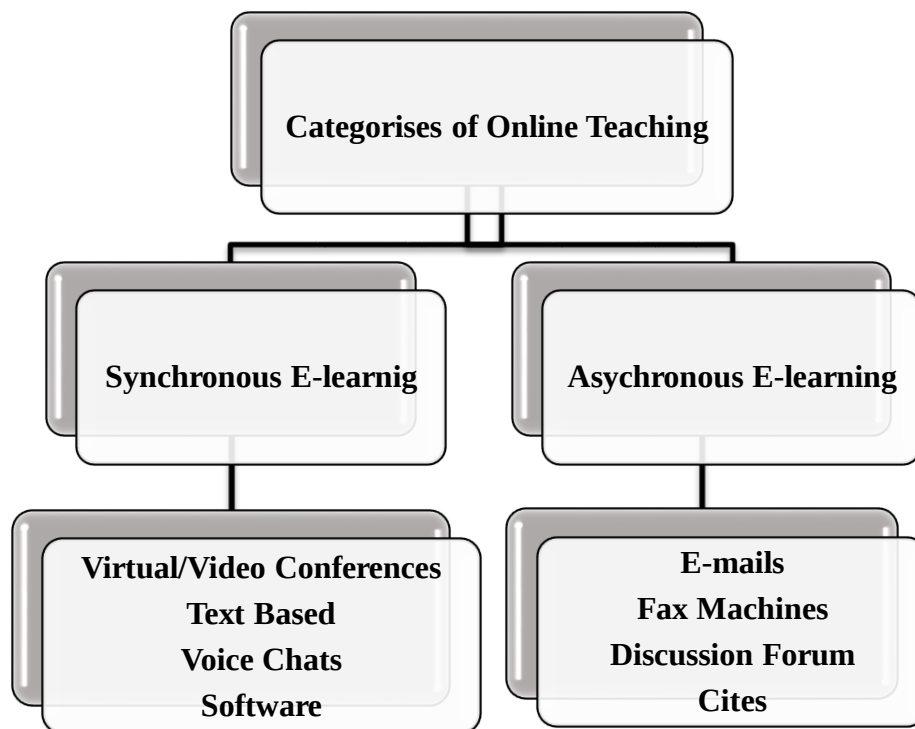


Figure 2: *Categories of Online Teaching.*

3.1.3.1 Synchronous E-learning

Several researchers have provided a comprehensive definition of synchronous e-learning which is unanimous and it must include two components. They are interactions and time. Based on these components, Khan defines synchronous e-learning as the interaction of participants with a teacher through the Web in real-time (2006a). It was developed due to proven needs in different ages such as education. There is no physical meeting in the online educational environment. In this type, learning experiences are live and real-time. The roots of synchronous e-learning come from three main influences: the classroom, the media, and the conference (Clark et al., 2007).

3.1.3.2 Asynchronous E-learning

Asynchronous e-learning is defined variously due to the components, nature, and facilities that are common in some of its characteristics. On the other hand, one of the popular definitions that focus on the components of asynchronous online learning introduced it as “an interactive learning community that is not limited by time, place or the constraints of a classroom” (Mayadas, 1997). In this type of learning, learning experiences are not live and real-time. The conditions and factors driving asynchronous e-learning are different. This method is, therefore, defined by other components. Based on these components, Khan mentioned that asynchronous learning refers to instruction that is not restricted by place or time” (2006b).

3.1.4 Benefits and Drawbacks of Online Teaching

Like most teaching methods, online teaching has its own sets of pros and cons. Decoding and understanding these pros and cons will help institutions to create strategies for more effective course delivery and ensure an uninterrupted learning journey for the students. Gautam (2020) classifies some of the major benefits and drawbacks of remote teaching. These will be addressed shortly.

3.1.4.1 Benefits of Teaching Online

- i. Online teaching provides teachers with effective ways to deliver lessons to students. E-learning has several tools like videos, PDFs, podcasts, and teachers can use all of these tools as part of their lesson plans. By extending the lesson plan beyond traditional textbooks to include online resources, teachers can become more effective educators.
- ii. It allows students to attend classes from any location of their choice. It also allows schools to reach a larger network of students, instead of being limited by geographical

boundaries. Moreover, online lessons can be recorded, archived, and shared for future reference. This allows students to access learning materials at a time that is convenient for them. Therefore, online learning provides students with the accessibility of time and place in education.

- iii. Another benefit of online teaching is the reduction in financial costs. It is much more affordable than physical learning. This is because online learning eliminates students' transportation costs, meals, and most importantly, real estate. In addition, all the lessons or study materials are available online, thus creating a paperless learning environment that is more affordable and beneficial for the environment at the same time.
- iv. Since online classes can be taken from home or the location of your choice, there are fewer chances of students missing classes.
- v. Every student has a different learning style. Some students prefer to learn through audios, while others are visual learners. Likewise, some students thrive in the schoolroom, and other students are individual learners who are distracted by large groups. The e-learning system, with its diverse options and resources, can be customized in many ways. This is the best way to create a perfect learning environment adapted to each student's needs.

3.1.4.2 Drawbacks of Online Teaching

- i. For many students, one of the biggest challenges of online learning is having difficulty concentrating on the screen for long periods. With online learning, students are also more likely to be easily distracted by social media or other sites. Therefore, the teachers should keep their online lessons crisp, engaging, and interactive to help students stay focused on the lesson.
- ii. Many parents worry about the health risks that come with their children spending long hours staring at a screen. This increased screen time is one of the main concerns and

disadvantages of e-learning. Sometimes students also develop poor posture and other physical problems from bending over a screen. A good solution to this would be to provide the students with plenty of screen breaks to refresh their minds and their bodies.

- iii. Another major challenge of online courses is internet connectivity. Whereas internet penetration has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years, in smaller towns and villages a consistent connection with decent speed is a problem. There can be a lack of continuity in a child's learning without a consistent internet connection for students or teachers, This harms the education process.
- iv. Learners can learn a lot when they are in the company of their mates. Nevertheless, physical interactions between students and teachers are minimal in an online classroom. This often results in feeling isolated for students. In this situation, the school should allow other forms of communication between learners, their mates, and instructors. This can include online messaging, emails, and video conferencing which will allow for face-to-face interactions and reduce feelings of isolation.
- v. Teachers must have a basic understanding of how to use digital modes of learning to teach online. However, this is not always the case. Teachers may have only a very basic knowledge of technology. They do not always have the resources and materials they need to offer online courses. To overcome this, schools should invest in training teachers with the latest technological updates so that they can easily conduct their online classes.

3.1.5 Instructional Strategies for Online Learning

This title discusses different instructional strategies. These strategies will help in transforming traditional one-on-one learning into remote learning.

3.1.5.1 Voice and Pitch Management: One of the prominent features of online teaching is the voice of the teacher. Literature shows that effective communication between students and

teachers has a crucial role. Keeping the pitch of voice high and practicing vocal functioning like pauses and the intensity variation is essential. In traditional to classroom teaching, body language, eye contact, and physical gestures are important teaching tools. However, teachers should focus more on their voice and vocal functions in online education. A recent study suggests that speaking softly is beneficial for students. It helps students to write essential lesson points (Bao, 2020a). It can be suggested here that universities should provide training for their teachers. Teachers should know about the significance of maintaining a slow voice and practicing vocal functions. This will ensure efficient learning for students in online teaching.

3.1.5.2 Formulating Teaching Strategies to Enhance Online Class Interactions: Greater

interactivity in an online course will improve the overall success rate of the online course. Literature shows that more discussions between students and teachers can lead to greater interactivity (Townsend et al., 2002). Online class participation can be one way to increase students' engagement in lessons. Additionally, discussing case studies and asking questions can lead to greater students' involvement (Smith & Diaz, 2004a). Ergo, universities should organize meetings with the other universities. Through these meetings, they have to devise methods to develop more interactive online courses. Practicing these methods will encourage students' attendance and improve learning abilities. Teachers should prepare lectures in advance and share case studies and questions with their students.

3.1.5.3 Developing Students' Learning Abilities in Online Classes: Online classes are

completely different from face-to-face class courses. In traditional classroom lectures, the teacher has more control over students' behaviour. A study shows that teachers should design different activities to deal with this concern. Such activities can enhance students'

learning skills in online courses (Bao, 2020b). Additionally, teachers should ask challenging questions to students during online classes (Smith & Diaz, 2004b). These practices will help to establish better learning skills for students. In addition, these practices will allow students to be more focused in classes. Besides these, getting feedback from students about these online courses can improve online classes' productivity in a number of significant ways.

3.1.5.4 Backup Plans for Pandemic Situations: Due to COVID-19, all classes shifted from face-to-face classes to online classes. Various issues that may occur are systemic and technical. Institutions do not have the appropriate resources and equipment to conduct online classes. All of these issues are significant in running online courses, namely overloading of servers, lack of computer devices, and inability to perform software installations. To deal with these problems, institutions must always be ready. This kind of pandemic situation can occur at any time. Additionally, the institution should have a backup plan as Plan B or Plan C to address these issues without causing learning delays for students.

3.1.5.5 Transforming a Large-Class Lecture Course to Smaller Modules in Online Classes:

To ensure concentration, a large classroom lesson can be divided into smaller modules or discussions. Teaching staff should prepare online course materials in less than 30 minutes. This can be accomplished by splitting a single big task into several smaller tasks (Bao, 2020c). This will help students to remain attentive and focused during online classes. Moreover, this method will help in improving students' learning skills in online classes.

3.1.5.6 Recording Online Lectures and Providing Self-Learning Material: Before the online session time, the teaching support staff should send emails. These emails should contain all preclass-specific reading materials. Teachers can ask students to submit a brief

explanation of what they understood after reading the material during an online session. This will help in improving online class discussions. Additionally, students will take part in answering questions if they have read the material already. Furthermore, students should be provided with online class recordings. These recordings will be beneficial for students who missed or did not understand any part of the lecture.

Section Two: The Use of the MOODLE Platform

3.2.1 Learning Management Systems (LMSs)

Learning Management System (LMS) is a software tool that is developed to manage an organization's learning. It provides access to a series of educational resources. LMS can help faculty members and students in the e-learning process in quite a variety of different ways. Fallon and Brown (2004) define LMS as a web-based software that enables the management and training needed to monitor the use of educational content and its results. According to Black et al., (2007) "Most LMSs are web-based that facilitate access to learning content and administration, anytime and anywhere" (p. 36).

Many scholars and educators have adopted LMSs in their language classes to improve foreign language proficiency and optimize teaching hours. As a result, they have achieved many language-learning goals (Rymanova et al., 2015). Besides, Ahn (2017) thinks that the implementation of LMS at universities has become popular and more practical for both teachers and learners in foreign and second language education thanks predominately to its effective methodology for course delivery and socialization opportunities with technology-enhanced learning activities in both online and offline environments. Furthermore, the effectiveness and

benefits of LMS in language learning for students' achievement and autonomous learning have been investigated (p. 01).

Williams (2016) believes that E-Learning systems (or LMSs) play an irreplaceably vital role in teaching English; technology has become indispensable to the processes of English language learning and teaching. Thus, a person can certainly learn English without technology, but there is no promise that the process will be as effective and flawless as it could be if technology were utilized, even on a small scale. Therefore, an LMS for a foreign language is very likely to be the perfect partner to teach and learn a new language since it is arguably, easier, faster, and more dynamic than the traditional teaching.

Due to globalization, the necessity of the English language for every non-native English community is the real requirement to change their educational system towards development. On the other hand, people nowadays live in a so-called digital era. Ergo, being computer literate is a prerequisite. Thus, modern web-based technologies are increasingly being used in education to meet the educational demands, especially in teaching English as a foreign language (Boskovic et al., 2014). One of the most growing and popular platforms in the world today is the Moodle platform (a free learning platform), which is highly used worldwide and is considered a fundamental element in teaching and learning. In the Algerian higher education institutions, it is a platform where new instructors are asked to post their lectures in order to be officially admitted to their jobs. Nowadays, the majority of the students work on their personal laptops and smartphones and have access to library computers. Moodle is a Learning Management System (LMS) that is used to deliver the courses and the activities; its various activities help in improving the language skills (Robb, 2004; Suvorov, 2010a).

3.2.2 History and Philosophy of the MOODLE Platform

More than one million teachers around the world use the Moodle platform to support their online courses; it is, by and large, freely accessible. The first version of Moodle was created in August 2002, in Australia by Martin Dougiamas. The term Moodle is the acronym for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. Moodle is approved and worthy internationally. More than 65 million users around the world use it. In fact, it is one of the most used platforms in the educational field. Moodle is made for teaching and learning, and it has been being developed for more than 18 years by the pedagogical socio-constructivist, it provides effective tools that can be accessed to the learner and learning collaborative environments that empower both the teaching and the learning process.

Today, Moodle is one of the fastest open sources in the world. Oproiu stated that “The Moodle system is a virtual learning environment (VLE) in which the learning process is completed online, it is an open-source software and it is intended to support a collaborative learning environment” (2015, p. 427). Teachers can use Moodle to create and manage courses as well as set up an interactive environment between themselves and their students. Therefore, students can collaborate and interact with their classmates to submit their assignments and download their lessons.

It is also commonly referred to as a Course Management System (CMS), Learning Management System (LMS), or a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) (Suvorov, 2010b) where the process of learning unfolds online. This platform is a simple and easy to manipulate interface; it is constantly developed with new resources and documents that facilitate its usage. This platform is always updated: it is constantly improved and ameliorated to fulfill the needs of its users as it is, adapted according to their actual and future needs. Each Moodle user can adapt,

complete or modify it according to their needs. According to Lamb (2004), Moodle is self-directed. It, likewise, enhances the learners' autonomy because learners learn by themselves far from the classroom environment.

According to the Official Moodle Platform, Moodle's multilingual abilities guarantee that no linguistic obstacles would happen. In order to let all users use Moodle in their own languages, and benefit from its multiple resources, assistance, and discussions in different languages, the Moodle community translated it into more than 100 languages. To accommodate these technological advances, the Algerian University provides a Moodle platform to create a virtual classroom between the teachers and their students. Mila University Center launched the Moodle platform through their webserver <http://elearning.centreunivmila.dz/?lang=en>

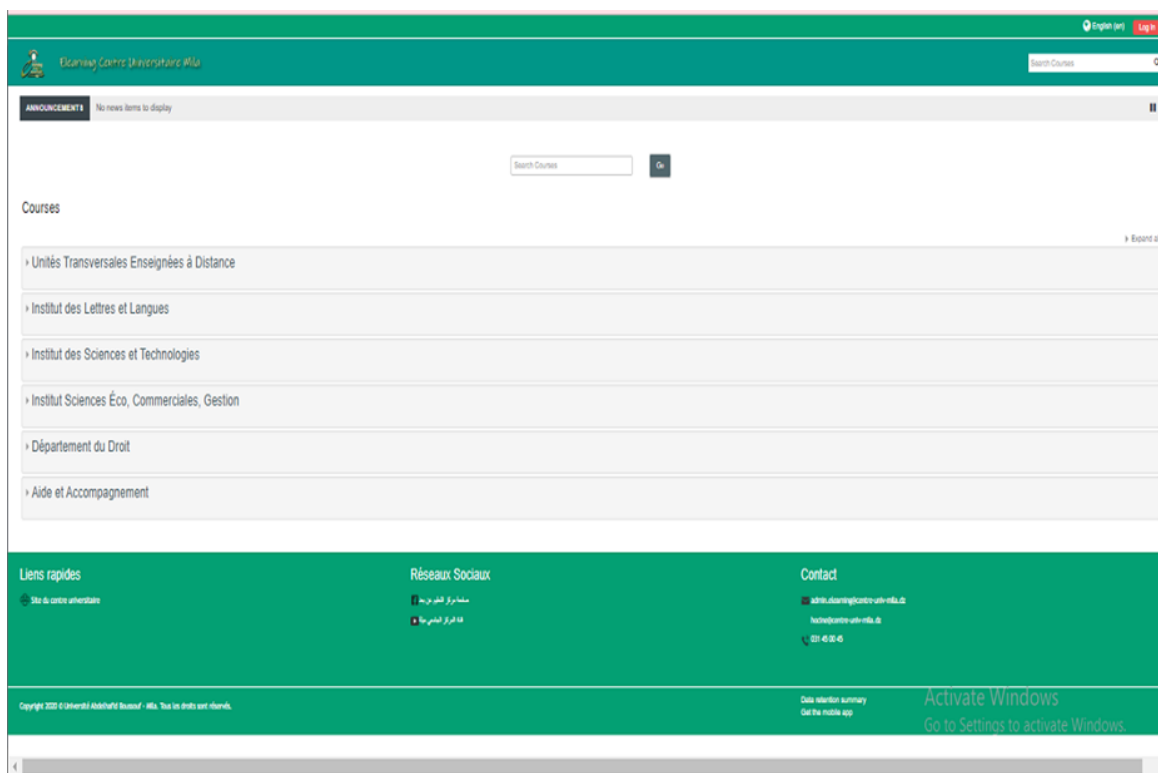


Figure 3: Mila University Center Moodle Platform

3.2.3 Moodle and Teaching

In Moodle, a teacher is autonomous in supplying the resources and activities to their own course. The instructor also manages the registrations and can change the presentation of the course. This platform provides a guide to explain in ample details how the operation can be performed. When students join Moodle for the first time, they see all the available courses. Once registered or already registered to at least one course, they can see only their own courses in the section ‘my courses’.

