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**Considering The Bets of Distance Learning in the Algerian
Universities: between the Ministry's Spur-of-the-moment
Decision, Teachers' Challenges and Learners' Expectations**
(The Case of the Section of English at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret)

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I dedicate this work to my dear parents who supported me

Special thanks to all my sisters, brothers and all my friends

I am especially grateful to Amel, Fatima and Nour El Houda for their support
and love.

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In memory of my grandmother,

I dedicate this work to my family , a special feeling of gratitude to my loving
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My dear and lovely mother for her patience and sacrifice,

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List of Abbreviations and Coding Conventions

BMD: Bachelor, Master, Doctorat

CA: Communicative Approach

CBA: Competency Based Approach

DE: Distance Education

DM: Direct Method

EFL: English as Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

GTM: Grammar Translation Method

MOOCs: Massive Open Online Courses

MOODLE: Modular Object Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment

ABSTRACT

The current study investigates and assesses Distance Education in the Algerian Higher Education during the Covid-19 pandemic. It attempts to examine the main obstacles and challenges of distance education faced by both EFL teachers and students at the University of Ibn Khaldoun of Tiaret during the corona virus confinement. In order to test our hypothesis, we used the descriptive analytical method. A structured questionnaire was destined to 120 students at the section of English at Tiaret and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 teachers at the same section. The results of the collected data from the students' questionnaire and teachers' interview demonstrate that online/distance education is not more interesting or important than the ordinary learning and teaching. The inadequate use of ICT, insufficient e-learning infrastructure, financial constraints, lack of reliable internet and the technical skills on e-learning, e-content development and the inability to interact and communicate with teachers and fellow students are amongst the major barriers that hinder the implementation of distance education at the Algerian University. Therefore, decision-makers have to rethink the distance and hybrid learning environment for EFL learners in Algeria.

Key words: Distance education, Covid-19 pandemic, EFL teachers, EFL students, obstacles, ICT.

ملخص

تهدف الدراسة الراهنة إلى تحري و تقييم التعليم عن بعد في قطاع التعليم العالي في الجزائر إبان جائحة كوفيد-19 ومن ثم تسعى إلى تقصي المعوقات و التحديات الرئيسة للتعليم عن بعد التي واجهها كل من طلبة و أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية في جامعة ابن خلدون بتيارت طيلة مدة الحجر الصحي الخاص بفيروس كورونا. و من أجل إختبار صحة فرضياتنا تم الاعتماد على منهج الوصفي التحليلي. إستندت هاته الدراسة على إستبيان إلكتروني تم توجيهه الى 120 طالبا للغة الانجليزية بالإضافة إلى مقابلة مفتوحة مع أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة ابن خلدون بتيارت . هذا و أكدت النتائج المتحصل عليها أن التعليم عن بعد ليس أكثر فعالية من التعليم التقليدي؛ إضافة إلى أن الاستخدام القاصر لتكنولوجيا المعلومات و الإتصال ؛ ضعف البنية التحتية الخاصة بالتعليم الإلكتروني؛ محدودية التمويل ؛ ضعف الإتصال بالانترنت؛ و الإفتقار إلى المهارات التقنية الخاصة بالتعليم الإلكتروني؛ بالإضافة الى تعذر التفاعل و التواصل بين الطلبة والأساتذة؛ كلها عوامل رئيسة تعرقل إعتقاد التعليم عن بعد في الجامعات الجزائرية . وبالتالي فإنه من الضروري لأصحاب القرار و المسؤولين إعادة النظر في الوضعية الخاصة بالتعليم عن بعد و التعليم الهجين في الجامعة الجزائرية

الكلمات المفتاحية : التعليم عن بعد ؛ وباء كوفيد-19 ؛ طلبة اللغة الانجليزية ؛ أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية؛ المعوقات؛ تكنولوجيا الاعلام و الإتصال.

General Introduction

The covid-19 has spread rapidly all over the world and has made remarkable changes in a various sectors including the field of education. the first Covid-19 case in Algeria was confirmed on 25 February 2020. So, In response to this pandemic; Algeria was among the first countries to impose partial quarantine as the most convenient solution via social and physical distancing by the temporary closure of schools and universities.

To avoid the spread of Covid-19 pandemic the Algerian government policy suspended classrooms without stopping the education process and switch from face-to-face to distance education to allow the completion of the programme and ensure continuing education to students as well. The issue with school and universities closure policies that require students to continue their studies is that not every country has adequate structures and effective systems to ensure that students would continue learning as they should.

This study aims at scrutinizing the pros and cons of exploiting modern technologies in higher education in Algeria and assessing distance education difficulties faced by EFL students and teachers at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret during the confinement period i.e. to find out the obstacles and overcome the barriers and challenges of distance education to help making such type of education more effective.

The present study is divided into three chapters, two theoretical chapters and practical one. The first chapter overviews higher education in Algeria, the LMD system, distance education, its history and evolution and e-learning in Algeria. Besides, autonomous learning and students' motivation is considered in this chapter. The second chapter is mainly concerned with the history and development of EFL in Algeria, implementation and barriers to the successful integration of ICT in the Algerian EFL classroom. The last chapter discusses the main findings of the current study and provides some recommendation to make the distance education more effective.

Our study was conducted at the department of English at the University of Ibn Khaldoun of Tiaret, with 120 students of English and 16 teachers at the same section.

The study aims at answering the following research questions:

The main question: what are the main obstacles that hinder distance education at the Algerian university?

In the same line of thought, sub-related questions can be raised:

General Introduction

- a) What are the main challenges that both university teachers and students in distance education face?
- b) To what extent can the effective use of ICT tools by both students and teachers be crucial in distance education?
- c) How far can the Section of English at Ibn Khaldoun University meet the requirements of teaching and learning of the 21st century?

On the basis of the aforesaid research questions, some hypotheses are suggested:

It is postulated that the majority of teachers and many of their learners have not received training in how to use the tools and strategies applied in distance education due to poor ICT infrastructure, low level of digital literacy, lack of reliable internet access, deficiency in communication and interaction among teachers and their students and lack of interest of students along with lack of some teachers' motivation.

In this study, a number of limitations were encountered mainly in collecting data from just a sample of students (120) and teachers (16) to represent the whole department of English due to the Ministry's sanitary measurements. So, the findings might not be adequately well representative since some students and even teachers refrain from answering our questionnaire and interview.

1.1 Introduction

When the concept of distance education first appeared, there have been great changes in education because of the development of Information and Communication Technologies (hereafter ICTs). This chapter reviews the Higher Education System in Algeria, history and evolution of distance education, and provides an overall situation of distance education in the Algerian higher education. The educational technology and electronic learning are too considered. It also sheds some light on the autonomous, self-directed learning and factors that enhance the learners' motivation in distance educational settings.

1.2. Higher Education in Algeria

After July 5, 1962, when Algeria gained its independence; there was only the university of Algiers and two annexes in Oran and Constantine and some schools concentrated in the capital, all this hardly reaching 3000 students. "In 1962, only about a third of Algerian Muslims enrolled in primary school. Only 30% of students at secondary and 10% at university were native Algerians" (Helen, 1994, as cited in Rose, 2015, p. 3). At independence, Algeria gradually began a massive training programme at all levels in order to fill in the void left by the mass departure of the French settlers.

By the Constitution, schooling is free and compulsory for all and with access to higher education for the greatest number. All baccalaureate or equivalent foreign titles are granted access to higher education. The Algerian higher education diplomas have been provided by universities, specialized institutes and national institutes of higher education, which all fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (Djoudi, 2010). Today more than 1500.000 students are enrolled in Algerian universities which is dispersed throughout the national territory in one hundred and seven(107) higher education institutions spread over forty eight (48) Algerian administrative area covering entire national territory.

1.2.1. BMD System in Algeria

The BMD (Bachelor-Master-Doctorate) system was launched in 2004 as a pilot scheme in the Algerian universities to improve the readability of qualifications in the labour market into accordance with international standard. Within BMD system, studies are organized around three basic levels of qualification, each of which corresponds to a certain number of credits (Djoudi, 2018).

Three years of study are required to obtain a BA degree (aka license) in 6 semesters = 180 credits, Master's: an additional 2 years or 120 credits (4 semesters) after completing License (a total of five years of study), and Doctorate (PHD): a total of 3 years (6 semesters) of study.

1.3. Distance Education

Distance education is a form of education in which learners and the facilitators are physically separated during the learning activity around organized and planned learning experience through various two or multi-way mediated media channels that facilitate and support interaction and communication between/among learners, facilitators as well as between learners and educational resources (Sikili, 2008). According to Moore and Kearsley (2012) “distance education is teaching and planned learning in which teaching normally occurs in a different place from learning, requiring communication through technologies as well as special institutional organization.” (p. 2)

The basic idea of distance education is that teachers and students spend all or most of the time teaching and learning in different locations. This separation is what makes distance education a distinct from the traditional face-to-face education .The teaching and learning process in distance education is not random but planned; teachers provides organized set of information and feedback to their students. Because they are in different places, they must rely on some form of communication technologies to communicate with each other and to design courses.

According to Holmberg (1989), this communication process is of two kinds:

1-"One-way traffic in the form of pre-produced course materials sent from the supporting organization and involving students in interaction with texts; this can be described as simulated communication

2-Two-way traffic, i.e. real communication between students and the supporting organization.” (p. 167)

Holmberg (1989) stated a similar definition that:

Distance education is a new concept that covers the learning-teaching activities in the cognitive and/or psycho-motor and affective domains of an individual learner and a supporting organization. It is characterized by non-contagious communication and can be carried out anywhere and at anytime which makes it attractive to adults with professional and social commitments (Holmberg, 1989, p. 168).

Accordingly, three domains of learning; cognitive which means the thinking process, affective: emotions and feelings and psychomotor: physical and tactile are included.

1.3.1. Distance Education: Genesis and a Brief History

The history of distance education is no exception to the history of education in general. Its origin can be traced back to the 1700s and 1800s and reflects an Egalitarian Approach to education (Casey, 2008). “Its history can be classified under three ages at the macro-level and under five generations at the micro-level, these ages and generations were shaped and determined by the dominant communication technologies adopted in distance education.” (Buzkurt, 2019, p. 253)

1.3.1.1. The 1st age: Correspondence Distance Education

The first age of distance education refers to as a correspondence study and individuals who primarily use written and printed texts as well as postal services for sending such documents in the forms of books, newspapers and manuals; it is so called print-based correspondence education (Aoki, 2012). In this stage, students started receiving their education at home or at work (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). Learners were generally adults, who decide to learn from a distance because of their professional or family commitment.