Administrators and teachers determine how a student signs in and what he/she can and cannot do or see in Moodle. These permissions can accompany each course or with any of the multiple types of activities. For example, in some contexts, students can correct the work of other students, explore all what happens in a course, and interact with other participants. In another contexts, students can be guided in a very strict way with minimal interaction with others.

3.2.4 Moodle Resources

Moodle offers a set of resources that allows teachers to include any type of file in their courses. Here are some basic resources teachers can add to their courses:

3.2.4.1 The label: It allows inserting some content (texts, images, videos) directly into a section of the course content. The students do not need to click on the link to be able to see the content of the label; the content of the label is always shown on the home page of the course.

3.2.4.2 The folder: We can see the list of the files in the folder instead of putting links to each file. When we click on the link of each folder, users can see and download the wanted files.

3.2.4.3 The file: Users click on the link (the name of the link or the folder) to gain access to the content of the file.

3.2.4.4 The book: It allows the creation of a resource that consists of several pages of content with a table of content. Users only click on the link of the book to see the content of the first page of the book and its table of contents.

3.2.4.5 The page: It allows creating a web page with the help of the editor HTML. People click on the link (the name of the page) to see the content of the web page Moodle.

3.2.4.6 The URL: It permits putting links to an external website. Users only click on it to access the external website.

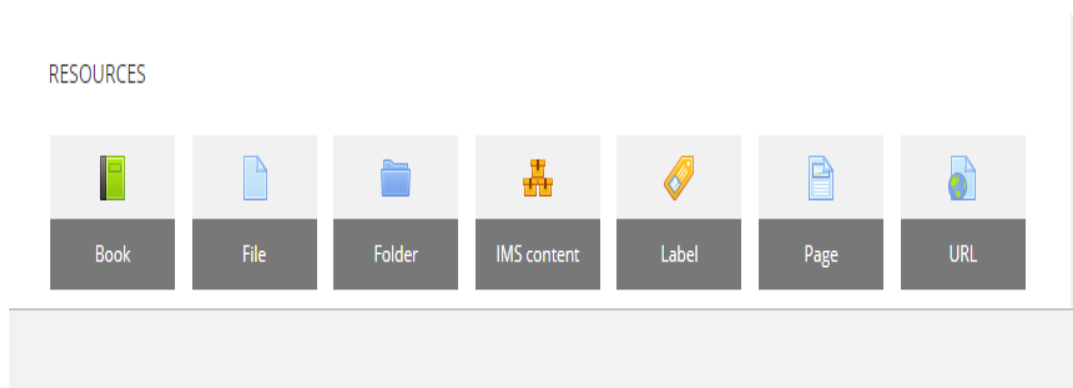


Figure 4: Moodle Resources (From the Official Website of Moodle)

3.2.5 Moodle Activities (Modules)

The Moodle activities are services provided by the platform to facilitate online collaborations and interactions, which can be between teachers, students, or teachers and students. These activities, likewise, facilitate the success of an e-learning program. According to Robertson (2008), when implementing the Classroom Management System (CMS), teachers benefit in the field of organization, implementation, communication and assessment. Wu (2008) shares the same idea.

From the Official website of Moodle, it is stated that there are 14 activities provided on their platform. Besides, these seven activities are known to be of plentiful uses.

3.2.5.1 Database: The database module permits the teachers and students to build, view, and search a database of record entries on a topic. The format and structure of these entries may include, among other things, images, files, URLs, numbers, and texts. However, the database is presently having issues exporting data for various modules: sometimes it is convenient to store and share data with all the participants. The database consists of several fields that you need to create. Likewise, it configures each database to decide how many entries each participant must write to see other entries, the minimum and maximum entries allowed, etc.

3.2.5.2 The Chat Room: A chat is used for live (synchronous) written exchanges. A session can be moderated by a teacher and framed by an assignment, or it can be used for ‘casual’ communication. In terms of organization, the live nature of chats means that the time for a chat session must be agreed upon in advance and all chat meeting participants must be online at the same time. To keep a chat discussion manageable and conducive to learning, it is recommended that you have no more than six-eight participants, but no less than three. However, using the chat option seems worth the organizational effort. Students enjoy the opportunity to meet live in a chat; being able to ‘talk’ to each other directly without a time delay promotes a positive group atmosphere and the feeling of togetherness. Simultaneously, students are less reluctant to converse (i.e. write) than to talk. Therefore, chat can be used as a first step in preparing for future audio chats or Skype meetings (Warth, 2011a). The benefit of using the chats module is that teachers can

decide the topic they are going to chat about, and they should find something interesting and enjoyable for students to attract their attention otherwise they will not be into it.

3.2.5.3 Forum: In a forum module, teachers and students can exchange ideas by posting comments or discussing questions (Warth, 2011b). It is a means of communication among a group of people. Students can add images or documents to the forum and all the exchanges are archived and accessible at any time. Furthermore, forums can be in written or spoken forms.

3.2.5.4 Glossary: The glossary activity allows both teachers and students to create a glossary course or a complete platform. There can be multiple glossaries within a course and there are different ways to navigate through the glossary. Words can also be linked automatically. Therefore, students can click on a difficult word in a text and they will automatically be taken to the explanation in the glossary that they provided. (Pandey, 2009b).

3.2.5.5 Wiki: The wiki module has its own basic wiki that can be used for collaborative writing, such as planning projects together or group writing exercises. The simple editing and saving process means group work can quickly resume without students having to be in the same place at the same time (Pandey, 2009c).

3.2.5.6 Lesson: The lesson module allows a teacher to write a series of lesson pages that end with a question. Students can click on the button « Continue » to move to the next page. The lesson continues on the content page of the received answer.

3.2.5.7 Quiz: The quiz (test) allows the teacher to evaluate the students' work; also, it allows students to evaluate themselves in an activity or exercise recommended by the teacher. The test can be presented as a list of questions presented in different forms. It might be:

- Questions with multiple choices of responses.
- True or false questions.
- Pairing exercises.
- Short answers to questions (a word or an expression).

ACTIVITIES

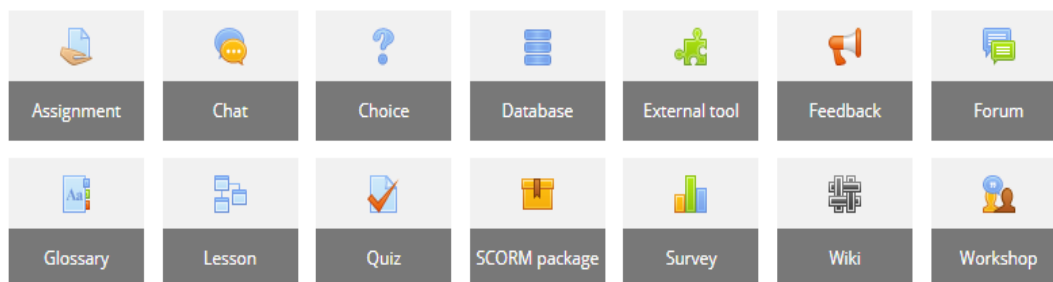


Figure 5: Moodle Activities (*From the Official Website of Moodle*)

3.2.6 The Roles in Moodle

According to the Moodle Electronic site, Moodle presents a guide to reveal the role of each user, and what users can and cannot do in particular areas of Moodle as it is shown in the following table:

Table 1: Roles and Functions in the Moodle Platform (*Lopes, 2011, p.03*)

Role	Function
Administrator	Manages the whole environment.
Teacher	Generates events, courses, or subjects according to the thematic areas, defines and generates training or events that are designated.
Student	Accesses and interacts with a specific event and participates in the subjects theyare subscribed.

3.2.6.1 The Administrators' Role

They can almost do everything and go everywhere in Moodle. The Moodle Administrator is responsible for the administration of the Moodle site, updating, and installing plugins, reporting, integrations, etc. A user with the site admin role can reach every part of the Moodle site including all courses, reports, and user's data.

3.2.6.2 The Teachers' Role

The teachers have control over the specific courses and the activities of the registered students. Teachers can post multiple lectures, lessons, and activities for their students.

3.2.6.3 The Students' Role

The student's role is to participate in a course. The users with the role of students in Moodle can participate in all the activities of the course and see the resources, but they cannot modify or see the notebook of the class; they can only see their own marks but only when the teacher chooses to make this accessible to them.

Section Three: Teaching EFL Remotely via the Moodle Platform

3.3.1 Moodle and EFL Teaching

Moodle permits EFL instructors to blend traditional classroom methods with new technological methods of teaching, and teachers add to their traditional teaching methods (board and chalk) modern ways (e-learning with internet and learning platforms). Some students may feel uncomfortable while studying in the physical presence of the teacher; this depends on each student's personality. Based on Lehman and Conceição (2010), by using online learning

(Moodle), the teacher is present online not physically, which can enhance the learner and teacher's relationship (Munro, 1998).

Moodle allows EFL students to continue their learning outside the classroom. Although the role of the teacher is important in the process of learning, it is also beneficial for learners to work on electronic media. Teachers create effective online learning communities (Garcia and Molina, 2009). Moreover, the Moodle platform facilitates the students' process of learning since they do not need to go to the university to have the course and activities.

3.3.2 Implementation of the Moodle Platform in EFL Classes

Presently, it is not possible to think about the teaching and learning process without associating it with Information and Communication Technology (ICT). ICT plays an important role in education and has special relevance in the instructional component, supported by Learning Management Systems like the Moodle platform (Zainuddin, Idrus, & Jamal, 2016). During the global pandemic of COVID-19, most countries around the world adopted emergency remote teaching to save the educational process. As Amin and Sundari (2020) mentioned, the pandemic has resulted in a situation where instructors and students are being urged to alter their teaching system from a face-to-face online lesson in the classroom to a virtual teaching system using different online platforms or applications. The Algerian universities have implemented the Moodle platform to save the educational process which can be used by students to access course information in several media (text, image, and sound), as well as engage with their instructors or classmates via message boards, forums, chats, video conferencing, and other types of communication tools.

The administrators of this platform have added a new option that is the language availability, in which students can choose any language they want to run the program and interact

with culturally diverse groups; this gives the learners the opportunity to explore new cultural horizons and backgrounds (Bransford, 2000, as cited in Suvorov, 2010). These intercultural discussions are not time and place bound restricted; in other words, even if the learners are geographically scattered, they are still able to communicate with each other (White, 2003; El-Maghraby, 2012).

3.3.3 The Constraints Faced by the Lecturers while Implementing Moodle's Curriculum

Gleaned from a study by Tazkiyatunnafs Elhawwa (2017), teachers face several limitations depending on the implementation of the Moodle curriculum. We will be looking at a range of these under this rubric.

Firstly, in terms of listening, the Moodle platform is actually a good alternative to offer listening materials. It has many language learning modules. The chat room, an activity of Moodle, can be embedded as a platform for carrying out the listening classes. Here, Moodle provides EFL learners with alternatives to get access English materials. Moodle has a function of management that can record students' learning time, which can help EFL teachers to monitor and supervise students' devotion to learning. During the EFL learning course, online learning is more preferred over the listening practice in the classroom. The problem is that the materials provided by Moodle are difficult to follow. The conversation is too fast, so the students cannot listen and understand the content well.

Secondly, in terms of speaking, Moodle provides the actual speaking experience. In blended learning of EFL, the oral practice can be conducted in a regular classroom. Face-to-face communication can help students understand others more easily. The teacher can also upload documents of related background information, and topic questions that are commonly used in the implementation of the Moodle platform through the teacher's perspectives in the English

department about the topic, which can help to arm the learners with more knowledge to use during talking. For those students who are always too shy to speak, online chat is another good choice. Covell (n.d) offers a free and powerful module designed for learning foreign languages. It can be integrated with Moodle and works as a speaking platform for students to chat in English with their classmates or native English speakers all over the world. Moreover, in this case, both instructors and students have problems, such as some utterances are difficult to understand, in addition, the conversation is too fast, and so on.

Thirdly, with regard to reading comprehension in blended courses, it is recommended that intensive reading takes place in regular classrooms since the learners can better understand the reading material and the teachers can also give them immediate instructions. Moodle offers diverse and rich materials for learners to choose from for extensive reading. The problems encountered by the students are:

- a. There are some unfamiliar words.
- b. It is difficult to make a mental map of the texts.
- c. No local authentic materials are available.

Fourth, in terms of writing, Moodle is designed with some features to practise writing. The forum, workshop, and wiki functions provide EFL students with extensive space for writing practise. A forum is a good place for students to brainstorm topics, contents, and structures before they start writing. The function of the workshop allows both lecturers and students to read and evaluate others' writings. On the one hand, this way of assessment enables students to find out the problems in their own writing. On the other hand, it offers them opportunities to learn from others. The most prominent aspect of the course is to guide EFL learners to focus more on the process of writing rather than the result of writing. Here, the learners face a number of problems such as:

- A. Moodle does not provide students with handwriting products, so it is hard for the teachers to see the learners' handwriting products.
- B. Moodle does not provide writing score guidelines, so it is difficult for the teacher to assess directly the students' writing product.

3.3.4 Challenges of Using the Moodle Platform in Teaching EFL Online

Online education reduces the high costs of education for universities as well as students; however, the utilization of educational platforms is still below expectations. While implementing this rapid virtualization process, students and teachers have increasingly crashed into many challenges.

Among these challenges are the enormous amounts of imbalanced online courses, which could undoubtedly jeopardize the health of the students, both physical and emotional, while spending successively long hours in front of a screen, e.g., eye strain. In addition, the lack of communication and interaction with teachers and peers would predictably affect the students' learning process and academic achievement. Besides, even if the courses were/are available online on the Moodle platform, the educational institutions and universities have not considered that not all students are lucky enough to have computers, proper instruments, access to the internet connectivity, and personal touch in e-learning.