According to Aoki (2012) :

The interaction between teachers and students was usually limited to correspondence, which refers to handwritten texts sent through postal mail. It is difficult to gauge the extent of student in this mode as student evaluation is usually summative and left at the end of the course (Aoki, 2012, p. 184).

1.3.1.2. The 2nd age: Visual-Auditory Distance Education

In addition to print materials, The second age is characterized by the use of multimedia teaching materials including videos, radio programs, television and teleconferencing as instructional media. The materials were designed based on one way communication facilitated by the instructors. In this age, the teaching and learning process was teacher-centred (saykili, 2018), in this pedagogy the interaction between the teacher and students or amongst students remained minimal (Anderson & Simpson, 2012). Bozkurt (2019) said that at this age “Learners started to gain independence and autonomy through the benefits provided by the new communication technologies.” (p. 256)

1.3.1.3. The 3rd age: Computer-based Distance Education

This age also marked the birth of the digital-knowledge age and network society. The scope of the concept of “distance” was altered as distance in which time and space became less important. “The prominence of teacher-centred education diminished and the education became more learner-centred” (Bozkurt, 2019 p. 258). With the benefits and increase capacity provided by information and communication technologies, interaction between the teacher and learners and amongst learners has become the central focus for distance education. When contrasted to newer, higher quality computer-based multimedia; previous generation multimedia had become obsolete and synchronous and asynchronous instruction had grown to be as efficient as face to face instruction, new learning paradigm, such as e-learning, mobile learning, and ubiquitous learning emerged. Learning rather than teaching has gained the main focus and the idea of Lifelong learning has been emphasized (as cited in Buzkurt, 2019).

Because of the spread of a fatal virus known as Covid-19 in Algeria in 20 February 2020, Algeria like all countries of the world closed its schools, universities and institutes and imposed partial quarantine on March, 2020 as the most convenient solution to impose social distancing and to control the spread of corona virus infection. A revolutionary change has taken place in various sectors as a result of rapid spread of Corona Virus proliferation.

Education as an important sector in Algeria has totally changed with the notable rise of e-learning whereby the instructional process is undertaken remotely and on digital platform. Universities across Algeria in their turn including the University of Ibn Khaldoun of Tiaret have created an e-learning Moodle Platform to publish courses for all degrees of study and to link the teacher and the students in a virtual interactive way that allows the continuation of lectures and the completion of the programme. Nonetheless, shifting from face-to-face to distance education has many unavoidable challenges.

1.4. The Transactional Distance Theory

Distance education is "the universe of teacher-learner relationships that exist when learners and instructors are separated by space and/or by time" (Moore, 1997, p22). The Transactional Distance is a theory developed by Meachel, G Moore in the 1970s, it has a direct impact on e-learning and it explains and qualifies the relationship between the instructor and student in e-learning settings. “It is conceptually significant, since it claims that the essential distance in distance education is transactional rather than spatial or temporal.” (Gorsky & Gaspi, 2005, introduction section, para. 3). In view of that, it is not just the geographical distance between the

student and the teacher that impacts on learning achievements but more importantly is a cognitive distance (Moore, 1997). Moore (1997) proposed in his Theory of Transactional distance that in distance learning circumstances the separation between the teacher and students can “lead to communication gaps, a psychological space of potential misunderstandings between the behaviours of instructors and those of the learners” (Moore, 1997, p. 23).

Moore (1997) defined the variable "transactional distance" as "a psychological and communications space to be crossed, a space of potential misunderstanding between the inputs of instructor and those of the learner"(p. 23). This theory has identified three major components which are the dimension of the structure of the instructional programmes (structure), the interaction between learners and teachers (dialogue), and the nature and degree of self-directedness of the learner (autonomy).

1.4.1. Instructional Dialogue

The term dialogue was defined as:

It is used to describe an interaction or series of interactions having positive qualities that other interactions might not have; a dialogue is purposeful, constructive and valued by each party. Each party in a dialogue is a respectful and active listener; each is a contributor, and builds on the contributions of the other party or parties. There can be negative or neutral interactions; the term 'dialogue' is reserved for positive interactions, with value placed on the synergistic nature of the relationship of the parties involved. The direction of the dialogue in an educational relationship is towards the improved understanding of the student (Moore, 1997, p. 24).

The interactions can occur between the teacher and learner, amongst learners and the interaction with the content in distance learning community. Accordingly “the crucial factor in this regard is not the frequency of dialogue but its quality and effectiveness in enabling the resolution of learning challenges the distance learner may face.” (Moore, 1997, p. 24).

1.4.2. Structure of the Instructional Programme

The second factor is the structure of what is designed to be learned, which is the degree of rigidity or flexibility the course and to what extent the instructional programme is structured and planned so that it can be delivered through many forms of communication media, “Structure expresses the rigidity or flexibility of the programme's educational objectives, teaching strategies, and evaluation methods. It describes the extent to which an education programme can accommodate or be responsive to each learner's individual needs.” (Moore, 1997 p. 26).

1.4.3. Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy depends on the previous two factors, it refers to learner's perceptions of both independence and interdependence as they engage in the course (Falloon, 2011). "Learner autonomy is the extent to which in the teaching/learning relationship it is the learner rather than the teacher who determines the goals, the learning experiences, and the evaluation decisions of the learning programme."(Moore, 1997, P. 31). Learner autonomy is intimately tied in with a learner's sense of self-direction and the extent to which in the learning and teaching relationship it is the learner who determine the goals and take decisions.

1.5. Technology for Education and E-learning

The interrelationship between technology and education has generated a new set of digital technologies namely "Ed-Tech" which, in turn, took a part in the rise of technology-related type of learning that is e-learning.

1.5.1. Educational Technology

Educational technology refers to a variety of materials that are used to enhance learning and make teaching more interesting. It makes learning easier by utilizing the right technology procedures and resources. According to the International Technology Association (ITEA) educational technology is "the use of technological developments, such as computers, audio-visual equipment, and mass media, as tools to enhance and optimize the teaching and learning environment in all school subjects, including technology education " (ITEA, 2003, as cited in Januszewski & Molenda, 2013,p. 233).

Another definition of educational technology" a study and ethical practice of facilitating learning and improving performance by creating, using, and managing appropriate technological processes and resources " (Januszewski & Molenda, 2013,p. 15).

Furthermore, according to Keegan (1993) there are some typical qualities of educational technology :

Human learning is an objective: educational technology is fundamentally preoccupied with learning-related problems and uses a systematic and a systemic approach to solve them.

Systematic approach (pedagogical design): a systematic approach is a logical and gradual sequence of operations or activities. It is exemplified in the organizational and operational methods of educational technology.

Systems method: the relationship between the systems approach, as a science and a source of general systems theory, and educational technology has been well established (Bertrand, 1990). It supplies a global conceptual framework for educational technology which is both systematic in its procedures and systemic in its approach to problem-solving.

Use of media: educational technology's basic focus is on educational resources and the use of media in education (p. 97).

1.5.1.1. The Evolution of Technology in Distance Education

A wide range of technology terms manifest themselves in the perspective of distance education like Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) , Information technology (IT), Interactive and Informative Technologies (IIT), Advanced Learning Technologies(ALT) and Mobile Learning (m-learning). All these terms are umbrella forms that covers the process of the ongoing integration of technology in distance education.

In the 1970s, technologies such as audio-conferencing made teacher-student and student-student interaction possible followed by another revolutionary technology ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) and based video conferencing in the 1980s which enabled the participants to engage in visual and verbal communication.

Moreover, the advent of the interaction videodiscs and compact discs have allowed learners to learn with more interactive multimedia via the use of the computer and the video features in the 1980s.

In the late 1990s with the advent of the internet and the web 2.0 technologies, as a result it becomes possible for individual learners and learning communities to interact and collaborate in both synchronous and asynchronous modes. Within the same period of time the use of mobile phones for learning in distance education became increasingly more common among distance educators despite the limited functions of these instruments with small screens at the time.

Nowadays, with the new trends in education technology for distance education such as web2.0 applications and m-learning, students who enrolled in distance education courses become able to use tools such as Skype, zoom to interact with their fellow students simply by gogging for multimedia content.

Moreover, the services provided by international universities, for instance, the OERs Open Educational Resources with its synchronous and asynchronous features, represent an excellent opportunity for students who are learning remotely. Video materials are more than ever easy, quick and cheap to produce with the use of digital cameras or Smartphone, tablets cameras and upload them by learners, teachers, and even universities.

Furthermore, students can communicate regularly with one another and with their teachers via social media sites such as Facebook, Linked In, and Twitter. In this context, Kukulska Hulme (2012) affirmed that

Advancements in technology such as social media, online social networking, and mobile technologies. These are popular everyday tools and services that are also potential or de facto resources for education. They enable not only online learning but also offline – through digital resources such as e-books downloaded to mobile devices and accessed at the learner’s convenience. Their widespread adoption means that mobile devices, and the social networks and resources they give access to, are a significant part of the grain of daily life (introduction section, para.2).

According to the World Bank (2012), nearly three-quarters of the global population had access to a mobile phone approximately 5 billion mobile subscriptions are in developing countries out of 6 billion worldwide (para.1). As a result, billions of mobile applications (apps) have been downloaded to extend the capabilities of smart phones, tablets, and other mobile devices allowing distance education courses and materials to be delivered anywhere at any time.

In a nutshell, the emergence of technologies like the internet and the world wide web (web) as primary means of presenting educational content along with other educational technology in the form of mobile devices, computers, social media, and networks play a significant role in distance education, because these technologies are being an effective medium for communication and collaboration purposes between students themselves as well as their teachers and institutions across geographical boundaries in the first place. In the second place, with the help of educational technology, teachers can provide students with more personalized learning experiences as well as enhance education instructions, get engaged in professional development and track their students’ progress in distance education settings.

1.5.2. E-learning

Electronic learning (e-learning) refers to the use of ICTs in the process of teaching and learning to enable the access to online educational resources. Abbad et al (2009) defined e-learning to mean in its broadest sense “the learning that is electronically enable, in slightly narrower sense it is learning that is enabled by the application of digital technologies”(introduction section, para. 1). It becomes any learning activity that is Web-based or Internet-enabled, “provides institutions and their learners with the flexibility of delivering or receiving learning materials from any location and at any time” (ALadwan & Smedly, 2012, p.122). One of the most significant challenges in the deployment of e-learning in higher education is the availability of appropriate infrastructure for ICT development.

1.5.2.1. Types of E-learning

Falsh (2004) proposed four types of e-learning classifications: “e-learning without presence and without communication; e-learning without presence but with communication; e-learning combined with occasional presence and e-learning used as a tool in classroom teaching” (as cited in Nagashi & Wilcox, 2005, p. 3). Nagashi and Wilcox (2005) expended the classifications to six in order to make a distinction between the physical presence and virtual presence:

- 1- E-learning with physical presence and without E-communication: traditional face to face classroom setting (it considered as e-learning because of the e-learning tools used in the classroom).
- 2- E-learning without presence and without E-communication: this type of e-learning is self-learning; learners receive the content media and learn on their own.
- 3- E-learning without presence and with e-communication(asynchronous): the instructor and learners do not meet during the content delivery and there is a tie delay between content delivery and access.
- 4- E-learning with virtual presence and with e-communication (synchronous):it is a “real time” learning and teaching. The instructor and the learner do not meet physically but always meet virtually during content delivery.
- 5- E-leaning with occasional presence and with e-communication (blended/hybrid-asynchronous): in this type the content is delivered through occasional physical meetings.

- 6- E-learning with presence and with e-communication (blended/hybrid-synchronous): in this format the presence at all times and e-communication is used extensively.(pp. 3-5)

1.6 Information and Communication Technology

Information and Communication Technology is defined as " diverse of Technological tools and resources used to communicate and to create, disseminate, store and manage information. " (Blurton, 1999). Another definition is of (Anderson , 2010):

A plural term which is defined as the use of all the technologies that facilitate communication. ICTs are basically information handling tools and a varied set of goods, applications and services that are used to produce, store, process, record, distribute and exchange information (p. 13)

Accordingly, ICT is an umbrella term encompassing all communication devices, communication networks, applications, and systems, including radios, televisions, cellular phones, and various software and hardware used by networks and satellite systems, as well as various services and applications.

1.6.1. Information and Communication Technology in Distance Education

Due to the separation in time and space between learners and their instructors, distance education's main concern is the form of educational delivery, In this regard; communication technology is seen to play a significant supportive role in enabling this delivery. Thus communication technology serves as a total delivery system and not just a technology

... planned learning that normally occurs in a different place from teaching and as a result requires special techniques of course design, special instructional techniques, special methods of communication by electronic and other technology, as well as special organizational and administrative arrangements (Moore & Kearsley, 1996, p.2 as cited in UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education ,2002,p. 11).

It is worthy of note that the interactive, electronic, and computer-based ICTs were used by the third generation of distance education, in which the ICTs provide two-way modes of communications that are either synchronous as in videoconferencing and audio conferencing or asynchronous as in e-mails or computer-based discussion forums.

Based on the previous pieces of literature, it is concluded that the most significant contribution of ICTs in distance education is the extending of the prospective to instruct at a distance thanks to ICT resources such as e-mail, instant messaging, online social networking, and wireless networks that also offer opportunities in educational collaboration and social networking which are vital for the building of social capital in distance education.

Nowadays, a whole range of ICT tools are used to reach a vast numbers of remote students and link them with instructors, experts, resources, and peers all over the world .these tools fall into two categories synchronous and asynchronous ICTs .

Synchronous ICT denotes the real time communication and the direct exchange between instructors and their learners and include chats that is text-based and broadcasting technologies such as:

a) Teleconferencing: is an interactive electronic communication technology that connects people located at various places, it is a very practical ICT tool in distance education , especially in enhancing direct instructions , providing support for learners and reducing their isolation (Mariki,2013,para.18).

Based on the level of sophistication of technology as well as the nature and extent of interactivity, four types of teleconferencing manifest themselves : audio conferencing; audio-graphic conferencing, video conferencing; and Web-based conferencing.

b) Video Conferencing : sometimes referred to as a video teleconference or VTC, is a means of communication where the sound (audio) is accompanied by a live picture (video). A video conference can be relayed over the Internet or it can utilise ISDN telephone lines, satellite links or wireless networks, even cell phones. (Andberg, 2008, p. 3).

c) Audio Conferencing and Audio-graphic Conferencing: are means of synchronous communication that permit students and their teachers to hear and talk to each other utilizing headsets and microphones , yet the audio-graphic conferencing is characterised by providing a traditional on-screen whiteboard that is suitable for brainstorming exercises and activities along with a text-chat box providing limited space for additional written input can be opened to supplement the voice conferencing. (Hampel & Hauck, 2004, para.18).

d) Web-based Conferencing: is a communication tool that allows students and teachers to stay actively engaged virtually by the exchange of written messages among a group of

participants in a computer-mediated environment which is very effective for delivering the course content and creating an ongoing communication between students and their instructors and also in providing other types of instructional support (Knapczyk et al, 2005, para.2).

Asynchronous ICT Tools encompass means of software application that allow learners to work at their own pace at their own places and according to their preferred times like **discussion boards/ forums** where students can post their messages at different times as their circumstances require.

1.6.2. Massive Open Online Courses

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have become a popular trend in Higher Education in recent years, the term MOOCs refers to open access, global, free video-based instructional content, videos, problem sets and forums distributed via an online platform to a large number of people who want to take a course or learn something new to be educated (Baturay, 2015, p. 1). MOOC is a key element which can foster knowledge and raise the quality of education.

Schulze (2014) said that “the main reasons behind creating MOOCs are that many students around are looking for continuity in learning after they end classes, to better comprehend a topic or concept in a given subject matter, and to do well in activities” (as cited in Ghemmour & Sarnou, 2016, p. 248). MOOCs can be a powerful tool for universities to assure quality education, it offer a variety of subjects and allow learners develop different skills.

1.6.2.1. Characteristics of Massive Open Online Courses

According to Baturay (2015), there are three fundamental characteristics for MOOCs, open, participatory and distributed.

- 1) **Open:** Participation in MOOC is completely free and open to anybody with an internet connection. One might take as many courses as s/he want and all the content is open to course takers, the work that is generated through the course both by facilitators and learners is shared and available.
- 2) **Participatory:** Participation in a MOOC enhances learning by allowing students to create and share their own contributions and to interact with the contributions of others but the participation is entirely voluntary.

- 3) Distributed:** Because MOOCs are built on a Connectivist Approach, any knowledge should be distributed across a Network of participants most of the course activity takes place in social learning environment where participants interact with the material (and each others' interpretations of it). The course readings and other learning materials available act as starting points for discussion and further thinking (p. 428).

1.7. Adult Learning and Autonomy in Distance Education

Before exploring the insights about autonomy and distance education, it is important to shed light on the concept of autonomy in education in general .

1.7.1. Learners' Autonomy

To embark on defining 'learner autonomy' many researchers agreed that the concept of 'autonomy' first appeared in the field of education via the council of Europe's Modern Languages Project which was instituted in 1971.

Holec (1981) defined learner autonomy as" the ability to take charge of one's own learning "which entails 'determining the objectives', defining the contents and progressions, 'selecting methods and techniques, 'monitoring the procedure of acquisition', and 'evaluating what has been acquired "(p.3).

Furthermore he stated "to say of a learner that he is autonomous is to say that he is capable of taking charge of his own learning and nothing more ...to take charge of one's learning is to bear responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning." (p3)

Based on the previous definitions, autonomous learners are those who come to realize they have to take charge of, responsibility for, and control over their own learning which can be accomplished by fulfilling the roles mentioned by Holec which are viewed as general aspects of the learning process, which has been confirmed by (Dicknison, 1987) "the learner is responsible for the decisions concerned with his or her learning, and the implementation of these decisions." (p. 81).

Furthermore, multifarious definitions were suggested by various researchers in the same area of the study. Little (1991) stated "autonomy is a capacity - for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, and independent action. It entails that the learner will develop a

particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning. The capacity for autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to wider contexts"(pp. 3-4)

Little's definition of autonomy actively demonstrates that autonomy is a cognitive and self-management process of learning which adds a psychological aspect to the overall definition of autonomy.

1.7.2. Promoting Autonomy in Distance Education

Due to the physical separation between teacher and learner and the non-simultaneity that characterize distance education, namely flexibility in time and space; distant students are required to maintain discipline, self-control, and self-direction that is to say autonomy is a crucial factor in distance education.

According to Moore (1994), who is considered one of the pioneers that deal with distance education, defined learner autonomy within the context of distance education "the potential of distant learners to participate in the determination of their learning objectives, the implementation of their programs of study, and the evaluation of their learning "

Moreover, Moore in his early work on distance and autonomy stated that due to the separation of teacher and learner autonomy is of critical importance in distance education mainly because the learner is on his own and is obliged to adopt a certain level of autonomy that might not be comfortable in other circumstances and he specifically emphasized on the psychological separation in his transactional distance theory(Moore, 1977, as cited in White, 1995,para. 9).

Furthermore, full autonomy in a distance education environment requires discipline and responsibility, learners have to make decisions involving planning, organization, and implementation, determine goals and even determine how much to learn. Additionally, in terms of digital literacy Distance learners are expected to know how to use the technological tools during the education process along with the other skills mentioned above. Arcúrio (2008) conceptualizes the meaning of the autonomous student in Distance Learning as follows:

An independent learner in the universe of Distance Learning should know how to use the technological resources that the modality offers, adapting the various individual needs according with flexible hours for the study, personalized service, improvement and new assessment of learning opportunities without staining his/her legal norms, as well as

the great growth of an interpersonal relationship (ARCÚRIO, 2008, p. 2 as cited in de Lourdes, 2015, para. 26).

1.7.3. Teacher's Role towards Autonomous Students

Teachers play a significant role in promoting their learners' autonomy ; in investigating teachers role in autonomous environment researchers suggest the next:

first of all , the teacher is totally responsible for redefining the teacher-learner roles in the teaching-learning process which will make the learners share the responsibility of their learning Ho(1995). Accordingly , he is he is supposed to play the role of a facilitator by taking the initiative and supports the decisions –making processes, a counselor Taking action in response to the needs of individuals And a resource who makes their expertise and knowledge available to learners as needed. (Voller,1997) and manager who creates a supportive learning environment, who is a resource person, who assists students to reach their full potential and who help students to sense institutional requirement and expectations related to the discipline they are studying (Higgs,1988), and more importantly a helper who helps students gain confidence and believe in autonomous learning as well as developing their autonomous ability and to guide students to create feasible plans, help students decide about and practice the learning strategies and Utilize effectively self-directive ability to facilitate autonomous learning (Han, 2014).