In addition to students, teachers face technology problems during emergency online teaching, which may obviously form obstacles to successfully delivering EFL courses online. Furthermore, most teachers lack training in using such technology, the reason for which they have to be trained to use online teaching technology to reach satisfactory results.

A study by Benadla & Hadji (2021a) uncovered that the challenge of accessibility to the Moodle platform is another burden to be added to this new shift in the pedagogical approach.

Both teachers and students have complained of poor connection troubles, especially when the number of students connected is high. Besides, students' lack of adequate technologies for participating in online learning has overlapped with some issues like the lack of laptops/computers, and mobile phones connection that partially offers access to the resources provided by the Moodle platform, especially those who live on the campus.

Training teachers and students on how to use educational platforms, like the Moodle platform and computer tools, make online education more enjoyable (Aixia & Wang, 2011a). By so doing, experience and knowledge about teaching in the online environment are more than fundamental to positively strengthen this field of virtualizing the process of learning and scaffolding learning accordingly.

3.3.5 EFL Teachers' and Students' Attitudes towards the Use of the Moodle Platform in Distance Teaching

4.3.5.1 Students' Attitudes

There is minimal research on college students' attitudes towards online teaching environments (Aixia & Wang, 2011b). Based on Qazia et al. (2020), student's satisfaction and acceptance of online education are linked to residence location, previous online learning experiences, availability of educational tools, and the use of online educational resources by a friend or relatives. Most students asserted that the lack of interaction with their teachers had affected their ability to assimilate and understand the subjects taught during the courses. What is more, the learners believe that learning online via Moodle may even harm their performance due to the poor assimilation of the courses.

At Mila University Centre, distance learning involves mainly *Mila e-learning* which was created for the first time in 2012. It has been widely used as a response to the COVID-19

pandemic in 2020. As EFL students at the Foreign Languages Department, when we were third-year students, we witnessed changes in the educational process from regular teaching classrooms to uploading lessons on the Moodle platform. Teachers tried to use the Moodle platform to deliver the courses to their students and get in touch with them, but what was noticed is the low interaction rate on the part of the students. Consequently, the experience of distance learning via the Moodle platform for us was not a good solution to the situation we were witnessing. However, these two last years are somewhat different from the previous one.

Ultimately, students' perspectives and attitudes are important and necessary for the continuity and development of online education (Selim, 2007). Like teachers, students are in dire need to receive adequate training on this front to get better equipped to use online learning more effortlessly and more meaningfully.

4.3.5.2 Teachers' Attitudes

Many research studies uncovered teachers' negative and positive attitudes towards the use of Moodle.

A study by Saihi (2020) showed that teachers do not adequately master the Moodle platform access, and they do not support the use of the Moodle platform; they still urge the use of the traditional classroom-based teaching. This was mainly due to the lack of equipment (software), experience, knowledge, and efficient online teaching training. By contrast, several EFL teachers react differently; they support the use of the Moodle platform but under certain better circumstances, and they consider online teaching as an effective way for gaining more knowledge.

Another study by Benadla & Hadji (2021) revealed that teachers were not well prepared for an online learning experience. Most of them lack the necessary technical skills to be able to either adapt their teaching style or appropriately interact with students in the online environment

ensuring high standards of the teaching process. They have not realized yet that the pedagogy in online learning is quite different from face-to-face teaching. They are not well experienced in designing activities suitable for distance learning. Nineteen percent of respondents gave overt comments on the teachers' incompetence in distance education to accomplish their teaching tasks. Some would even resist using e-learning because they find it difficult (Collis & Moonen, 2008). In addition to that, when teachers were asked about their readiness for the use of e-learning, 27 teachers out of 38 in the English Department showed negative attitudes.

Another scholar (Berbar, 2020) stated that the majority of the participants held negative perceptions of the Moodle platform; they advocated face-to-face education and were firmly against teaching through Moodle. The findings also disclosed some disadvantages of teaching through Moodle such as lack of training.

Based on the studies mentioned above, it is revealed that teachers' and students' viewpoints about teaching and learning online through Moodle were unsatisfactory; there is a need for attitude change and the development of teachers' technological literacy. For that, the ministries of education should organize training sessions about the use of this platform for both of them.

3.3.6 Is Moodle an Effective Platform in Teaching EFL Online?

The Online Management Learning Systems (OMLS) or Course Management Systems (CMS) are the platforms provided by the technology to facilitate learning, including language learning. These platforms help learners get access to lectures either in the form of handouts or videos; in addition, they help learners communicate with each other in groups or individually along with communicating with teachers. On the other hand, the electronic platforms help

teachers provide their learners with lessons, activities, and tests. There are two types of these platforms. The first one is commercial and should be paid to get access to, like Blackboard. The second type is a free platform and all learners and teachers may use it like Moodle. Suvorov (2010c) assumed that Moodle is effective for the EFL context for its various services that are provided for both teachers and learners in order to be connected synchronously and asynchronously.

Moodle is a safe system for the teachers to communicate with their learners and for research sharing. Jeong mentioned that Moodle combines all educational strategies and instruments in one space. In the same vein, he stated that it can be effective in promoting learner autonomy as well as in supporting collaboration and learner-centered learning environments (2017, pp. 4846-4847)

With the help of the Moodle platform, teachers become able to provide their students with all the information they need, like assignments, activities, books, and videos. Scholars like Su (2006) saw that Moodle has the ability to be effective for language learning (Suppasetserree & Dennis, 2010). The Moodle platform is an effective way to boost learners' autonomy. Moreover, it makes them capable to control learning and feel comfortable by joining their preferable group and choosing the needed activities (Ghounane, 2020, p. 29).

Conclusion

Presently, we have dealt with the theoretical part of our research work which is divided into three sections. The initial theoretical division dealt with the history and some definitions related to online teaching in general to expand the scope of our research work. It also included an explanation of distance education main types, its benefits and drawbacks from various perspectives, and some instructional strategies for the latter. The second section introduced the

learning management systems (LMSs) and the rationale behind using them in language teaching. Then, it provided an overview of the Moodle history by addressing its philosophy and some clarifying definitions for the term. In addition, it mentioned Moodle resources, activities and roles. The last section discussed the implementation of Moodle in teaching EFL online and the constraints faced by teachers concerning the curriculum; furthermore, it investigated its challenges and attitudes faced by teachers and students, which was supported with a set of previous studies. Finally, this chapter ends with a question that explores whether Moodle is an effective platform for teaching EFL or not.

By and large, this chapter has been put together to pave the way for a fuller and richer understanding of the applied part of this paper.

Chapter Two: Fieldwork

Introduction

Unlike the previous chapter that provided the literature review where we have sketched out a theoretical conceptualization of online teaching and the use of the Moodle platform this chapter is devoted virtually entirely to the practical part of the current research, which puts the hypothesis into testing. Throughout this chapter, we have presented the means of research, population, and sampling, the description of the questionnaires, and we have provided an analysis of each question or statement followed by a discussion of the obtained results of both students' and teachers' questionnaires. Further, this chapter dwells on the study's major limitations and the provision of some suggestions and recommendations for future studies based on the analysis and the interpretation of the obtained findings. Moreover, like all academic studies, this chapter ends up with a general conclusion.

4.1 Means of Research

“Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers” (Brown, 2001, p. 6). In our attempt to investigate teachers' and students' perceptions towards the use of the Moodle platform in teaching EFL online and explore the efficiency of this platform in teaching EFL online, we opted for the deployment of questionnaires as a data collection tool to gain access to sufficient information data and increase the credibility of the findings. Two different-scoped questionnaires have been designed and administrated to teachers and learners respectively to collect the necessary data.

4.2 Population and Sampling

The current study was conducted in the Foreign Languages Department at Mila University Center. The population with which the study is concerned involves students and teachers of English. Concerning the students' questionnaire, we dealt with third-year students in the academic year 2021/2022. The whole population consists of 211 students who are distributed into 08 groups; among these, we have collected a sample that constitutes 85 third-year students as representatives of the population. This population as such was opted for due to their familiarity with online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic; they have experienced both types of teaching, traditional classes and distance classes, in comparison with first and second-year students; in addition, learners at this level can express their perceptions and attitudes. As regards the teachers' questionnaire, it was electronically sent to fourteen teachers from the whole population, but we collected just eight completed questionnaires from our informants who belong to MUC. These teachers have been teaching a variety of modules during their teaching experience at university.

4.3 Students' Questionnaire

4.3.1 Description of the Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire in this work was administered to 85 third year EFL students at Mila University Center, 75 copies were printed while 15 copies were sent electronically. It aims at investigating learners' attitudes towards learning online and their perceptions towards the use of the Moodle platform. This questionnaire is made up of 19 questions that are carefully selected and simplified according to the students' levels. It is composed of four sections that encompass a mixture of close-ended questions that require the respondents to choose either yes or no, open-

ended questions which require them to give full answers or justifications whenever necessary, and multiple-choice questions where they tick up the suitable options.

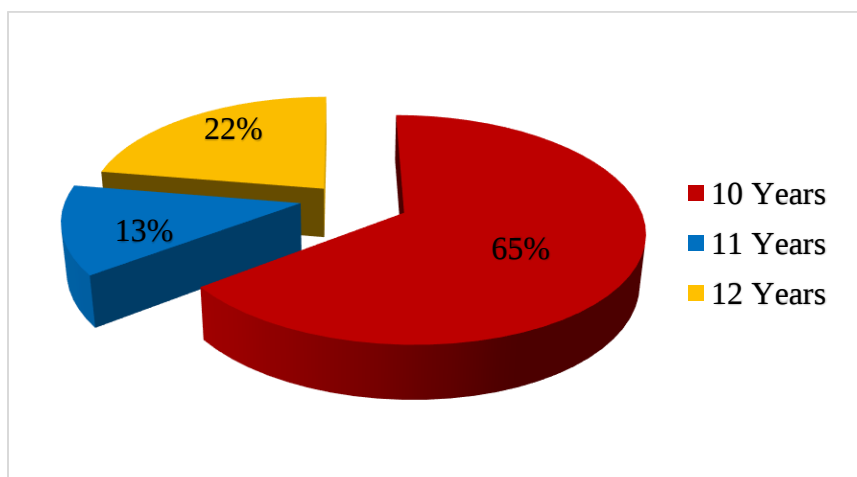
The first section is entitled “Background Information”; it aims at gathering personal information about the informants in terms of how long they have been studying English, their levels, whether they are motivated to learn this language as well as their level of using technological devices. The second section is entitled “Learning Online”; it consists of five questions which have been tailored to shed light on how learners perceive online learning, if they have internet sources, and the difficulties they face in using digital tools. In addition, it enquires about the estimates of the respondents regarding the shift from traditional classes to distance classes and their efficiency. Moreover, it explores students’ opinions about their university’s success in handling the Covid-19 outbreak. Following that, the third section, on students’ perceptions of Moodle’s use, attempts to underscore the second variable in the present study. It contains three Yes/No questions and two multiple-choice questions; it is about the use of Moodle and if it is helpful for learners in studying what they have been provided with, in addition to the difficulties they have faced when using this platform, and if they are satisfied with learning with it or not. The last section acts as the main section of the students’ questionnaire because it combines the two variables. It is entitled “Teaching EFL Online via the Moodle Platform”. To begin with, this section is initiated by the first question that aims at exploring if students see the Moodle platform as helpful for the learning process or not. The second question aims at exploring whether they have been able to contact their teachers via Moodle; students who respond positively are asked if they have received the amount of help they looked for during the online learning sessions. Then, the third question aims at exploring if the informants know that Moodle is not only for posting lectures. The fourth question aims at discovering the students’ attitudes towards the sufficiency of Moodle, and whether it provides a good learning environment for them

or not. Eventually, in the fifth question, the respondents are invited to provide their viewpoints regarding online education via the Moodle platform, if it is successful or not, in addition to the suggestions they recommend to develop distance education in MUC.

4.3.2 Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

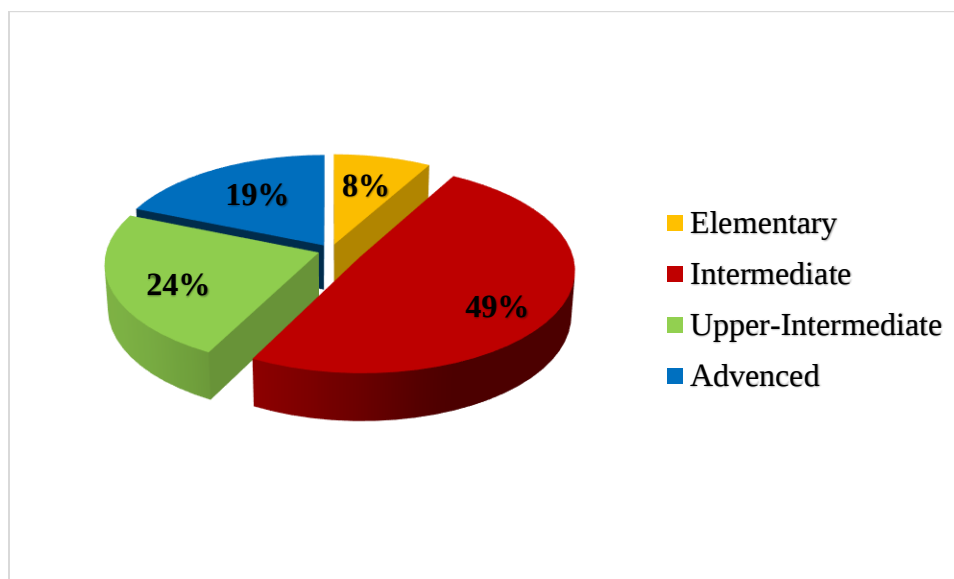
Section One: Background Information

Q01. How long have you been studying English?



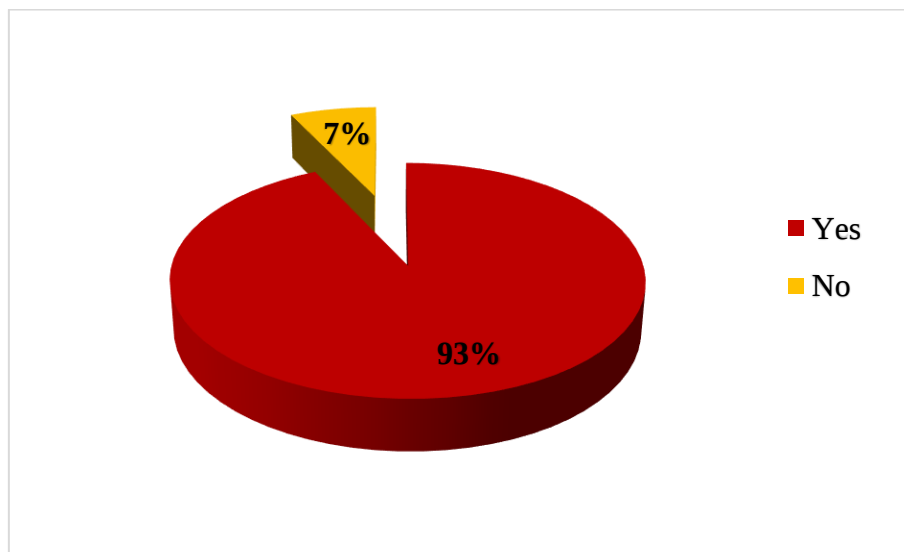
Graph 01: Students' Experience with Learning English

This question aims at finding out about the number of years that the participants have spent learning English to ensure that the respondents had enough competence to give credible answers. Graph 01 shows that 55 students (65%) have been learning English for 10 years. This is because most of the students study English in the middle school for four years, followed by three years in the secondary school and three years at university. Nineteen students (22%) have been learning English for 12 years, whereas eleven students (13%) have been learning this language for 11 years.