In a nutshell, the common aspects shared by the previous researchers in perceptualizing the teachers' role in an autonomous environment are that the teacher has to shift from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness by being less of an instructor and more a facilitator, counsellor, supporter, and encourage their students to make decisions, help them improve their capacity to learn by themselves and assists them to develop and learn by their own learning strategies.

1.7.4. Self-regulated learning

Self-regulated learning is the type of "learning that occurs largely from the influence of students' self-generated thoughts, feeling, strategies, and behaviours, which are oriented toward the attainment of goals " (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998, p8). that to say the process of self-regulated learning involves students activating cognitions, behaviours, and affects all used to attain their target goal of success (Schunk, Meece, & Pintrich, 2014, p. 158).

Furthermore, describing the characteristics of self-directed students, Zimmerman (2001) declared "students are self-regulated to the degree that they are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviourally active participants in their own learning process. These students self-generate thoughts, feelings and actions to attain their learning goals" (p. 5). So according to Zimmerman self-regulated learners must have control over their learning by keeping track of their learning progress and motivate themselves to achieve their learning objectives.

Accordingly, self-regulated learning is an essential feature to determine successful learning experiences especially the ones that provide learners with flexible and independent learning experience such as distance learning. Gardener (1963) said that " the ultimate goal of the education system is to shift to the individual the burden of pursuing his own education " (p. 21). Hence, students in distance learning must enhance their existing self-regulated learning skills.

Based on an educational concept, motivation is a learner's desire to achieve an academic goal or perform a task. According to Gottfried (1990) academic motivation is "enjoyment of school learning characterized by a mastery orientation; curiosity; persistence; task-endogeny; and the learning of challenging, difficult, and novel tasks" (p. 525).

Another definition is of Turner (1995) who takes cognitive behaviours such as monitoring and strategy use into consideration "voluntary uses of high-level self-regulated learning strategies, such as paying attention, connection, planning, and monitoring" (p. 413).

Due to factors such as isolation, frustration, and technology disruptions also lack of relevant support, the cognitive aspects of motivation are crucial to learners in distance education settings in which the learners have to operate autonomously.

1.7.5. Motivational Factors in Distance Education

Based on Keller's (1987) ARCS i.e. (Attention,Relevance,Cenfidence,Satisfaction) model there are four key strategic components for instructors to boost learning motivation in order to increase students' productivity. The four elements are:

- a) **Attention**; where the instructor maintains students' attention and interests throughout the online course or by making the course content so interesting for students to study.
- b) **Relevance** ; students find learning relevant when they are able to build upon their prior skills, knowledge, and their overall learning goals in a way that students' needs, interests, and motives are projected throughout the learning activities presented.

- c) **Confidence;** In which instructors focus on students' performance and assist them in developing positive anticipation that they will be able to achieve a successful learning experience with positive feedback about their progress.
- d) **Satisfaction;** in which the learning is viewed as a rewarding process by providing students with positive reinforcement for their efforts. (Keller, 1987).as cited in (Chaiprasurt & Esichaikul, 2013, para. 6).

1.8. Conclusion

As a conclusion; throughout this chapter, we tried to give an overall presentation of distance education in general and distance education in Algerian higher education. Then, we dealt with educational technologies in distance education and their evolution, with a special emphasis on ICTs and their importance in distance education settings, and moved to factors of significant importance in distance education namely, autonomy, self-regulation and motivation.

In addition to what we have reviewed in this chapter, one would say that distance education is a phenomenon that is attracting and receiving a wide range of interest from many educationists since it is considered as the most convenient solution to maintain instructions especially during the covid-19 pandemic that caused the education institutions to abruptly shift to emergency remote teaching.

Moreover, the emphasis on information and communication technologies in this chapter was due to the latter's contribution to facilitating multimedia approaches that provide faster and more relevant feedback to students. In the subsequent chapter, our emphasis will be on the information and communication technology use in distance higher education in Algeria, from the perspective of English Language Teaching in Algerian universities.

2.1 Introduction

Many countries in the whole world use the English language for communication it is the world's most widely spoken language. So, no doubt it is one of the most dominant languages globally. Nowadays, English is considered as the primary international language of education, technology and globalisation that's why many advanced methods, approaches and techniques that aid in improving the quality of teaching and learning English have appeared in the twentieth century.

The use of ICT tools in the EFL classroom has become indispensable requirements for keeping up with the world's rapid changes. This chapter attempts to provide the historical and development of EFL in Algeria and the advantages and disadvantages of ICT tools in the Algerian EFL context.

2.2. The History and Development of EFL in Algeria

The Algerian curriculum developers incorporated English as another foreign language besides French language to be taught in national educational programme in 1996, however; it was not an easy task, it required intensive efforts from the ministry of education in Algeria, the syllabus designers and teachers of English in order to apply the alternative policy and ensure its success. Cook (2003) stated "in recent years the growth of English has been further accelerated y starting expansion in the quantity and speed of international communication" (Cook, 2003, as cited in Kadi, 2017, p. 38).

2.2.1. English language Teaching in Algeria

When Algeria gained its independence in 1962, it has been trying to develop an effective educational system responds to the needs in all domains. The Algerian educationalists have tried several teaching methods and approaches which the English language teaching is concerned.

At the end of the 1970s, English gained a considerable status in the Algerian context when the government made a decision decided to integrate English as a second foreign language to eight grade students, so English started at this time to gain public support among the students, teachers and even parents. After 1990, a more importance has been given to English since the Algerian government set new policy in the domain of teaching foreign languages especially English language teaching.

According to the educational system (LMD) lunched during the academic year 2004, English becomes an obligatory subject matter for the four years in the middle school and the three years in the secondary school, in the university English is taught as a separated

speciality which requires three years to hold a licence degree and an additional two years (five years) to hold the master degree and the total of eight years (additional 3 years) study to hold the doctorate degree.

2.3. The Promotion of English Language Teaching in Tiaret

The status of English teaching and learning in Tiaret is simply an affiliation to the Algerian educational system implemented throughout the country. Teaching English in Tiaret is compulsory throughout its middle and secondary schools and universities whether students have enrolled for literary or scientific streams, Moreover, the Ibn Khaldoun university includes an English department that aims at training competent English students and prepare them to be well-qualified future teachers.

Furthermore, English language private schools in Tiaret also play a crucial role in promoting English teaching and learning among the citizens especially the youth .who want to learn the language for educational, academic, and sociocultural purposes. This increasing interest in both teaching and learning English among tiaret inhabitants plays a significant role in promoting the English language in tiaret

2.3.1. The Department of Foreign languages at Tiaret University

The department of foreign languages at Ibn Khaldoun University offers three languages Arabic, French and English. This also includes the establishment of constituent sections. It has been transformed from former department of the faculty of Humanistic and Social Sciences into an independent administrative, pedagogical and financial college. The English Department of Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret come into extended on 2012, starting with few numbers of students and Instructors, according to an agreement between university of Mostaganem and Tiaret to become an independent university. (Si yousef & Miman, 2018, p. 49).

2.3.2. Centre d'Enseignement Intensif des Langues at Tiaret

The CEIL (Centre d'Enseignement Intensif des Langues) in English: The Intensive Language Teaching Centre is an institution created by Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in 2009 to provide the teaching of the following languages (English, French, Spanish, and German), for the levels A1, A2, B1 and B2, where the registration is in the beginning of the academic year, each September or October. Candidates take a level test at first to classify each of them to A1, A2, B1 or B2.

2.4. Teaching Approaches and Methods to EFL in Algeria

EFL teaching process in Algeria is very complicated, because making the learners achieve good results is so hard due to many reasons and obstacles which affect the EFL teacher making him responsible to develop his teaching methods and approaches for reaching spectacular learning outcomes as much as possible. Teaching English to non-native learners requires a set of methods and approaches to facilitate the process of teaching. The grammar translation method, the direct method and competency based approach are the main approaches and methods which have been used in ELT.

2.4.1. The Grammar-Translation Method

The Grammar-Translation method was created in Prussia in the mid-nineteenth century, and because it was a product of German scholastic philosophy. It was initially known in America as the Prussian method. For more than a century, it dominated the area of foreign language study. This strategy was adopted earlier in the twentieth century to let pupils read and enjoy foreign language literature to help them growing intellectually.

It is still frequently practiced in many regions of the world and is considered the most common approach (Miliani, 1998, P. 14). Grammar was taught deductively, which means that grammatical rules were first given clearly, then practiced using translations and exercises. Furthermore, reading and writing earned a lot more attention than speaking and listening. The primary objective of learning a foreign language in the grammar translation method was not to talk or communicate in the language, but to read it.

However, as students were expected to reach high standards in translating sentences that were examined in written exams, accuracy in writing was an important component of the GTM. Additionally, the student's native language was used as the medium of teaching, with minimal emphasis on the use of the target language (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 113). After 1962, the GTM was applied in Algeria to teach the English language.

2.4.2. The Direct Method

The direct method was created in the early 1900s. In other words, the Direct Method, it is widely acknowledged, arose as a direct response to the Grammar Translation Method's fundamental flaws. As its name suggests, this innovative method emphasized on language acquisition by direct interaction with the target language in relevant circumstances, as its name indicates.

2.4.3. The Communicative Approach

The communicative approach is a language teaching approach that was popular in the period from 1970s to 1980s. Its main objective was to enable students to be competent in communication and know to contact each other using the target language. This approach was used by the teacher, who relied on elicitation, repetition, and numerous corrections to encourage students to produce the proper form on their own. These findings also indicated that the instructor felt that no method is the best, and that correction depends on the qualities and requirements of his students.

In 1980s, Algeria applied the Communicative Approach in which EFL teacher was viewed as the facilitator of the communication process. He had to make the learners believe that the classroom is not only for grammar learning purpose, but also to speak and share their ideas (Mekkaoui, 2014, p. 6).

2.4.4. The Competency-based Approach

The Competency-based Approach (hereafter CBA) is a very a popular approach appeared in the USA in the 1970s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, P. 141). It depends on the expectation of what can the students do with the learning process. It is based on the social constructivist pedagogy that depends on social communication to result a collaborative knowledge in groups. The teachers use this approach to enhance the social interaction competencies between the students so they can speak, read, write, listen and exchanging ideas in communicative events. This approach develops life skills and evaluates them according to the learner capabilities (Wong, 2008, PP, 179-198). However, this approach also focuses on the growing language learning competencies and abilities by splitting it into three main components: attitude, skills, and knowledge (Bougandoura, 2012, PP. 1-6); while, the teacher's position becomes purely supportive because he maintains a non-authoritarian presence to instill confidence in pupils in their ability to achieve their learning objectives. As a result, their self-reliance will be enhanced by support of their teacher.

In 2002, the Algerian schooling system introduced the Competency-based Approach to reform the previous secondary school textbooks and syllabuses. Teachers educate learners how to transfer ideas and developing their skills and knowledge (Soreda, 2013).

2.5. Technological Methods of Teaching EFL in Distance Educational Settings

In the late 2019, the world witnessed a critical epidemic emergence defined as Corona Virus Covid-19 hit all the countries without exception causing more than millions of cases, most of them died because there was no vaccine for it. Due to this situation, and the fast

spread of the disease, the countries obliged people to stay home and take serious measures to avoid the infection, and that quarantine affected negatively all dimensions of people's lives in different sectors such as economy and education.

Algeria, as any other country, has been hit by the Covid-19 which obliged the government to take serious measures towards that pandemic, especially in the education sector. When it comes to education during the lockdown, the schools and universities were closed .So, Algeria was obliged to discover new teaching/learning means in which feedback among teachers and their learners has to be done at home.

EFL teachers used a several technological methods during the quarantine, whether by exploiting the online platforms created by the universities or via exploiting other technological way.

The following means are the most exploited ones by the Algerian EFL teachers:

A) E-mails (Electronic-Mails): they are used as a means of contact between the teacher and his students to tell them about the courses and exams planning, sending home works and exams results, and also to exchange courses lessons and ideas .In other words, it is used to read, correct, educate, or just explain certain aspects of English reading to their students.

B) Scholar Forums and Chat Rooms: they focus on exchanging ideas and suggestions between the learners and between the teachers and students. They allow several users to log in and engage with each other. This is a fantastic method to get answers to your queries and share your experiences and thoughts. However, the instructor should plan the talks such that all of the students may participate at the same time.

2.6. Big Changes Ahead for Teaching English in Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret

During the COVID-19 pandemic quarantine, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research applied modern pedagogies in all universities, where the teaching/learning processes was transformed into distance using websites and digital platforms.

EFL teachers in the Department of English at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret found themselves struggling in distance education during the pandemic lockdown, and they were really overloaded with designing many teaching activities. Therefore, the teaching/learning

process has been switched from real traditional classroom to a virtual one. As a result, this change depends on a several teaching approaches and ways at the same time i.e. rely on both presence and online simultaneously (aka blended learning). However, adopting this method in higher education becomes appropriate for teachers and students, especially with the resumption of face-to-face studies within the new protocol set up for the academic year 2020-2021 (Bahri, 2021).

Blended learning is the combination of face-to-face instruction and computer-mediated instruction. This method makes students spend less time in the classroom and provides them a better learning environment. In return, blended learning has been a challenge for teachers when it relates to the traditional teaching approaches, because they were responsible to be capable using this new method and obliged them to give clear ideas about the aims of blending (Bouguebs, 2019, pp. 57-68).

One of the blended learning approaches is Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment). “It is an internet-based platform that was created in 2002; it is used by both of teachers and students during the covid-19 quarantine to pursue studies. The platform is designed to be adaptive and flexible. Therefore, developing students’ interactions through synchronous and asynchronous technological implements (Dhawan, 2020, p. 5-22).

Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret has too adopted Moodle since the beginning of 2020 by the website <https://moodle.univ-tiaret.dz/>. About 917 teachers and 23939 students use the portal (Moodle platform website, 2021). Moreover, the educators have uploaded courses, instructions and planning in the platform on the on hand. On the other hand, the learners have joined those courses and activities to create a collaborative work between them and react to their teachers’ instructions.

Another method of blended learning is Google Classroom, a free online educational platform developed by Google where the teacher creates a virtual classroom that can be accessed by a computer or a Smartphone. Students can join the class by options, the first with a private code sent by the teacher to the personal emails of learners, and the second one is through the automatic importing of a specific student list from the university domain. Every class has its folder where the student can submit work to the teacher. The teacher, then, can receive each student’s task and evaluate each student’s work. Now, educational universities

can go digital and avoid the traditional teaching method using Google Classroom offers. Besides, it is possible for any Google user to create a class and start teaching virtually.

Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret provides “A Guide to Google Classroom” for teachers and students, which is an instruction manual. The teacher/student connects to their Gmail account, and they go to all the Google applications. Then, in the top-right corner, there’s a plus sign (+) which has two options; the first one is “Join class” and the second is “Create class”. The “Join class” choice is for students when they choose it, a new section appears, called “Class code, Ask your teacher for the class code, then enter it here”, which means there’s a specific code for each class, while the “Create class” section is for teachers when they click it, a window appears telling them to agree or not to the privacy policy and security if they agree and continue, a new section appears telling them to fill some details about the class (Name, Room, Section... etc), after doing all these instructions, the classroom is in hands of the teacher. Moreover, all the instructions can be found on the “A Guide to Google Classroom” manual through the following link: <http://fsm.univ-tiaret.dz/docs/enseignant/classroom%20enseignants.pdf>.

2.7. ICT in the Algerian EFL context

ICT has become increasingly significant in people's daily lives during the 21st century and rules the globe in all aspects of life. In other words, it has become an important tool in society and all through the world and its effects extends to all parts of life. Furthermore, many people use it at work, in administration, at colleges, in schools, and in various sectors. The use of ICT in the classroom as a tool for foreign language learning and instruction is rapidly becoming more successful and important. It fosters a sense of community among students who learn and practise a new language. However, ICT in learning and teaching appears to have an impact on the sector of education many researchers praised this phenomenon as the shining future, in which learning will be, for better or for worse, through modern technologies as computers, the internet, mobile devices, and any other tool.

Moreover, ICT is used to motivate students to learn, research, and facilitate the learning process. The impact of ICT in this sector, particularly at universities provides an opportunity to enhance knowledge exchange and communication between learners and educators. Additionally, ICT plays a significant role in the English Language Learning and Teaching process, as it offers new opportunities and provides technologies for EFL teachers and students to present and create cooperative work at university. In addition, ICT improves students' learning motivation and educational behaviour in the EFL classroom (Benhammadi,

2015, p. 13). Moreover, ICT contributes to improving the EFL teaching process and student motivation in Algeria due to the parts of ICT that help teachers and students to enhance their abilities in educating or in learning and also boosting their performance. EFL Teachers should include different technological teaching methods in the classroom because students feel comfortable and enjoy using those developed instruments; they're pleased about the prospect of using the Internet and data-show or any other tool of ICT.

The following instruments are the most used ones in learning and teaching EFL in classrooms, The first tool is the projected visual-aids which let teachers present their lessons to make them easier for students, and all that by using the teacher's personal computer and slides projectors (Data-Show). The second instrument is personal communication; it is a digital communication tool that allows teachers and student to contact with each other through web platforms and portals; like the social networks as Facebook, Instagram and Skype. It offers students to create their own space of communication to exchange information and also provides them opportunities to enhance their learning level. Furthermore, digital entertainment materials are the third tool, they're Cellphones, Smartphone, and Tablets, they allow teachers and students to download, and play media files (Images, Videos, or Audio). Moreover, the last tool is personal the laptop which is described as a personal computer that runs with a battery, it means without the need for power sources with a wireless network and a lot of modern features (Belhoudjar, 2018, p. 6).

2.7.1. Implementing ICT in the Algerian Higher Education

Like any other country, Algeria has witnessed many transformations in all fields especially the higher education sector since the independence till this moment in order to improve its quality of education. However, ICT is one of the most urgent external factors that improve higher education organizations and scientific research. As a result, the ICT is used by different interactions of the research sector as centred administration, universities, laboratories, and research centres). Furthermore, Algeria adopted the ICT due to many reasons. The first one is the need of upgrading the mechanism of the educational sector by providing digital media and software of management because it's a necessary step to manage websites of higher education and scientific research, personnel, compensation, and stock management, and secretariat services. In addition, ICT is a fundamental pillar of research activities; the latter depends on the upgrade of informatics, connection networks, and radio communication. The second reason is the need for a research-development field that focuses

on solving the problems of the active sector, and any other research activity to enhance the national competency, and this was the reason to create the IAS (Internet of Algerian Society) by the Research Centre for Scientific and Technical Information (RCESTI) in 1998 to realize only one principal aim which is the promotion of Internet in the Algerian society (Benhamadi, 2002, PP. 3-4).

According to the Priority and Planning report in 2007, The Higher Education and Scientific Research Ministry indicated the following couple of ICT strategies; the first is adjusting the informatics aspects of the higher education sector; while, the second strategy is creating a distance education system as a co-cooperation for learning in the classroom.

However, as distance education was adopted by the ministry higher education, the latter started providing all the institutions with distance education tools in 2003 at a total cost of 716152000DZD (The Higher Education and Scientific Research Ministry website, 2021), and also the creation of the electronic library which depends on the modern techniques in transforming data from papers to electronic forms to realize more competency in the information storage to provide it to the learners. Also, the library offers research resource on CDs or in the Internet. Moreover, all the national universities used the videoconference through a specific network to attract a large number of teachers and to improve the education level, although this network allows a non-live broadcast of courses, it's used in a synchronous manner requires the presence of the teacher and the student in the same time.

This system can handle 18 courses simultaneously through specific techniques of the Research Centre for Scientific and Technical Information (RCESTI). Furthermore, the videoconference was upgraded during the academic season 2009-2010, and also the Preparatory Schools were provided by virtual laboratories and some classrooms which are linked by videoconference network. (The National Project of Distance Education, n.d).

2.7.2. Exploiting ICT in Distance Higher Education in Algeria

Covid-19 has affected the higher education system in Algeria and has in most other nations around the world. In light of the Corona virus outbreak, the Ministry of Higher Education committed to online education in response to the Algerian President's order. The Ministry of Higher Education adopted an educational plan for Algerian universities that includes details of carrying on online courses. However, The Algerian Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research has ordered university administrators to set the ground to

ensure that students taking remote courses can continue for at least a month. the Minister selected the 15th of March 2020 as the start date for putting the plan into action, emphasizing the necessity of following the memo's instructions. In a letter to university directors, he also highlighted the importance of adopting all required technology methods to enable distance contact between teachers and students (Ministry of Higher Education, 2020).

In higher education, information and communication technology is defined as anything that is applied in the field of education and learning from information and communication technologies with the aim of storing, processing, retrieving, and transferring information from one area to another. This organization is dedicated to enhancing and refining the educational process by the use of advanced technology such as computers and software, and also internet technologies such as e-books and databases, Video conferencing, virtual classrooms, e-learning, digital libraries, interactive television (Deif Allah, 2016-2017, p. 86).