Q02. How do you consider your level in English?

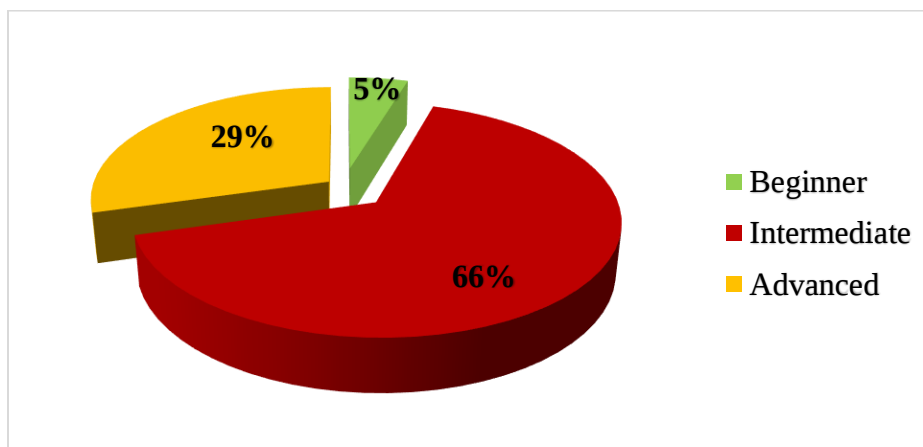
Graph 02: Students' Estimates of their English Level

By raising this question, we aimed principally at knowing about the participants' level of English which may help in inferring which participants reach a certain point where they could be aware of the effectiveness of online education in their learning process. The graph above demonstrates that forty-two participants (49%) claimed that their level in English is intermediate. Twenty informants (24%) considered their level in English is upper-intermediate, whereas, sixteen students (19%) of our subjects believed that they reached an advanced level. These participants may be the exception to the sample: They hold enough self-confidence and satisfaction to declare that they have scored a satisfactory level of achievement, or there is a possibility that some of them might be showing off since they were asked to answer anonymously. The remaining students, seven (8%), asserted that their level is elementary.

Q03. Are you motivated to learn English?

Graph 03: *Students' Motivation to Learn English*

The results show that seventy-nine (93%) respondents are highly motivated to study this language and willing to succeed since it is a global language that may provide them with better opportunities in both academic and vocational areas. On the other hand, only six (7%) were not motivated to learn English because it was not their choice; it was mainly due to their baccalaureate average.

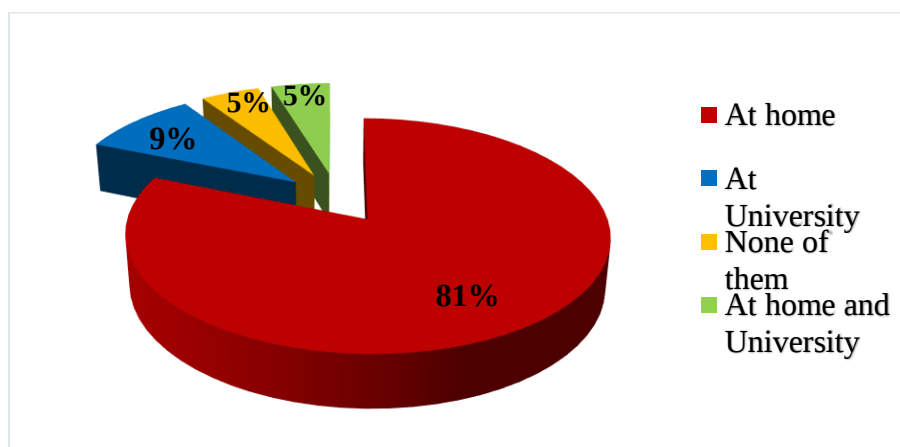
Q04: How do you consider your level in using technological devices?

Graph 04: *Students' Level in Using Technological Devices*

This question attempts to explore whether students mastered the use of technological devices or not. Graph 04 shows, clearly, that most of the participating students, 66% representing fifty-six, are intermediate in using technological devices, and twenty-five (29%) are advanced, whereas four informants (5%) claimed that they are beginners in using technological devices.

Section Two: Learning Online

Q01: Do you have internet sources at home or at University?



Graph 05: *Students' Access to the Internet Sources*

The graph above demonstrates that sixty-nine (81%) informants demonstrated that they have internet sources at home, eight respondents (9%) represented the students who have sources at University, whereas four of them (5%) declared that they have neither at home nor university. Although there is an internet room in the library of Letters and Foreign Languages and another one in the Central Library of the university, the reason behind their response probably is that they may have never heard about such internet spaces in the university or that they rarely visit the library if at all. However, only four (5%) informants declared that they have internet sources at home and university.

Q02: A) Do you find any difficulties in using digital tools in your online learning?**Table 02: Students' Online Learning Use Difficulties**

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	51	60%
No	34	40%
Total	85	100%

Our aim from this question is to know whether students found difficulties in using digital tools in their online learning or not. This question is divided into two parts. For the first part, we asked students if they struggled using digital tools in their online learning. The results showed that fifty-one (60%) respondents faced difficulties when learning online, whereas the remaining participants, thirty-four (40%) of the sample, had not faced problems regarding online learning.

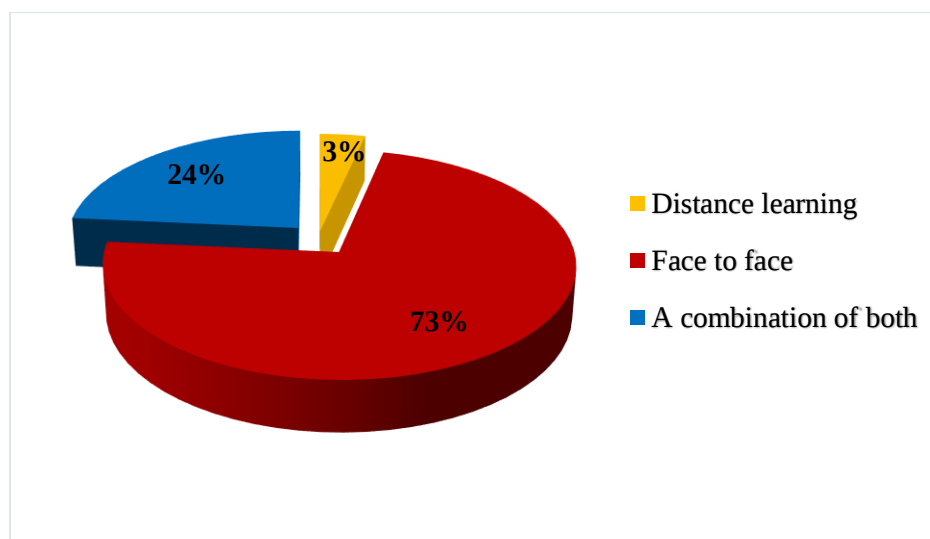
B) If "yes", what type of difficulties do you face?**Table 03: Students' Difficulties during Online Learning**

Options	Number	Percentage
Technical issues	25	49%
Lack of guidance	05	10%
Lack of explanation	14	27%
Computer knowledge	04	14%
Total	51	100%

Concerning part two of the second question, the total number of participants represented the number of students who gave positive responses to the previous part, which is fifty-one students.

We found that twenty-five (49%) out of fifty-one students confessed that technical issues like platform breakdowns and internet disconnections hindered their online learning process, and this certainly concerns the internet problems in our country. Fourteen (27%) participants claimed that the lack of explanation is one of the problems encountered, which asserted that most of the teachers did not provide the learners with the needed explanations. Seven (14%) of the participants considered computer knowledge as one of the problems faced, and only five respondents (10%) opted for the lack of guidance. It seems that some students cannot be autonomous in their learning; they need certain guidance.

Q03: Do you prefer distance-learning or face-to-face learning?

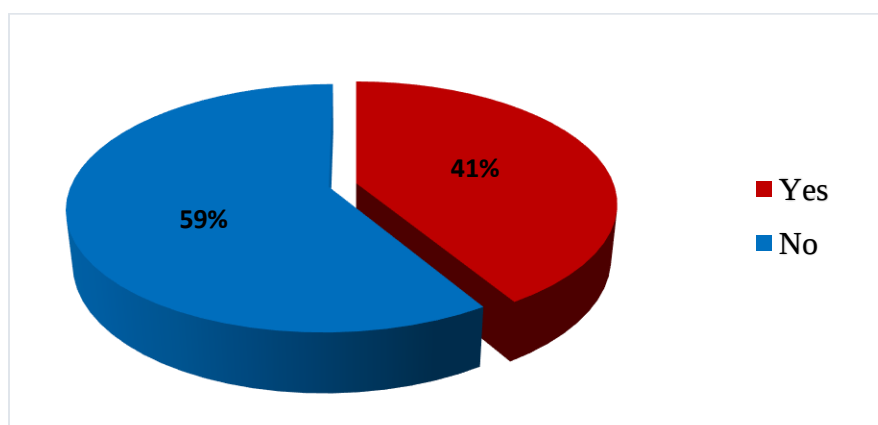


Graph 06: Students' Preferences Regarding Traditional and Distance Classes

By raising this question, we aimed at knowing the students' preferences about both regular and virtual learning. The graph above demonstrates that the majority of the participants, sixty-two (73%), preferred face-to-face learning. On the other hand, only 3%, representing three

students, of the participants preferred flipped learning; twenty respondents (24%) indicated that a combination of both is their preference.

Q04: A) Is teaching EFL online as effective as classroom teaching?



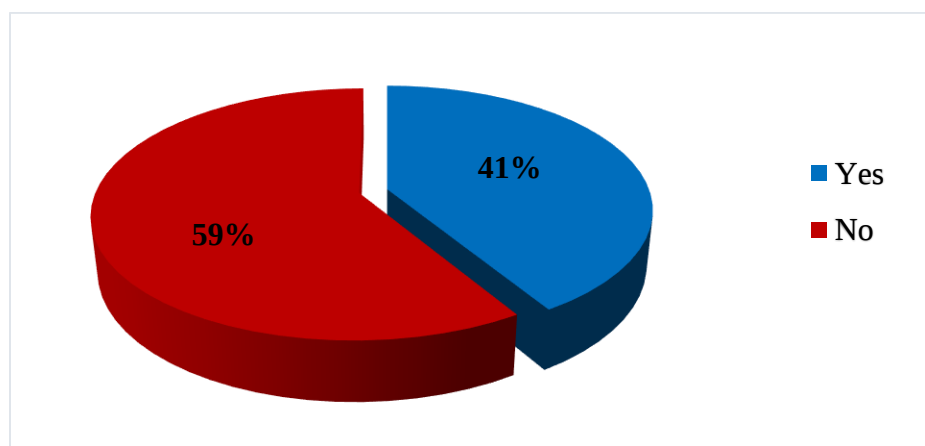
Graph 07: *Students' Points of View about Distance Learning Efficiency*

Our aim of this question is to investigate learners' opinions about the efficiency of online learning. Diagram 07 shows that, on the one hand, fifty respondents (59%) believed that virtual learning is not as effective as traditional classes for teaching EFL online. On the other hand, thirty-five (41%) of them considered online learning as effective as classroom learning. We have noticed that the participants who opted for face-to-face learning in the third question are the ones who believed that e-learning is not as effective as regular learning.

In this question, students were asked to justify their answers. Those who opted for the “yes” option justified their answers by claiming that it allowed them to learn anytime and anywhere which suits working learners. In addition to that, they confirmed that it forces students to be autonomous which allows them to discover their learning abilities and improves their levels. On the contrary, the respondents who opted for the “no” answer claimed that they had difficulties understanding the lectures because the teachers uploaded them on the platform without explanation; most of the time, these lectures gave less and unclear information. In addition, they

did not have the opportunity to ask questions and participate as in classroom learning. Besides, they believed that teachers' feedback is necessary to solve their problems, especially in terms of phonetics, writing, and pronunciation. Moreover, the missing of verbal communication, participation, and interaction between the teachers and their students, which plays a crucial role in the teaching and learning process, made the students not satisfied with virtual learning. For that, they claimed that the teacher's presence and the atmosphere of the classroom make learning full of life and more enjoyable. One of the respondents justified his/her answer by saying that he/she hates studying online. We assume that this is mainly due to the lack of technological devices, access to the internet, and lack of computer knowledge.

Q05: Do you see that your university has handled the covid-19 outbreak successfully?



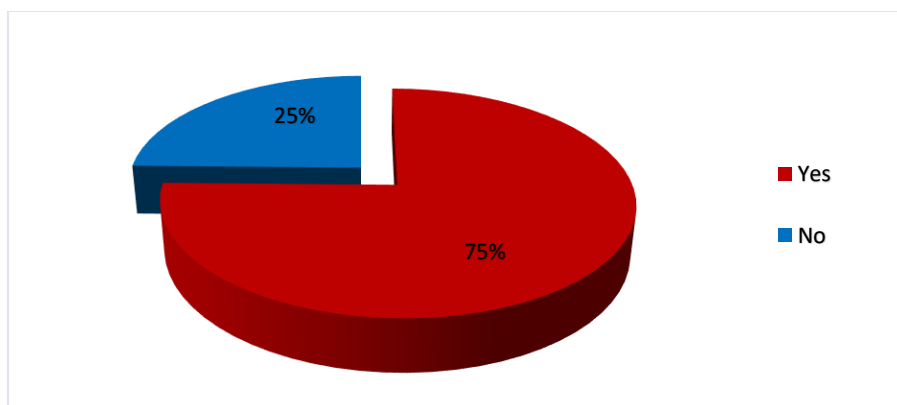
Graph 08: *Students' Opinions about their University's Success in Handling the Covid-19 Outbreak*

By asking this question, we aim at exploring students' attitudes towards their university success in handling the covid-19 pandemic. The above-stated results show that 59% of participants, representing fifty students, declared that their university has not been dealing with the covid-19 outbreak successfully. By contrast, less than half of the sample 41%, representing

thirty-five students, indicated that their university has been handling the outbreak of covid-19 successfully.

Section Three: Perceptions towards the Use of the Moodle Platform

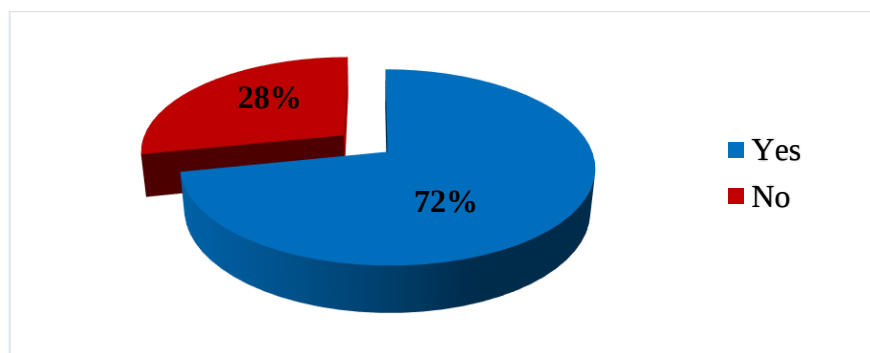
Q01. Do you use the Moodle platform to study?



Graph 09: The Actual Use of the Moodle Platform by Students

By asking this question, we aimed at investigating whether the participants used the Moodle platform or not. As shown in the graph above, the majority of students, forty-six respondents (75%) used the Moodle platform; in contrast, twenty-one students (25%) did not use it at all.

Q02. Is the Moodle platform helpful in studying?