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research set three-year strategic goals around 10 years ago (2007-2008-2009). "Establish a system of distance education to enable education that needs presence," was one of the objectives. To be more specific, distance education here refers to the use of various information and communication technologies, ranging from computers to information networks, to reduce distances and extend the time to manage the educational process at institutions without giving up on the presence training. The breakthrough was obvious and based on studies, Moreover, it is important to limit the dangers of significant changes when the ministry has chosen to blend the old system with the modern system (E-learning), which is known as integrated education as a transitional stage. (Ministry of Higher Education, 2021).

In addition, many universities in Algeria are developing distance education schemes and provide free courseware content through various sources like print media, television, and audio. visual contents, and more the most noticeable exploits of ICT in Algeria can be divided into two different abstract elements first getting information which can be done through the internet the likes of educational websites social media digital and e-books, ---etc which secrets acts of taking part in courses online additionally on television, TV channels and other audiovisual shows, the second element is conversing in the virtual world or creating network communities which share and discuss common topics or subjects This involves the development of virtual communities of practice and knowledge-building communities among

teacher educators and preservice and in-service teachers. this can be done through several SNS applications, the likes of Skype and Zoom converses Facebook or other social applications and gatherings (Ghounane, 2020, pp. 21-41).

2.7.3. Algerian EFL Teachers' Perceptions of ICT use in Distance Higher Education

ICT plays an important role in EFL learning and teaching in distance higher education. However, the need of EFL teachers' perception of implementation of ICT is very important. For this reason, (Arabeche) attempted a research to know their perceptions. The teachers were surveyed online about E-Learning during the quarantine; the E-Learning methods mentioned in the survey were online courses, online classrooms, Moodle platform, The role of ICT in enhancing the EFL teaching, Distance education and finally the ZOOM app. The results showed that there is a relation between MESRZ instructions and online courses during the quarantine which means continue of education depend on following preventive actions of Ministry of Higher Education. Also, the EFL teachers shared courses through different platforms, they use Moodle which is the most recommended one. In addition, there's no relation between MESRS instructions and ZOOM, that means that the EFL teacher is free using that app in without an order from the Ministry of Higher Education,

The Final consequence revealed that most university EFL teachers had never taught online courses before the pandemic, according to the research, and E-learning at this moment is their first experience of it. As a result, the Ministry of Higher Education has made different E-learning platforms available. Those who have implemented online courses and directed work have also expressed their dissatisfaction with the destructive and unstable dynamics of the process. Internet, in this view, some EFL teachers have argued that E-learning is practical; nevertheless, accessibility creates significant difficulty for students, such as the arrangement of computers, the internet, cameras, printers, scanners, and so on, to be able to access it. This represents a significant challenge for Algerian distance higher education. As a result, the effectiveness of online education is dependent not only on willpower but also on other external variables. (Arabeche, 2021).Christine and colleagues (2020) in the United States confirmed these findings, stating that institutions might collaborate with equipment providers and state organizations to complete the online learning process.

The Corona virus outbreak has exposed the actual reality of Algeria's higher education and scientific research sectors. The survey showed that teaching was not prepared for the use

of distance education the lockdown, and as a result, many obstacles emerge in the higher education environment, such as a lack of quality and quantity of technological and material resources, teacher training, digital educational content, applications, and software.

2.7.4. EFL Students' Perceptions of ICT use in Distance Higher Education

Like the case of teachers, students also have perceptions of ICT use in distance higher education. Thus, a study has been attempted by Benadla (2021) who focused purposefully concentrated on the examination of students' perceptions of online learning, their capacity to digest and absorb knowledge, and the availability and use of E-learning platforms. The researcher created an online survey with an intricate questionnaire to collect information and opinions from students who were affected by the lockdown in the second semester. The responses are from two separate master's degree programs in Literature and Civilization (MA) and didactics. Due to the unusual schooling, the Algerian government made hasty choices to close schools by the middle of March 2019 in order to prevent rapid virus spread among pupils. The poll was distributed to the students via private e-mails and other social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter. The information was gathered from 157 Master's students in the English Language Department. However, the questions were meant to collect overall feedback from the learners, as well as their motivations and interest in distance higher learning in general, as well as the Moodle platform. Moreover, the researcher has included many technical obstacles when using Moodle platform.

So, the first question is how students respond to those obstacles. The second question was about the students' opinion towards the use of online learning and Moodle platform, and the troubles in using the online presentations. Furthermore, the results revealed that students have complained about disruptions in Internet connectivity or WIFI issues due to a lack of technological ability to offer ideal online learning circumstances. However, 71.33% of respondents said they had regular or very frequent technical issues with the university's platforms, not to mention some professors' nervousness about educating students via digital platforms, The major concern, according to 30% of students, is the professors' lack of adaptability to the online environment (Benadla, 2021, p. 60).

Concluding with the general results of the students' responses to the questions surveyed in the questionnaire, the majority of people believe that online learning has no benefit in terms of absorbing and processing knowledge. Studying and staying focused online is a little more difficult. Furthermore, teaching online is always difficult. As a result, students

get easily distracted and lose attention since teachers do not apply effective techniques to keep their students engaged because they are unfamiliar with this sort of learning. Furthermore, the current study found that in the online environment, the process of learning and absorbing information is lacking, which might lead to inferior learning results. Technical documents were frequently mentioned by respondents as a source of frustration. As a consequence, the discovery validates the causes for students' reluctance and lack of motivation. Increased Internet access is also attributed to a lack of infrastructure, particularly telephone lines. What aggravated the situation was the professors' inability to adopt effective teaching approaches, particularly when creating demanding courses (Benadla, 2021, p. 64).

2.7.5. Advantages and Disadvantages of ICT Tools in EFL Classroom

The aim of integrating ICT is to improve and raise the quality, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness of educational delivery while also taking use of the benefits of connecting learning communities to better prepare people to confront global competitive problems (Bruniges, 2003, p. 6).

Many teachers already use computers to animate their lessons and motivate their students to comply with 21st-century educational system. However, the ICT is a double-edged sword because it affects the teaching approaches whether positively or negatively. Despite the help of ICT in enhancing the English teaching methods which mentioned previously, it has bad consequences either. In other words, advantages and disadvantages of the ICT on EFL teaching which are as follow.

2.7.5.1. Advantages of ICT

On the internet, ICT provides access to real materials. EFL teachers and students no longer have to rely on printed books in libraries to meet their educational needs. Authentic resources in practically any subject and in a variety of media may now be accessed from anywhere at any time of day and by a limitless number of people thanks to the Internet and the World Wide Web. Furthermore, ICT use is flexible, and each EFL student can choose the location and time that is most convenient for him or her, and lectures become more engaging, allowing students to concentrate on one part of the lesson, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar (Bushati et al, 2012, pp. 4-8).

Moreover, unlike teaching with textbooks, when teachers present the lesson without applying any form of materials to help them explain the assignments to their students, ICT has allowed teachers to use new materials for each lesson. Additionally, computers provide

immediate feedback to the EFL students' responses through error correction. It identifies and corrects the error. Also, unlike books, which are produced in a consistent manner, teachers can modify computer programs to their students' requirements and levels of understanding (Korkut, 2007, p. 2).

When technology is used appropriately and wisely in the classroom, it improves student learning. Students learn more effectively when teachers know how to use various tools and the most appropriate digital technologies for the lesson. There are numerous advantages to using digital tools to support the teacher's function. For teachers, technology makes the teaching process easier. Furthermore, it enables them to communicate information more understandably to students.

It also draws students' attention and encourages them to focus on the subject. Students' listening skills are constantly improved through the usage of recorders and films. Teachers focus on expanding their students' vocabulary when teaching the English language. Moreover, Students' participation in class is increased with the use of digital tools. It helps instructors to be more imaginative when planning activities for them. The exercise might take the shape of a spoken activity in which teachers encourage their students to discuss the film's content or a written activity in which they write down what they learned from the video. (Houari, 2019).

2.7.5.2. Disadvantages of ICT

It's essential to know that ICT has disadvantages either, despite its advantages in the EFL teaching process due to several factors. However, one of those drawbacks is cheating in exams, where the students use the Internet to search the solutions of exams while the teacher cannot see if they are using their Smartphone or not, in addition, cheating a long time ago was not that much due to the lack of ICT tools which use the Internet. Furthermore, another negative impact is plagiarism, it's one of the main academic drawbacks, it is the case when the student uses another person's ideas or work and pretends that they're his, and that's used by many university students when they write their dissertation or research papers without mentioning the real author, and all that due to the Internet which allows them to find those dissertations of others (Roger, 2007, p. 22).

According to Bransford, et al (2000), technology may be a valuable tool for improving the teaching-learning process provided both teachers and students use it appropriately. Students do not always have control over how much time they spend on technology. Instead of creating a presentation, they waste time on irrelevant things like picking fonts and colours.

Furthermore, incorporating technology into EFL classrooms is detrimental to teachers. The time and effort educators spend searching for appropriate information for each topic is the most difficult task they encounter. It takes time to look for innovative methods to integrate technology in the EFL classroom (Bransford et al., 2000, p. 22).

Another issue that students may confront is access to unsupportive material; in other words, the learner may have access to inaccurate information on the internet that has not been scientifically validated, and accessing this information can lead to confusion. In addition, one more disadvantage of using ICT in classrooms is the lack of assessment and feedback for students. Teachers, for example, find it difficult to maintain control over examinations since pupils may readily cheat (Bushati, 2012, pp. 4-8).

2.7.6. The Impact of ICT on the Students' Achievements

Information and communication technology (ICT) methods are currently employed in educational settings across the world. Depending on how teachers use technology in the classroom, this technology may alter and effect student success in either a favourable or bad way. However, ICTs are generally assumed to have a significant impact on educational methods, educational settings, and community services. Legislators and project managers must consider input elements that may be combined to examine the true impact of implementing ICT in education. In light of national plans and initiatives involving changes in curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation, and teacher training, the integration of computers is believed to enhance students' learning and teachers' effectiveness (Kozma, 2005, pp. 116-156).

According to Amin (2013) study, PowerPoint presentation software, for example, maybe an excellent choice for students while completing such assignments or lectures, and ICT helps to improve students' and teachers' performance in the classroom. Students place a high value on ICT as a performance-enhancing tool. They also have a good attitude toward ICT as a teaching and learning aid, as well as its influence on students' academic performance and learning and communication.