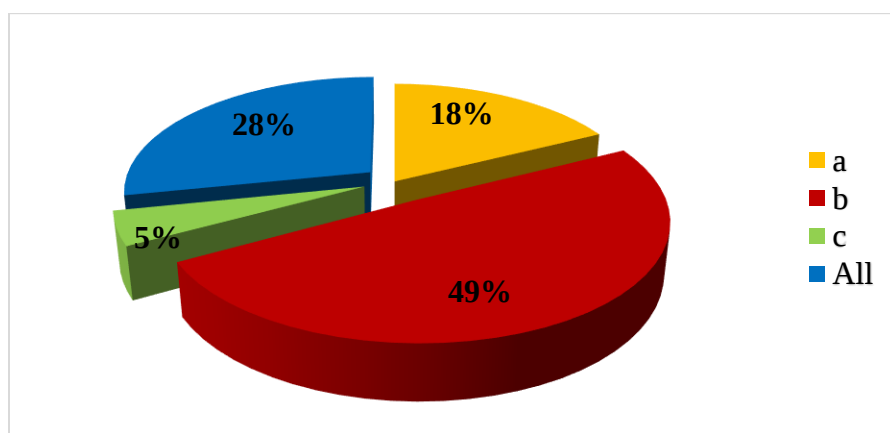


Graph 10: Usefulness of the Moodle Platform in Studying

This question aims to know students' opinions about whether or not the Moodle platform is helpful in studying. The obtained data revealed that sixty-one (72%) students saw the Moodle platform as helpful for studying; twenty-four (28%) were against that.

Q03. How has the Moodle platform been helpful to you? It has provided you with:

- a) Easy access to learning documents.
- b) Ability to study at home.
- c) Ability to contact teachers.

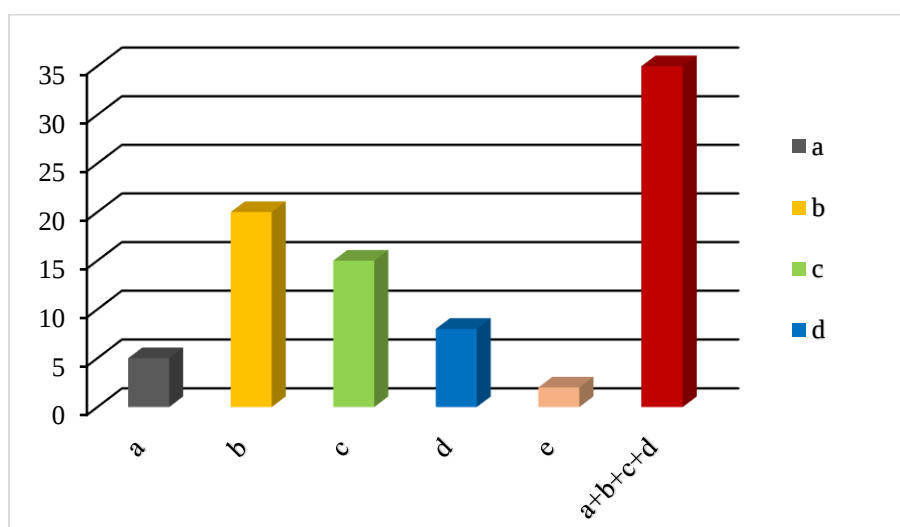


Graph 11: Ways of the Moodle Platform Usefulness

This question was designed for students who opted for the "yes" answer in the previous question, but what we have noticed is that all the participants responded to this question; therefore, the total number of respondents is eighty-five while it should be only sixty-one. Students were asked to mention what Moodle provided them with. Upon analysis, forty-two students (49%) opted for the ability to study at home. Fifty participants (18%) stated that Moodle provided them with easy access to learning documents. In addition, only four students (5%) selected the ability to contact teachers. The remaining students (28%) chose all the options given.

Q04. What are some of the difficulties you have constantly faced when using the Moodle platform?

- a) No available internet access. b) Poor internet connection.
- c) Difficult manipulation of the platform itself.
- d) Difficulties in downloading learning materials. e) Lack of technological materials.



Graph 12: Difficulties Faced by Students Using the Moodle Platform

When we asked this question, we gave our respondents the freedom to select more than one option, which represented some of the difficulties students faced in the use of the Moodle platform. From the diagram above, it is noticeable that thirty-five students from the whole population, 85, chose four options, which means that they faced many difficulties and challenges while studying remotely. For those who chose only one option, the most common difficulty faced was poor internet connection (20%). Fifteen students (18%) faced difficult manipulation of the platform itself. Eight students (9%) faced difficulties in downloading learning materials while

five students (6%) faced the difficulty of no available internet access, and only two participants lacked technological materials (computers, smartphones, and the list goes on and on).

Q5. Are you satisfied with learning through the Moodle platform?

Table 4: Satisfaction of Students with Learning via Moodle

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	44	52%
No	41	48%
Total	85	100%

Our aim from this question is to know the students' satisfaction with learning through the Moodle platform. The table above demonstrates that forty-four (52%) were satisfied with learning through this e-learning platform. These learners found Moodle useful. Forty-one (48%) participants were not satisfied with learning via this platform.

In this question, we asked the participants to justify their answers. The ones who answered with “no” justified their answers with some arguments. They all agreed that the complexity and big quantity of lectures made it difficult for them to understand due to the absence of the teachers’ explanation and video conferencing that enhances the interaction between students and teachers. This has negatively affected their levels and made them just memorize lessons without understanding. In addition, they claimed that they need their teachers' help and feedback to make the lessons easy because teachers used to explain every single word in face-to-face teaching but when studying remotely, learners faced difficulties in understanding the lessons. Others said that they could not gather all the documents because of the poor internet

connection and the platform. Surprisingly, some of our respondents never heard about Moodle before and some of them thought that it is just for uploading lectures. We assume that they did not know that this e-learning portal has several other features.

Section Four: Teaching EFL Online via the Moodle Platform

Q01: A) Have you been able to contact your teachers via Moodle?

Table 05: *Ability to Contact Teachers via Moodle*

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	42	49%
No	43	51%
Total	85	100%

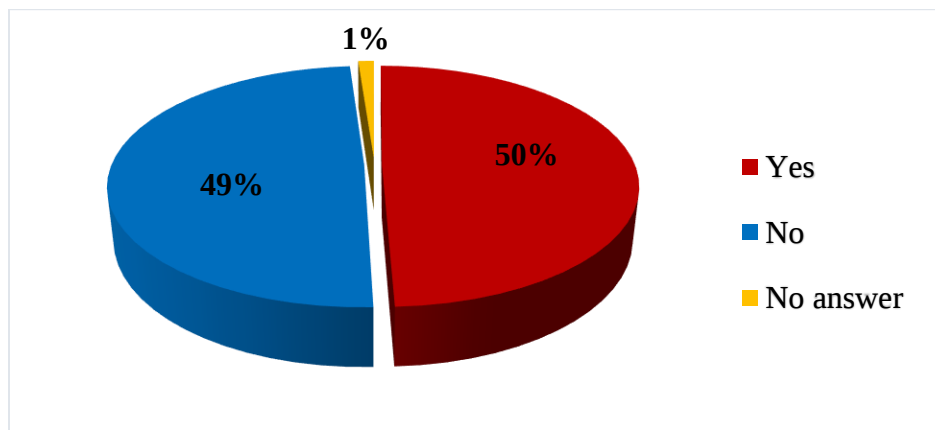
From the results demonstrated above, forty-two (49%) participants panned that they had been able to contact their teachers via Moodle. Conversely, forty-three (51%) of the students could not contact their teachers, which might negatively affect the interaction between teachers and students. Furthermore, this is one of the failures of using the Moodle platform because it provides this service; however, it was not used.

B) If “yes”, have you received the type and amount of help you looked for during the online learning sessions?

Table 06: *Students’ Attitudes about their Teachers’ Help during the Online Learning Sessions*

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	21	50%
No	06	14%
I did not ask	15	36%
Total	42	100%

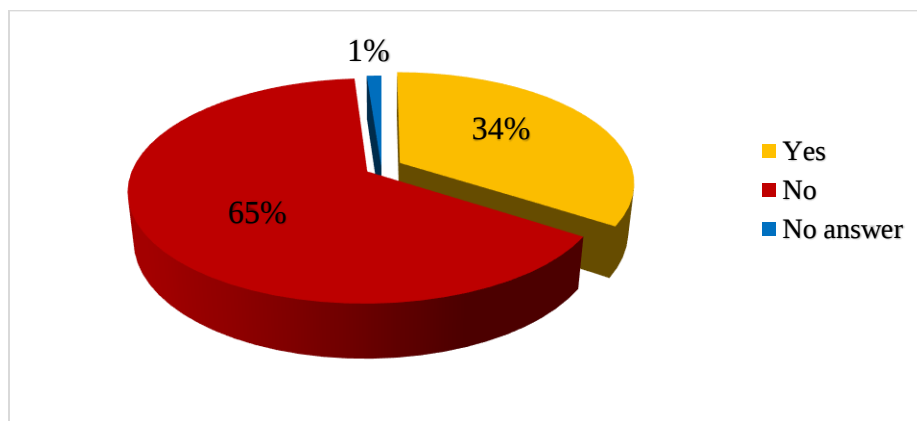
Concerning part two of the second question, the total number of the participants represents the number of students who gave positive responses to the previous question, which is 42 students. Half of the respondents (50%), which represents 21 students, claimed that they received help from their teachers. As opposed to them, fifteen participants (36%) pointed out that they did not receive any help from their teachers when they asked for it. The remaining six participants, constituting a minority of 14%, declared that they did not even ask. This may indicate that teachers did not provide the learners with the explanations needed because most of them sufficed just with uploaded the lessons in the form of PowerPoint or a PDF version on the platform. Alternatively, we can assume that some teachers need to use other technological tools that allowed them to provide the learners with the needed explanation.

Q03: Did you know that Moodle is not only for posting lectures?

Graph 13: *Learners' Knowledge about Moodle Activities*

According to what is revealed in graph 14, forty-two respondents (49%) selected the “no” option as their choice; that is, half of the subjects (50%) stated that they know that Moodle is only for posting lectures. Consequently, since teachers are using it just to post lectures, students think that it is the only use of this platform, while only one participant did not share his/her opinion. By asking our sample such a question, we aimed at investigating the students' knowledge regarding the uses and features of the Moodle platform.

Q03: Since Mila University Center mainly uses the Moodle platform as a tool for distance education, do you think that this platform is sufficient for providing a good learning environment for students?



Graph 14: *Students' Attitudes Regarding the Sufficiency of Moodle for Providing a Good Learning Environment*

By asking this question, we aimed at investigating the students' attitudes regarding the sufficiency of Moodle for providing a good learning environment. The above stated results showed that the overwhelming majority of our participants, 65% representing fifty-five students, stated that it was a sufficient platform. On the other hand, only twenty-nine of them (34%) believed that it was not sufficient. 1% provided no answer.

Q04: As an EFL learner, give your opinions about the online education in your university via the Moodle Platform. Do you think it is successful or not? In addition, what solutions do you recommend to develop distance education at Mila University Center?

In this question, we gave our informants total freedom to share their opinions concerning online learning via Moodle at Mila University Center by asking them if it was successful or not in addition to suggesting solutions to develop online learning at MUC. It is worth mentioning that

only 64 out of 85 students answered this question. The majority of the subjects stated that it was not successful for a range of different reasons. They claimed that teachers posted the lectures without explanation; some teachers posted them too late, on the night of the exam. Besides, they stated that the platform always break downs during the examinations period; this is mainly due to the large number of students who downloaded the lectures. Other problems faced by students were lack of computer knowledge and technological materials along with poor internet connection. Moreover, they mentioned that virtual learning is not motivating which made them passive learners because they cannot even ask teachers questions. Therefore, most of their suggestions fell into the following categories: 1- it is better to make a combination of both traditional and distance learning; 2- MUC should provide teachers and learners with training sessions about the use of Moodle; 3- increasing the quality of the internet connection to facilitate the online learning process; 4- teachers should provide students with Zoom sessions to explain the courses. Meanwhile, supporting the e-learning by using social media like Facebook might be a good idea, “Presenting distributed media should be consciously introduced to help learners share and solve their problems, and to improve learning instead of restricting learners into a circle of learning systems” (Mason & Rennie, 2008, p. 48).

On the other hand, a fewer number of subjects claimed the opposite; they deemed online learning as successful and supported their opinions with some arguments. They stated that online learning is enjoyable for students who like using technology in their learning process. They believe that it is beneficial in terms of timesaving, especially for working students, and it enhances the learners’ autonomy because learners learn by themselves far from the classroom environment.

4.3.3 Discussion of the Main Findings of the Students' Questionnaire

After the analysis of the questionnaires' results, which intend to investigate students' attitudes towards online learning and their perceptions regarding the use of the Moodle platform, it is fairly evident from the students' answers that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a turning point in the students' process of education which affects their learning negatively. From what has been collected, most of the subjects face difficulties in using digital tools such as technical issues, lack of guidance, understanding the lectures, and asking their teachers questions; that is why the majority indicate that they prefer traditional learning rather than online learning. Despite the many and varied difficulties faced, the obtained results demonstrate that more than half percent of the students are satisfied with learning through Moodle and they see it as helpful in the online process, whereas few respondents support virtual learning. Concerning the interaction between them and their teachers, forty-two informants claim that they were able to contact their teachers via Moodle, while forty-three students from the whole population, eighty-five, were not able to contact them. This invites us to notice that the interaction between students and teachers was very poor even though it is very crucial for the sake of receiving the planned curriculum correctly and clearly. Additionally, the majority of the students agree with the fact that MUC should not rely only on Moodle; it should be supported by other tools like social media and Zoom.

In the light of the analysis of the data gathered from the students' questionnaire, we can say that the results strengthen our ideas and hypothesis to a very considerable degree. Hence, the obtained results might lead to a conclusion that the more students are provided with the necessary explanation by teachers, the better their performance will be; and the more they enhance the use of Moodle, the better it would be as a robust tool in teaching EFL online.

4.4 Teachers' Questionnaire

4.4.1 Description of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire goes along with the students' questionnaire; it aims at investigating their perceptions and attitudes towards teaching EFL online via the Moodle platform. The teachers' questionnaire in this work was put together in a Google form and sent to the teachers of the sample via their professional emails. It was administered to more than ten teachers; we retained just eight responses from our respondents, and they have been very cooperative by providing us with answers to all the questions. This questionnaire is composed of nineteen questions that are divided into four sections, which encompass a mixture of close-ended questions, open-ended questions, and multiple-choice questions.

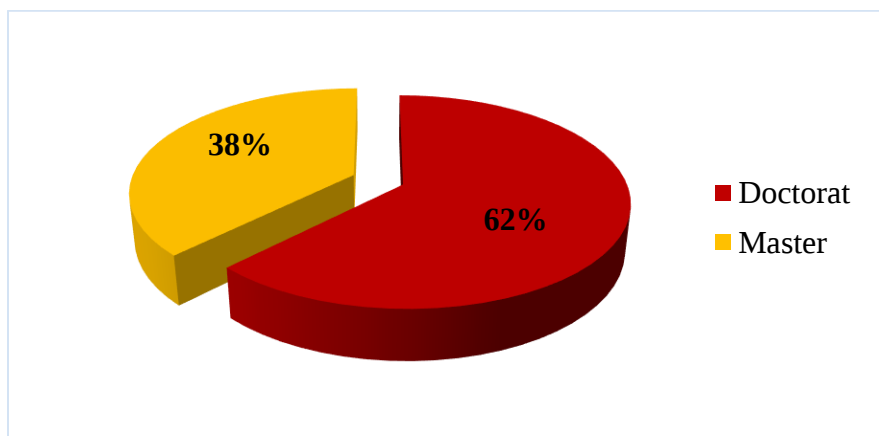
The first section attempts to gather general information about the professional degree that the teachers hold and their experience in teaching at university. The second section is designed to enable us to have an insights into teachers' attitudes towards teaching online. It begins with asking about the difficulties they face in using digital tools as well as their estimates regarding the shift from traditional classes to distance classes and its efficiency. Moreover, it explores teachers' opinions on whether virtual education will substitute face-to-face education, and if they are for or against carrying on with distance teaching at Algerian universities in the future. Following that, the third section is on teachers' perceptions of Moodle use. It is about the use of Moodle, for which purposes they use it, and if it is helpful for teaching. In addition, they were asked if they have received any special training to use Moodle and whether they are satisfied with teaching through it along with the kind of support they think the university should give them. The last section is entitled "teaching EFL online via the Moodle platform". To begin with, this section is initiated by the first question that aims at exploring if teachers see the Moodle platform as

helpful for the teaching process or not and whether they have been able to contact their students via Moodle. Then, they were asked if they have experienced online evaluation and if they are for or against it. Moreover, the next question aims at discovering the teachers' attitudes regarding the sufficiency of Moodle, and whether it provides a good learning environment for students' needs, in addition to their feeling about teaching through this platform. Eventually, in the last question, the teachers are kindly invited to provide their opinions about online education via the Moodle platform at MUC, in addition to the solutions they recommend to develop distance education in MUC.

4.4.2 Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Section One: Background Information

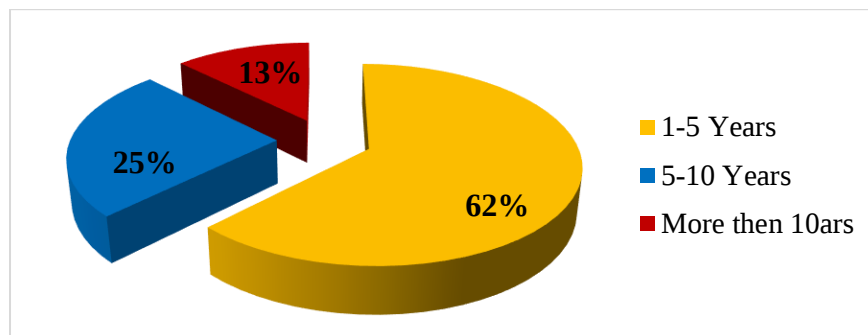
Q1. What academic degree do you hold?



Graph 15: Teachers' Academic Degrees

More than half of the respondents (62%), representing five teachers out of eight, were Doctorate holders whereas only three teachers (38%) hold a Master degree. Meanwhile, none of the participants hold a magister and license degree.

Q2. How long have you been teaching English at university?

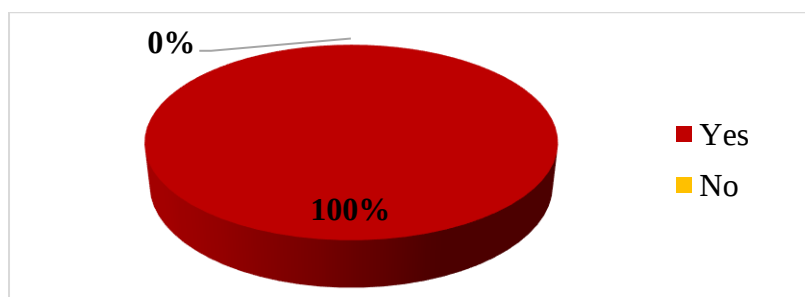


Graph 16: Teachers' Years of Experience in Teaching English at University

To establish the valuable contributions of instructors who hold high degrees in EFL teaching, we asked them about their years of experience in teaching English at university. From the results demonstrated above, it was indicated that five teachers that represent the majority (62%) have been teaching at university for less than six years (1-5 years). Then, two teachers (25%) indicated that they have been teaching at university for five to ten years. Only one teacher (13%) from the whole population has a long experience in teaching at university (more than ten years).

Section Two: Teaching Online

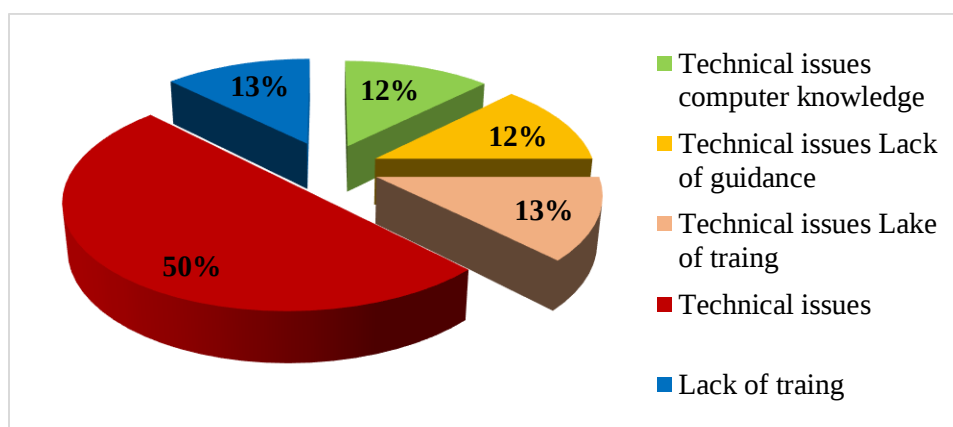
Q1. Do you find any difficulties in using digital tools in your online teaching?



Graph 17: Teachers' Online Teaching use Difficulties

This question is divided into two parts. For the first part, we asked the respondents if they struggled using digital tools in their online teaching. Eight teachers (100%), constituting the whole sample of the study, declared that they found difficulties in using digital tools during virtual learning.

B) If "yes", what type of difficulties do you face?

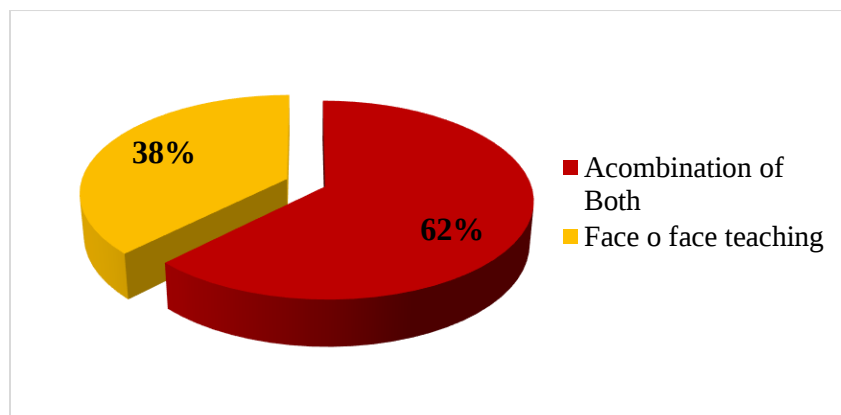


Graph 18: Teachers' Difficulties during Online Teaching

By asking the teachers of the sample this question, we aim at knowing the types of difficulties they faced. Upon analysis, one teacher (12%) declared that he/she faced technical issues and lacked computer knowledge. Another one (12%) selected “technical issues and lack of guidance”. 13% (one teacher) opted for lack of training and technical issues. Another teacher (13%) claimed that he/she lacked training, whereas half of the subjects, four teachers, opted for “technical issues”. What we have noticed is that the overwhelming majority of our informants had technical issues when using digital tools in their online teaching. This goes in harmony with what Ghounane confirms: “As the Coronavirus pandemic spread very fast, teachers were obliged to use e-learning as an immediate and emergency teaching technique while they were lacking the

needed knowledge of doing so due to the lack of training. All these factors caused them a big pressure and a techno-anxiety (2020a, p. 22).

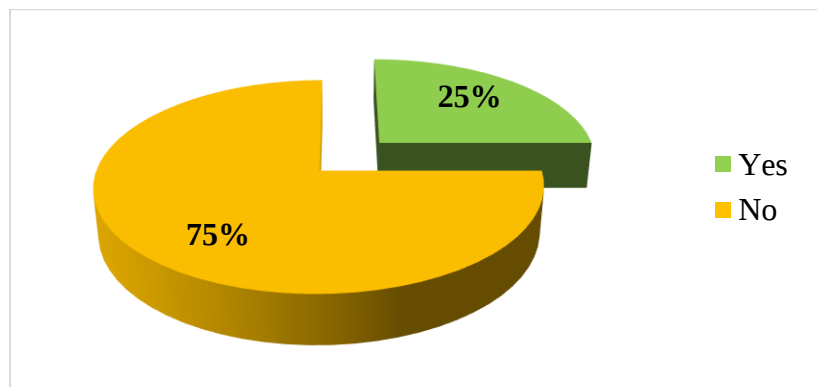
Q2. As a teacher, do you prefer distance teaching or face-to-face teaching?



Graph 19: Teachers' Preferences Regarding Traditional and Distance Classes

By raising this question, we aim at knowing teachers' preferences regarding both regular and virtual learning. Graph 20 demonstrated that the vast majority of the respondents, 05 teachers (62%), preferred a combination of both types of learning, "both traditional and virtual methods can be used in teaching skills; however, it seems that a combination of the two can facilitate knowledge transfer" (Mosalanegjad et al., 2012, p. 69). Three teachers (38%) entertained the belief that face-to-face learning is their preference, while none one of the respondents opted for distance learning. We can assume that most teachers prefer regular teaching because they refused the virtual interaction between them and their students.

Q3. A) Is teaching EFL online as effective as classroom teaching?



Graph 20: Teachers' Points of View about Distance Learning Efficiency

Our aim of this question is to investigate teachers' opinions about the efficiency of online learning. The obtained results showed that six teachers (75%) believed that virtual learning is not as effective as traditional learning for teaching EFL online, whereas, only two participants (25%) of the whole population considered online learning as effective as classroom learning.

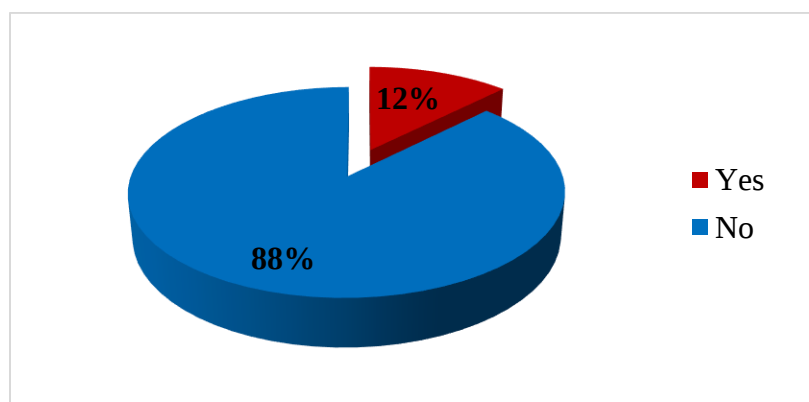
B) Justify your answer, please.

Teachers who claimed that teaching EFL online is not as effective as classroom teaching defended their opinions by furnishing a set of reasons. Some are linked to the sheer lack of knowledge like how to use the available means, some are associated to technical issues such as slow or absence of internet connection for either students or teachers, and some pertain to difficulties in assessment especially when unethical issues such as the occurrence of plagiarism emerge. Furthermore, they confirmed that the process of EFL learning requires accounting for learners' affective aspects and this was not achieved through online teaching. Students, in their own teachers' professional gauges were less motivated and fell into procrastination in the case of online learning; meanwhile, they did not take the latter seriously, in addition to the lack of body language interaction, which is vital to pedagogy. This is what Moulay ensures, "Teachers still

prefer using the traditional methods in teaching especially face-to-face interaction. Most of them refused the virtual interaction either the formal one like in the electronic platforms or the informal one like social media interaction” (2020, p. 22).

The remaining respondents, two teachers, who indicated that it is as effective as classroom teaching, supported their opinions with some arguments. One of them said that it depends on the nature of the lecture; we assume that some modules need to be taught in the classroom as Oral and Written Expression. The other teacher mentioned that because we are members of the digital generation, it is high time we exploited this tool for the benefit of the educational field in Algeria.

Q4. Do you think that distance education will eventually substitute face-to-face education?

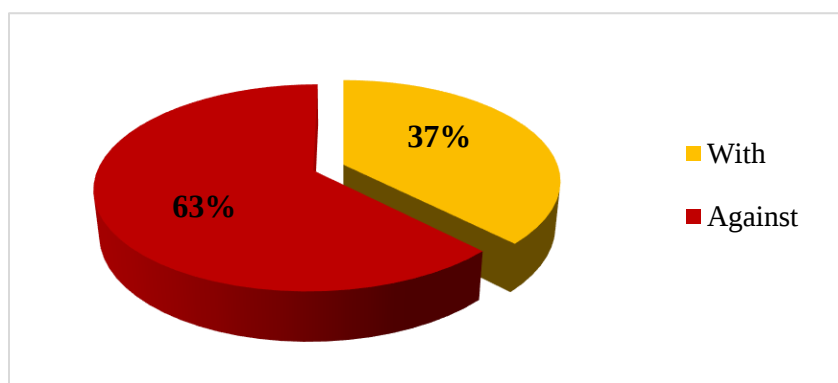


Graph 21: Teachers’ Opinions about the Possibility of Substituting Face to Face Education with Distance Teaching

This question aims at giving the teachers the opportunity to express their opinions about the possibility of substituting traditional classes with distance classes. The results of this question show that seven participants (88%) believed that distance education could never be an alternative to traditional education. However, only one participant (12%) answered positively that he/she

believed that it would be a good substitution, “There is a decent number of studies prove that there are teachers who are interested in using the electronic learning and platforms like Moodle” (Ghounane, 2020b, p. 23).

Q5. A) Are you with or against carrying on with distance teaching at Algerian universities in the future?



Graph 22: Teachers' Attitudes towards Carrying on with Distance Teaching

Most of the participants, 63% representing five teachers from the whole population, who answered the third question negatively were against carrying on with remote teaching. On the other hand, three teachers (37%) were with carrying on with distance teaching at Algerian universities in the future.

B) Justify your answer, please.

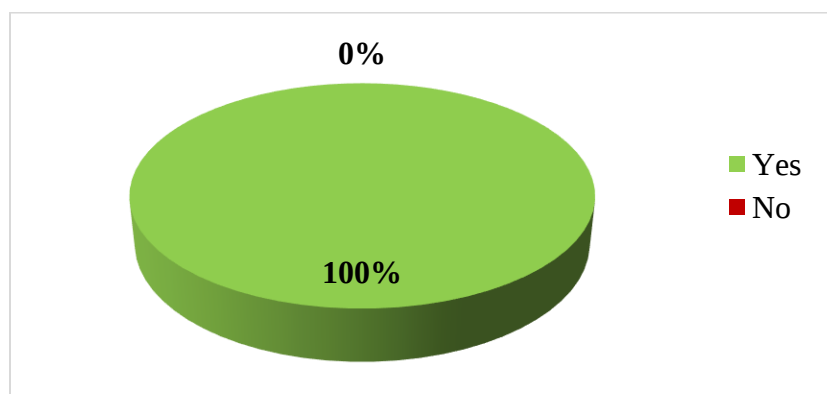
In this question, teachers were asked to justify their answers. The participants who declared that they are against remote education becoming a valid alternative to regular tuition believed that as long as we have a problem with internet speed in Algeria, distance learning will never be an option. Some claimed that students became careless regarding their education; consequently, this will affect their achievement level. The remaining teachers agreed on the fact

that this type of teaching will always prove ineffective and unsuccessful as long as enough training is not provided.