Furthermore, they also have a good attitude toward ICT as a learning tool, as well as its influence on students' academic achievement and improved learning and communication. Moreover, ICT has a substantial beneficial link with student achievement. This relationship between students and computers is becoming increasingly important, as they increasingly use

computers at home for studying and research, as well as in the classroom to present and perform better. Furthermore, ICT improves students' engagement, self-confidence, authority, and responsibility to present courses more effectively and collaborate, particularly through computer and internet technologies that enable new ways to teach and learn as well as do what they have done before in a more effective way.

2.8. Conclusion

To sum up, it is clear that (ICT) provides something new to learning and teaching due to the modern and developed methods used by teachers, especially during the Covid-19 quarantine. In this chapter, we mentioned all the English teaching approaches in Algeria with a particular reference to the evolution of English language in Tiaret. We concluded that both teachers and students should use ICT only for positive purposes so as to achieve high quality of education. In the next chapter we will deal with the practical part of our research, the methodology and the tools used for gathering data. However, we will analyse the findings and provide some recommendation.

3.1 Introduction

The third chapter is expected to collect data about the distance education, the difficulties and obstacles faced by EFL students and teachers at Ibn Khaldoun University in the period of corona virus confinement. It is meant also to check the pros and cons of exploiting modern technologies in Higher Education in Algeria.

In this chapter, the data collected from the students' questionnaires and the teachers' interviews will be analyzed to answer the research questions and confirm or disconfirm the hypotheses and give some recommendations for effective implementation of such mode of education.

3.2. Methodology, Tools and Sampling

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this research. We used a structured questionnaire within the quantitative method for collecting numerical data. It contains three sections with twenty questions (both open ended and close ended questions were used). The qualitative method consists of a semi-structured interview conducted with sixteen teachers to assess distance education's difficulties and obstacles faced by EFL teachers and students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret during the Covid-19 pandemic and mainly to provide some solutions to overcome the barriers of distance education to help making such mode of teaching more effective.

3.2.1. The Target Population

The target population of this research consists of a random mixed-gender of one hundred and twenty (120) students of English (Licence and Master) alongside sixteen teachers who were randomly chosen from the Section of English Language at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret.

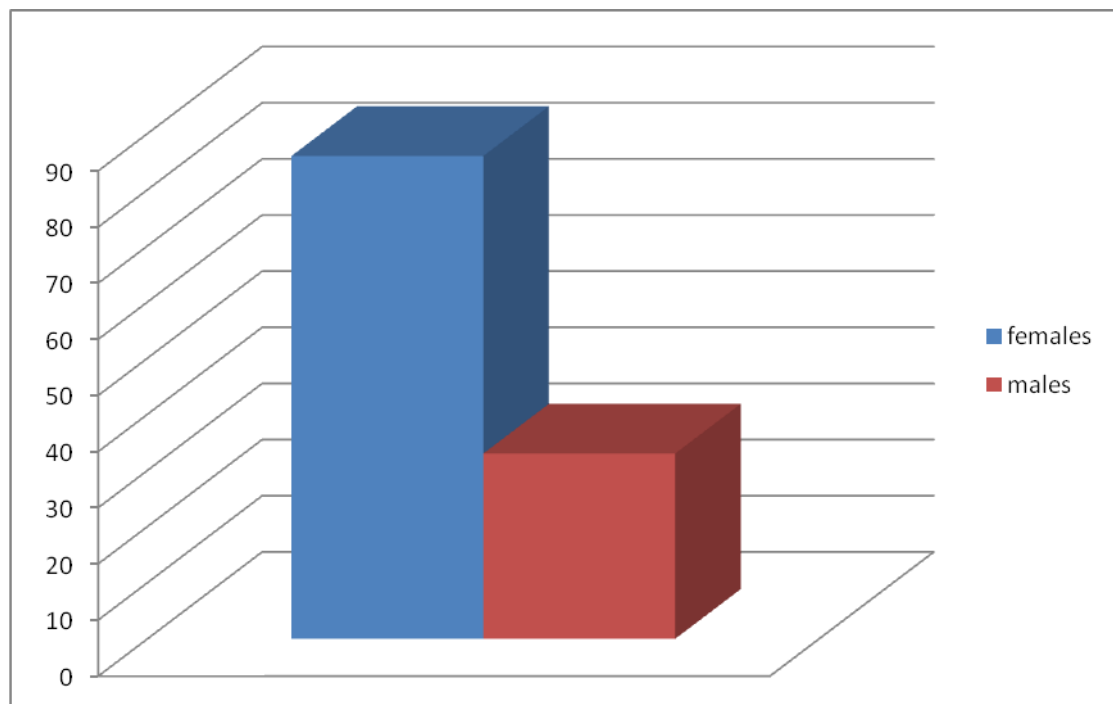
3.3. The Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

In fact, the questionnaire was designed to collect data from EFL students of Ibn Khaldoun University. It aims at knowing the students' opinions and attitudes towards distance education.

3.3.1. Participants' Personal Information

This section reveals our participants' sex, age and levels of education. We shall represent the findings of it in the figures (3.1/3.2 and 3.3) that follow:

Question- item 1: Sex

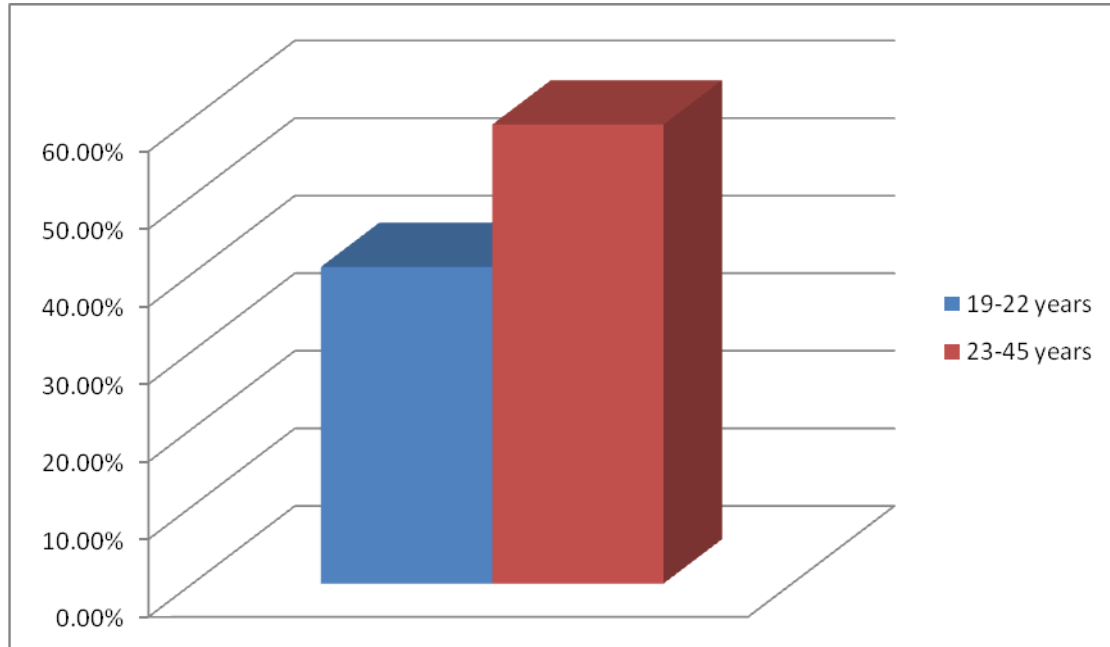


Graph 3.1 Students' Sex

Graph 3.1 demonstrates that the majority of the participants were females, out of 120 participant 86 were females (72.3%); while, only 34 were males (27.7%) and this means that females are the most dominant in the field of learning foreign languages and they are more interested in studying English rather than their males' counterpart.

Question- item 2: Age

The age of the sampled students generally varies between **19** to **45** years (**Graph 3.2**).

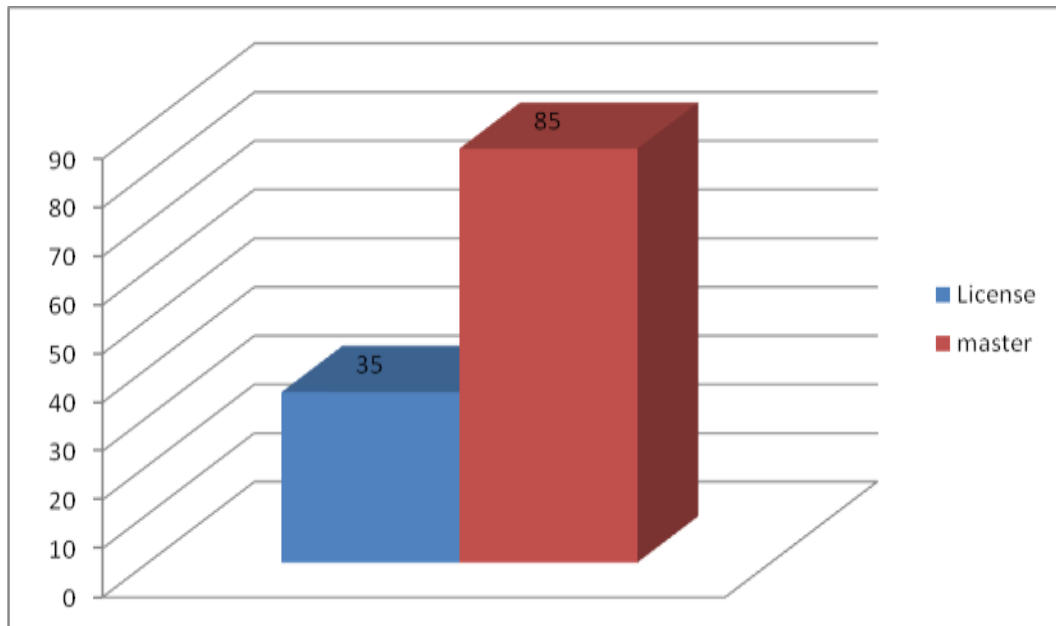


Graph 3.2 Age Distribution of Students

Graph 3.2 shows that the majority of the respondents (**59.17%**) are adults, aged between **23-45**; while, **40.83%** of them are aged between **19-22** years.

From the percentages displayed in the graph3.2, we observe that participants who are aged more than **22** are master students evidently .mainly because master students were our convenient sampling population .