According to the teachers who are with carrying on with teaching through online education, they defended their opinions that despite the technological issues, they preferred to keep using online learning. They stated that we could let go of technological advancement because it becomes primordial that our students and teachers resort to the use of those ready-made freely accessible educational materials. Meanwhile, they confirmed that face-to-face teaching could never be ignored, especially when considering assessment.

Section Three: Perceptions towards the Use of the Moodle Platform

Q01. Do you use the Moodle platform?



Graph 23: The Actual Use of the Moodle Platform by Teachers

This question requested the respondents to specify whether they were using Moodle in their teaching or not. Eight teachers, constituting the whole sample of the study, declared that they used the Moodle platform. This means that these teachers combined traditional classroom settings and e-learning.

Q02. If “yes”, for which purpose(s) do you use it?

- a) Upload my courses. b) Assign daily/weekly tasks that support my courses.
- c) Initiate online discussions with my students about the course.
- d) Quiz and test students. e) Keep students informed on a regular basis.

Table 07: Teachers’ Purposes of the Moodle Use

Options	Number	Percentage
A	04	50%
a+e	02	25%
a+b	01	12%
a+c+e	01	13%
Total	08	100%

This question is related to the purpose(s) of using the Moodle platform. As shown in table 07, half of the respondents (50%), representing four teachers out of eight, used Moodle to upload their courses. Two teachers (25%) used Moodle to upload their courses and to keep students informed on a regular basis. Only one teacher (12%) used Moodle for both uploading courses and assigning daily/weekly tasks that support his/her courses, whereas another teacher mentioned that he/she used Moodle for uploading courses, initiating online discussions with his/her students about the courses as well as keeping students informed regularly. What we have noticed is that none of the respondents used this e-learning portal to quiz and test students. According to the

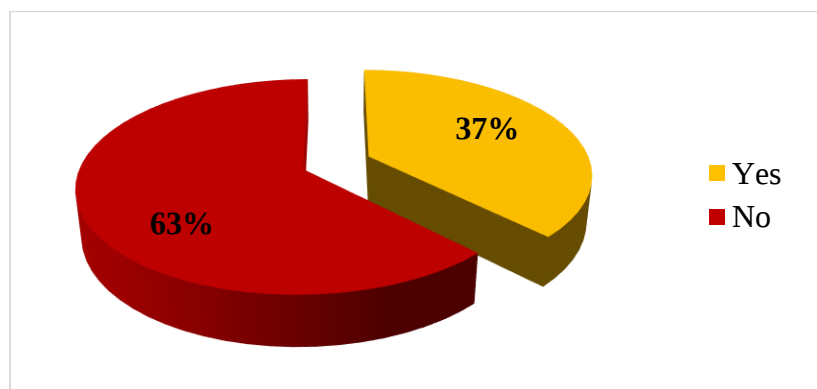
results, it could be deduced that the overwhelming majority of teachers used this platform only for posting lectures.

Q03. Have you received any special training to use the Moodle platform?

Table 08: *Teachers' Training on the Use of Moodle*

Options	Number	Percentage
No training	03	37%
Self-training	02	25%
Online training provided by the university	01	25%
Others	01	13%
Total	08	100%

This question aims to know if teachers received any special training to use Moodle. Three teachers reported that they had received no training. Two respondents engaged in self-training. The other two respondents declared that they received online training provided by the university. However, one respondent stated that he/she received training as part of a teacher-training course ran by the university. There might be several reasons why the university had not provided training sessions for teachers, such as lack of specialists and lack of training programmes that would need a long time to be organized and the list goes on and on.

Q04. Are you satisfied with teaching through the Moodle platform?

Graph 24: Teachers' Satisfaction with Teaching through the Moodle Platform

This question is about the teachers' satisfaction with teaching through the Moodle platform. As the graph above shows, only three teachers (37%) were satisfied with teaching through this e-learning portal. In the light of this idea, we assume that they found Moodle informative and useful. On the other hand, five teachers (63%) stated that they were unsatisfied.

If your answer is “no”, why?

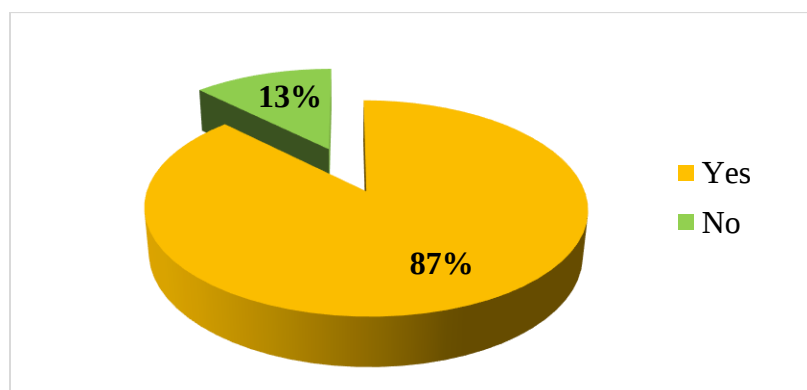
The teachers who were not satisfied were kindly asked to give their reasons behind their dissatisfaction to provide us with their opinions. For them, they were not satisfied mainly due to technical problems such as the slow internet connection and the platform breakdowns. Likewise, teachers and students alike do not have adequate control over the use of this platform. Therefore, failure is likely to occur as regards fostering learning through Moodle. Another reason is that students do not check the platform on a regular basis.

Q05. What kind of support do you think the university should give you while you are teaching online via the Moodle platform?

This question requested the respondents to suggest or specify what kind of support they think the university should give them while they are teaching online via the Moodle platform. Consistent with the findings, most teachers stressed the need for special training about the use of Moodle for both teachers and learners. One teacher suggested that Zoom should be integrated into Moodle to reach better quality of teaching online. The remaining participants suggested that the university should provide them with a good internet connection and fix the technical problems like the incessant platform breakdown.

Section Four: Teaching EFL Online via the Moodle Platform

Q01. Do you see that using the Moodle platform is helpful for the learning process?

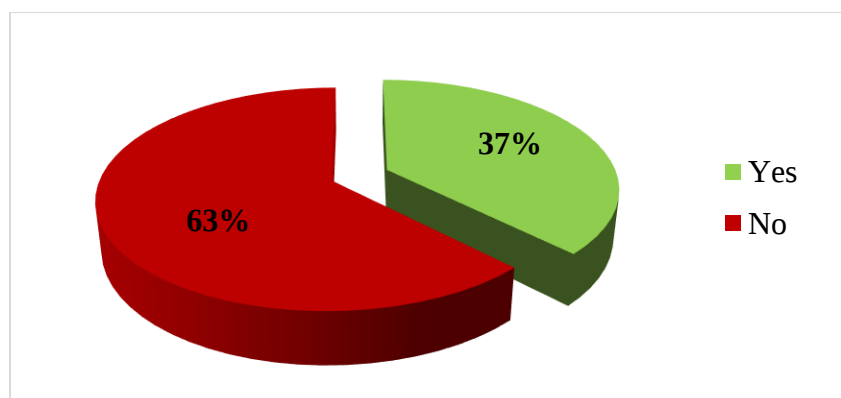


Graph 25: Usefulness of the Moodle Platform in the Learning Process

Through this question, we aimed at knowing if Moodle is helpful in teaching EFL or not. The overwhelming majority of the teachers (87%), representing seven teachers, claimed that Moodle is helpful in teaching. Accordingly, we assume that it is beneficial for teachers due to its

facilitation to deliver the curriculum to their students. Only one teacher (13%) stated that it is not helpful.

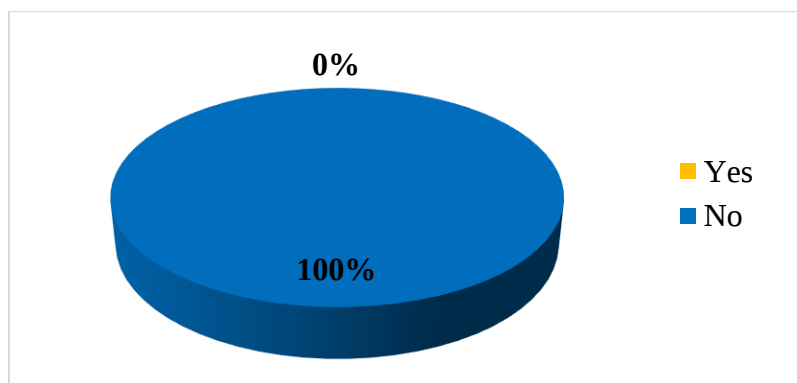
Q02. Were you able to contact your students via Moodle?



Graph 26: Teachers' Ability to Contact their Students via Moodle

The yielded results show that 63% of the respondents, representing five teachers, were not able to contact their students via Moodle. On the other hand, three teachers (37%) from the whole population were able to get in touch with their students via Moodle. From the above results, we assume that the interaction between teachers and students is low in teaching via the Moodle platform; this may be put down to the fact that teachers use this platform only for uploading the lectures.

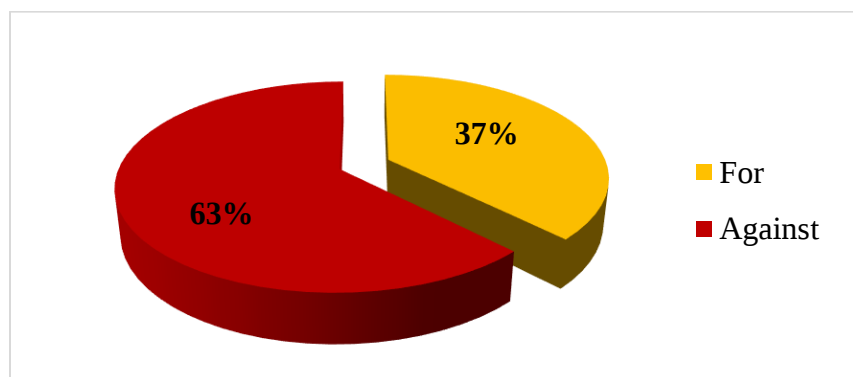
Q03. A) Have you experienced online evaluation before?



Graph 27: Teachers' Experience with Online Evaluation

The aim of this question is to investigate if the teachers have experienced online evaluation before or not. From the results shown in graph 28, the whole informants (100%) confirmed that they had not evaluated their students remotely before.

B) Are you for or against online evaluation?



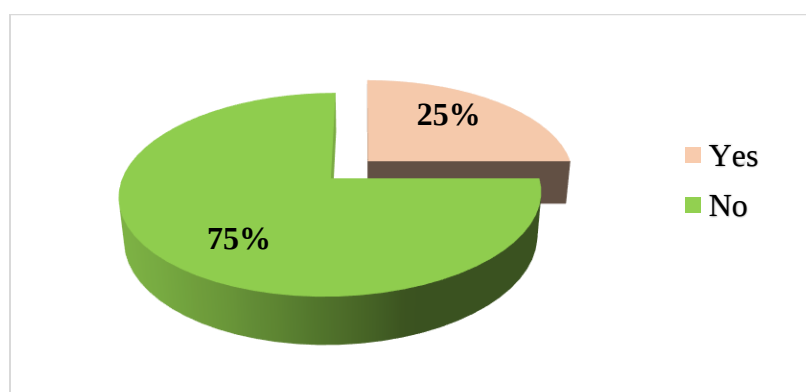
Graph 28: Teachers' Attitudes towards Online Evaluation

Although not all the respondents have experienced online evaluation before, three teachers (37%) stated that they are with evaluating students online, while five teachers (63%)

were against it. By raising this question, we predominantly aimed at investigating teachers' attitudes regarding online evaluation.

To know teachers' opinions about online assessments, we asked them to justify their answers. For the informants who are against assessing their students remotely, they believed that online evaluation lacks validity and reliability in the Algerian context; it does not bring about the results that reflect the level of the learner or the quality of teaching. Besides, they all agreed on the fact that the overwhelming majority of students do not respect ethical issues; they will definitely tend to cheat in a variety of ways and plagiarize their answers. By contrast, the remaining teachers who indicated that they are for online evaluation believed that it is effective in the sense that it saves time and energy. What is more, it is a developed kind of evaluation that students should try and know about.

Q04. Since Mila University Center mainly uses the Moodle platform as a tool for distance education, do you think that this platform is sufficient for providing a good learning environment for students' needs?



Graph 29: Teachers' Attitudes Regarding the Sufficiency of Moodle for Providing a Good Learning Environment for Students' Needs

By asking this question, we aimed at investigating the teachers' attitudes regarding the sufficiency of Moodle for providing a good learning environment for their students' needs. The results stated above show that the vast majority of participants, six teachers (75%), stated that it is a sufficient platform; only two of the whole population (34%) believed that it is not.

Q05. How do you feel about teaching through the Moodle platform?

Table 09: Teachers' Feelings about Teaching through Moodle

Options	Number	Percentage
Confident and relaxed	04	50%
Excited and motivated	00	00%
Frustrated and left behind	03	37%
Neutral	01	13%
Total	08	100%

We provided this statement in our questionnaire aiming at knowing how EFL teachers feel about teaching through the Moodle Platform. 50%, representing half of the population, felt confident and relaxed; three participants (37%) felt frustrated and left behind, and one respondent (13%) remained neutral.

Q06. As an EFL teacher, can you kindly give your opinion about the online education at Mila University Centre via the Moodle Platform? In addition, what range of tangible, applicable solutions do you recommend to develop distance education in Mila University Center?

This open-ended question is crucial since it covers all teachers' opinions about online education at MUC via Moodle and mainly all the tangible and applicable solutions they recommend to develop this type of education in our university.

The overwhelming majority of the participants harmoniously concurred that their experience regarding online teaching in general is simply unsatisfactory. They stated that it was a solution during the COVID-19 pandemic to complete teaching remotely via Moodle but the Algerian universities were not ready for it and they maintained that Moodle issue is excellent in nature while the problem is national. It lies in the fragility of the network in our country: Both teachers and learners suffer from the weak internet connection where the teacher cannot connect, students can, and vice versa, in addition to other technical issues like platform breakdowns. Besides, the lack of training on how to use Moodle is another problem they faced in their online teaching. Accordingly, regarding their recommendations, they provided us with some suggestions that can be taken into account to develop distance education in our university. First, they confirmed that the government should provide a good internet connection to facilitate the process of accessing different learning platforms so that this way becomes, to some extent, successful. Moreover, they insisted on training both teachers and students because they need to be guided in order to use the platform efficiently.

Just a few informants, two teachers from the whole population, were satisfied with teaching via Moodle. They stated that they had never faced problems with it. They claimed that the only downside is that it was not possible to contact students via this platform and they assumed that this is because students do not check it regularly. For that reason, they suggested that more restrictions should be implemented so that students will be more serious about their studies. Only one teacher was neutral: He/she suggested using online learning for lectures and face-to-face learning for evaluation and practice.

Seemingly, teachers are not satisfied with their experience in using the Moodle platform during the process of online teaching. We assume that they can resort to it after several years when we realize that we are ready to embrace it without technical issues and training to be in control of its use.

4.4.3 Discussion of the Main findings of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire intends to investigate teachers' attitudes towards online teaching and their perceptions regarding the use of the Moodle platform. We gained a clear idea about teachers' attitudes towards teaching EFL online via Moodle; the overwhelming majority of them do not support virtual teaching. According to what has been gathered, it can be elicited that technical issues, low internet connection, and lack of training on how to use Moodle are the most cumbersome problems that teachers faced in the process of online teaching. These might be the reasons why teachers are not satisfied with teaching through Moodle and they are against carrying on with distance teaching at Algerian universities in the future.

Concerning the teachers' training on the use of Moodle, three teachers claimed that they did not receive any special training and two other teachers declared that they depend on self-

training whilst only one teacher stated that he/she received online training provided by the university. This invites us to notice that the university did not provide the necessary training for teachers about the use of this e-learning portal. About the interaction between teachers and their learners, five teachers were able to contact their students via Moodle while three teachers were not able to get in touch with them. This means that the interaction between teachers and learners was achieved to some extent. Concerning online evaluation, all the participants have not experienced it before, and the majority of them are against this kind of evaluation due to the absence of credibility. Supplementally, the majority of the participating teachers agreed on the fact that the Moodle platform is not sufficient for providing a good learning environment for learners' needs at MUC.

4.5 Future Study Recommendations

After examining the students' and teachers' attitudes about online teaching, and their perceptions towards the use of the Moodle platform, we suggest some recommendations to enhance e-learning in the Department of Foreign Languages at MUC.

- i.** The administration should fix the Moodle platform technical problems and engage qualified engineers for the ultimate objective of a better management of the platform.
- ii.** The administration ought to organize training sessions for both teachers and students about the use of Moodle.
- iii.** The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research should ensure that all students have an internet connection before implementing this type of learning in the educational process.

- iv. Teachers have to provide teaching online via Moodle by using other tools such as social media, organizing video conferencing sessions to explain the lessons to their students, and giving them the opportunity to ask questions.
- v. Teachers should be present in the e-learning system as they do in traditional learning.
- vi. Teachers should evaluate their students by providing them with the needed practice and feedback.
- vii. Teachers should guide students to maintain a good learning process.
- viii. Students should ask for help from teachers or friends if they have issues with distance communication, with Moodle, with the lessons uploaded to it, or if they did not understand the lectures.
- ix. Students have to check the platform regularly.

4.6 Limitations of the Study

Some limitations have been encountered during the accomplishment of this study. Some of these limitations are worthy to be highlighted for their potential usefulness in future research studies. The most prominent of these is the problem encountered in the process of collecting the necessary data for the practical part of the research work because students studied intermittently. Further, since the data was collected during the month of Ramadhan, only a few members were attending the classes. Because of these circumstances, the researchers were obliged to complete submitting the data via Google Forms. In addition, one major limitation to the study is the credibility of students' answers to the questionnaire since some of them did not provide us with evident data; some of them did not justify their answers when this was needed. Besides, the teachers' questionnaire was limited only to eight teachers of English at Mila University Center because they were contacted via their professional emails.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the fieldwork of our academic undertaking and it was devoted to examining the targeted students' as well as teachers' perceptions towards online teaching via the Moodle platform, the population and sampling, and the means of research. It presented a description, analysis, and discussion of both teachers' and students' questionnaires. The results that are reported this chapter unambiguously reveal that students are by no means adequately prepared to study remotely; they also prove that teachers are not satisfied with teaching EFL online via Moodle. Thus, the obtained results strongly confirm the stated hypothesis. In the same vein, this chapter provided some recommendations for both students and teachers for the sake of enhancing and making online teaching more tangibly successful and more properly implemented.

General Conclusion

Online teaching can be rightly viewed as a new and indispensable form of education that creates new opportunities for students in which they study separately from their teachers. Therefore, it supports learners' autonomy as they learn independently. This form of education comes in different types suitable for different kinds of students. Furthermore, online learning shifts the responsibility of learning from teachers to students as their roles change during the teaching and learning process. This work sought to elicit the teachers' and students' awareness of using e-learning and digital tools and to what extent they enhance using the latter for better performance in the process of distance learning and teaching. The main objective of this study has been to highlight and scrutinize the perceptions and attitudes of both teachers and students towards teaching EFL online via the Moodle platform.

Within the spectrum of this study, the theoretical chapter is divided into three major theoretical sections. The major concern of the first section was to provide a succinct and well-informative overview on the concept of online teaching and its historical background, identifying it with its two main types; synchronous and asynchronous e-learning in order to extract their different underlying principles. Then, it accounted for the pros and cons of online teaching. Moreover, it attempted to spot light on a variety of instructional strategies used to help in transforming traditional one-on-one learning into remote learning.

The second section began with an overview of Learning Management Systems (LMSs). Then, it moved to present the history and philosophy of the Moodle platform. The section also explained the main features of this platform, including a set of resources that allow teachers to include any type of file in their courses in addition to the activities provided by the platform to facilitate online collaborations and interactions, which can be between teachers, students, or

teachers and students. We, in the same vein, tried to elucidate how these activities are prone to facilitate the way to the success of an e-learning program. This section ended up with an attempt to demystifying the wide range roles and functions Moodle possesses.

The last section addressed the two variables. It began with presenting the services provided by Moodle for teaching EFL online. Then, it discussed the implementation of Moodle and the constraints faced by teachers when implementing the curriculum; furthermore, it investigated the challenges and attitudes faced by teachers and students, which was enriched with a portrayal of some relevant previous studies. Lastly, this section ended up with a question that explores whether Moodle is an effective platform for teaching EFL or not.

The second chapter is devoted to analyzing and explaining the data gathered. It investigates teachers' and students' perceptions towards the use of the Moodle platform in teaching EFL online through analyzing and interpreting students' and teachers' questionnaires which have been administered to third-year EFL students, and EFL teachers in the department of Foreign Languages at Mila University Centre. The results of this study reveal that the overwhelming majority of teachers and students are not satisfied with online education via the Moodle platform. They defend their opinion with some arguments such as lack of computer knowledge, lack of training on how to use Moodle, technical issues, poor internet connection, and lack of body interaction. The results also demonstrate that most of the teachers agreed on the difficulty of evaluating students remotely because it lacks validity and reliability in the Algerian context; likewise, the vast majority of the students declared that they suffered from the lack of teachers' explanation. This made them focus more on memorizing the lessons rather than understanding them. Therefore, we can say that the obtained results of the questionnaires have confirmed the stated hypotheses to a very considerable degree.

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Appendices

Appendix 01

Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

We are kindly asking your help to fill in this questionnaire to help us conduct our research. It aims at investigating your perceptions towards the use of the Moodle platform in teaching EFL online. We are kindly asking for objective and honest answers.

Please put a tick (✓) in the box corresponding to your answer, and note that more than one answer is possible for some questions. Your time and your valuable contribution to this research are welcome.

Section One: Background Information

1. How long have you been studying English?

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2. How do you consider your level in English?

Elementary ☐ Upper-Intermediate ☐

Intermediate ☐ Advanced ☐

3. A) Are you motivated to learn English?

Yes ☐ No ☐

B) If "no" explain why.....

.....

.....

4. How do you consider your level in using technological devices?

Beginner ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced ☐

Section Two: Learning Online

1. Do you have internet sources at home or at University?

At home ☐ At University ☐ None of them ☐

2. A) Do you find any difficulties in using digital tools in your online learning?

Yes ☐ No ☐

B) If "yes", what type of difficulties do you face?

Technical issues like platforms breakdown or internet disconnection ☐

Lack of guidance ☐ Lack of explanation ☐

Computer Knowledge ☐

Others

3. Do you prefer distance learning or face-to-face learning?

Distance learning ☐ Face to face learning ☐

A combination of both ☐

4. A) Is teaching EFL online as effective as classroom teaching?

Yes ☐ No ☐

B) Justify your answer

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5. Do you see that your university is handling the covid-19 outbreak successfully?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Section Three: Perceptions towards the Use of the Moodle Platform

The Moodle e-learning platform is a web link that is provided by Mila University as well as in other Algerian universities. It is an electronic platform that is a virtual classroom used between the teacher and his/her students where they can get access to the programmed subjects, drills, tasks, and assignments.

1. Do you use the Moodle platform to study?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Is the Moodle platform helpful in studying?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. How has the Moodle platform been helpful to you? It has provided you with:

a) Easy access to learning documents ☐

b) Ability to study at home ☐

c) Ability to contact teachers ☐

d) Others.....

.....

4. What are some of the difficulties you have constantly faced when using the Moodle platform?

- a) No available internet access ☐
- b) Poor internet connection ☐
- c) Difficult manipulation of the platform itself ☐
- d) Difficulties in downloading learning materials ☐
- e) Lack of technological materials (smartphones, computers...) ☐

Others.....
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.....

5. A) Are you satisfied with learning through the Moodle platform?

Yes ☐ No ☐

B) If your answer is “no”, why?

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.....

Section Four: Teaching EFL Online via the Moodle Platform

1. Have you been able to contact your teachers via Moodle?

Yes ☐ No ☐

B) If “yes”, have you received the type and the amount of help you looked for during the online learning sessions?

Yes, I get the necessary explanation ☐ I did not ask them ☐

No, I don't get any explanation ☐

2. Did you know that Moodle is not only for posting lectures?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Since Mila University Center mainly uses Moodle platform as a tool for distance education, do you think that this platform is sufficient for providing a good learning environment for students?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. As an EFL learner, give your opinions about the online education in your university via the Moodle Platform. Do you think it is successful or not? In addition, what o solutions do you recommend to develop distance education in Mila University Center?

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Thank you for your collaboration

Appendix 02

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

You are kindly invited to devote some of your valuable time to respond to the following questions. This questionnaire aims at investigating your perceptions towards the use of the Moodle platform in teaching EFL online.

Please put a tick (✓) in the box corresponding to your answer, and note that more than one answer is possible for some questions. Your time and your valuable contribution to this research are greatly needed and wholeheartedly appreciated.

Section One: Background Information

1. What academic degree do you hold?

a) License ☐ b) Master ☐ c) Magister ☐ d) Doctorate ☐

2. How long have you been teaching English at university?

.....

Section Two: Teaching Online

1. A) Do you find any difficulties in using digital tools in your online teaching?

Yes ☐ No ☐

C) If "yes", what type of difficulties do you face?

a) Technical issues like platforms breakdowns or internet disconnection ☐

b) Computer Knowledge ☐ c) Lack of training ☐

d) Lack of guidance ☐

Others

2. As a teacher, do you prefer distance teaching or face-to-face teaching?

Distance teaching ☐ Face to face teaching ☐

A combination of both ☐

3. A) Is teaching EFL online as effective as classroom teaching?

Yes ☐ No ☐

B) Justify your answer, please

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4. Do you think that distance education will eventually substitute face-to-face education?

Yes ☐ No ☐

5. A) Are you with or against carrying on with distance teaching at Algerian universities in the future?

Yes ☐ No ☐

B) Justify your answer, please

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Section Three: Perceptions towards the Use of the Moodle Platform

1. Do you actually use the Moodle platform?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. If “yes”, for which purpose(s) do you use it?

a) Upload my courses ☐

b) Assign daily/weekly tasks that support my courses ☐

c) Initiate online discussions with my students about the course ☐

d) Quiz and test students ☐

e) Keep students informed on a regular basis ☐

f) Others, please specify

.....

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3. Have you received any special training to use the Moodle platform?

a) No training ☐ b) Self-training ☐

c) Online training provided by the university ☐

Others, please specify.....

.....

4. Are you satisfied with teaching through the Moodle platform?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If your answer is “no”, why?

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5. What kind of support do you think the university should give you while you are teaching online via the Moodle platform?.....

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Section Four: Teaching EFL Online via the Moodle Platform

1. Do you see that using the Moodle platform is helpful for the learning process?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Were you able to contact your students via Moodle?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. A) Have you experienced online evaluation before?

Yes ☐ No ☐

B) Are you for or against online evaluation?

For ☐ Against ☐

- Justify your answer, please

.....

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4. Since Mila University Center mainly uses the Moodle platform as a tool for distance education. Do you think that this platform is sufficient for providing a good learning environment for students' needs?

Yes

☐

No

☐

5. A) How do you feel about teaching through the Moodle platform?

a) Confident and relaxed

☐

b) Excited and motivated

☐

c) Frustrated and left behind

☐

d) Others

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6. As an EFL teacher, can you kindly give your opinion about the online education at Mila University Centre via the Moodle Platform? In addition, what range of tangible, applicable solutions do you recommend to develop distance education in Mila University Center?

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Thank you for your collaboration

ملخص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التدقيق في مواقف الأساتذة والطلاب تجاه التدريس عبر الإنترنت عبر منصة موودل وتصوراتهم تجاه الدروس ووضع التقييم في المركز الجامعي ميله. في سياق هذه الدراسة، تم طرح سؤالين بحثيين، وردا على ذلك اختيرت طريقة وصفية لاستكمال هذا البحث. للحصول على البيانات اللازمة، تم تقديم استبيان إلى عينة تتكون من 85 طالباً في السنة الثالثة، بالإضافة إلى استبيان آخر لـ 08 أساتذة من قسم اللغات الأجنبية في المركز الجامعي ميله. تشير النتائج إلى أن الغالبية العظمى من الأساتذة والطلاب غير راضين عن التعليم عن بعد عبر منصة موودل؛ وأقروا أنه ليس بنفس فعالية التعليم العادي لعدة أسباب مختلفة مثل نقص المعرفة الحاسوبية، ونقص التدريب على كيفية استخدام منصة موودل، والمشاكل التقنية، وضعف الاتصال بالإنترنت، ونقص التفاعل الجسدي. إلى جانب ذلك، كشف تحليل استبيان الأساتذة أن معظمهم اتفقوا على صعوبة تقييم الطلاب عن بعد لأنه يفتقر إلى الصلاحية والموثوقية في الجرائر. وكذلك أظهر استبيان الطلاب أن الغالبية العظمى من المتدربين عانوا من نقص شرح الأساتذة؛ مما جعلهم يركزون أكثر على حفظ الدروس بدلاً من فهمها. في ضوء النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من الاستبيانات، يمكن القول أن النتائج تتوافق مع فرضياتنا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التدريس عن بعد، متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، منصة موودل، تصورات المعلمين والطلاب، الصعوبات التي يواجهونها.

Résumé

La présente étude vise à examiner les attitudes des enseignants et des étudiants d'EFL envers l'enseignement en ligne via la plateforme Moodle et leurs perceptions vis-à-vis des leçons et du mode d'évaluation au MUC. Par conséquent, dans le cadre de cette étude, deux questions de recherche sont soulevées. En réponse aux questions, une méthode descriptive a opté pour l'achèvement de la présente recherche. Pour obtenir les données nécessaires, deux questionnaires ont été soumis à un échantillon composé de 85 étudiants de troisième année, en plus d'un autre questionnaire pour 08 enseignants du Département d'anglais du Centre universitaire de Mila. Les résultats indiquent que la majorité des enseignants et des étudiants ne sont pas satisfaits de l'éducation en ligne via la plateforme Moodle; ils ont déclaré qu'elle n'est pas aussi efficace que l'éducation régulière pour diverses raisons, comme le manque de connaissances en informatique,

manque de formation sur l'utilisation de Moodle, problèmes techniques, mauvaise connexion Internet et manque d'interaction corporelle. En outre, l'analyse du questionnaire des enseignants a révélé que la plupart des informateurs étaient d'accord sur la difficulté d'évaluer les étudiants à distance parce qu'elle manque de validité et de fiabilité dans le contexte algérien. Le questionnaire des étudiants a également démontré que la majorité des participants souffraient du manque d'explications des enseignants, ce qui les a amenés à se concentrer davantage sur la mémorisation des leçons plutôt que sur leur compréhension. A la lumière des résultats des questionnaires, on peut dire que les résultats sont dans le sens de notre hypothèse.

Mots-clés : enseignement en ligne, apprenants d'EFL, plateforme Moodle, perceptions des enseignants et des étudiants, difficultés rencontrées.