QQ 3 : Level of Education



Graph 3.3 Students' Level of Education

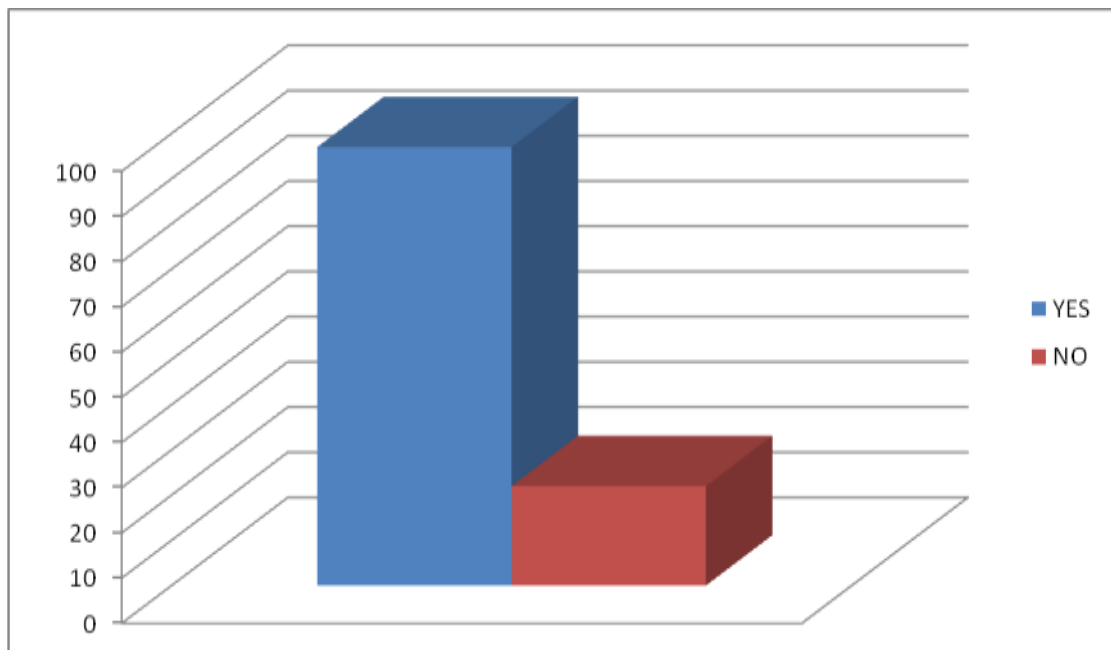
As shown in **graph 3.3**, the respondents' level of education reveals that '*Master*' students outnumbered '*Licence*' students by **85** who represent (**71.4%**); while, only **35** respondents (**28.6%**) are '*Licence*' students.

As a '*matter*' of fact, the main reason behind the obtained results is the imbalanced distribution of our questionnaire, and our choice of the convenience sampling (our belonging to the same educational level) resulted in '*master*' students outnumbered '*licence*' students .

3.3.2. Technology and Accessibility

The second section of the questionnaire is intended to collect data about the technology used by the students to connect to online software, computing program Smartphone's applications and any accessibility issues that students encountered.

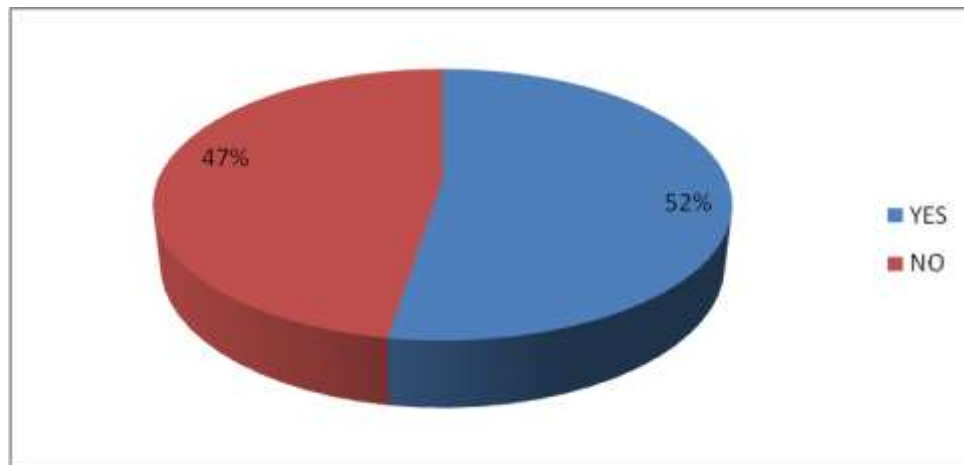
Question- item 1: Have you had an internet access at home?



Graph 3.4 The Internet Access

Graph 3.4 shows that the majority of the respondents (**80.83%**) reported that they '*had access*' to the internet during the confinement period and they had no problems to daily access to the internet and learn online. However, the biggest problem faced by the respondents (**18.33%**) is the '*lack of internet access at home*' ; So, they had difficulty to study from home at this critical period.

QQ2: Do you have a personal computer (laptop or desktop) you use for distance learning?



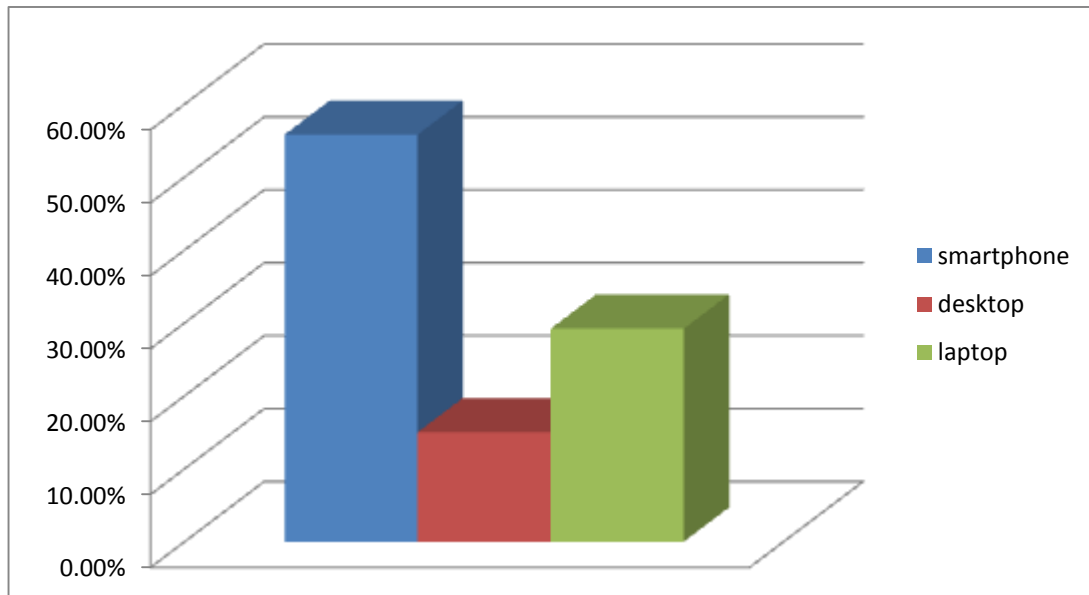
Graph 3.5 Availability of Digital Devices

The data collected in **graph 3.5** show that among **120** students **63** of them which represent **53%** 'do have a personal computer' to follow studies from a distance; while, **56** students represent **47%** of them 'do not have Personal Computers' and they are obliged to use other devices to study online .

We deduce from graph 3.5 that almost half of the participants were not privileged enough to have the capability to afford a 'computer' which is a remote learning requirement and a necessity, mainly because laptops and desktops are very practical in accessing digital platforms and downloading large files as well as managing online learning tasks, unlike smartphones due to their limited capacity.

Question- item 3: What or which devices did you use for distance learning?

In order to know the most useful devices to study from a distance during the lockdown period, we asked our respondents to specify them ,and the answers are presented in the **Graph 3.6.**



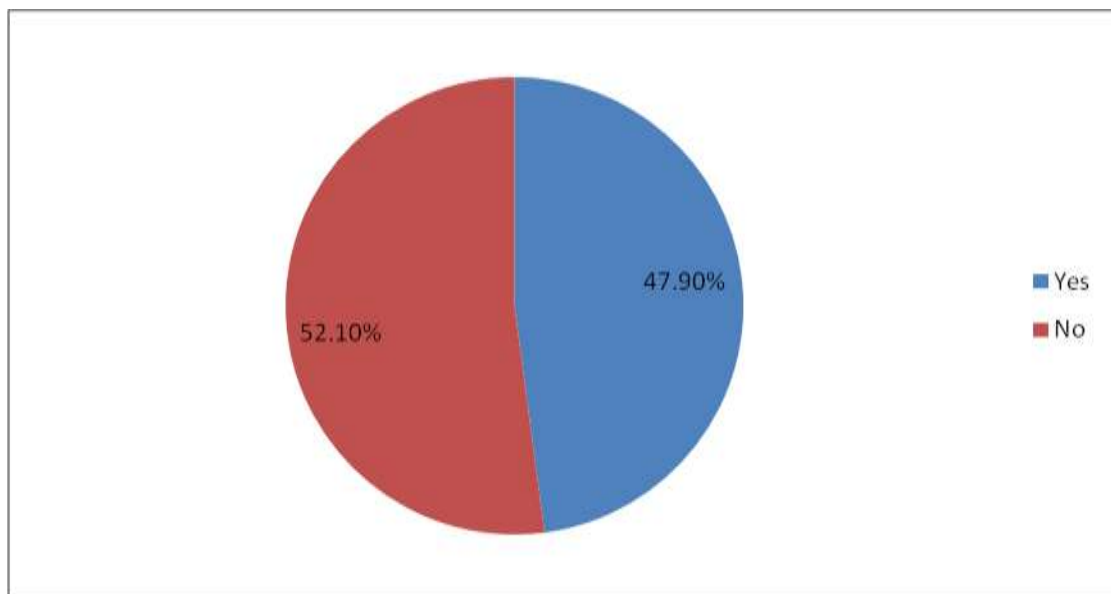
Graph 3.6 Devices Used to Study at/from a Distance

Graph 3.6 shows that the large majority of the respondents indicated that either a '*personal computer*', '*desktop*' or '*Smartphone*' was available for them to access online content. The majority of the respondents (**55.8%**) use '*Smartphone*'; while, (**29.1%**) of the respondents use their '*laptops*', and only (**15%**) of them use the '*desktop*' to study online.

Probable causes for such results are the issues of affordability of expensive devices such as '*laptops*' among students, not all students are lucky enough to possess a '*laptop*' that is of significant importance in learning at a distance, they can only use '*Smartphone*' that are less expensive and preferable in terms of communication usages yet have limited distance learning features, Or at best sharing a desktop with their family members which limited their time spending on learning at a distance.

Question- item 4: Did you have sufficient devices for the whole family members to be used simultaneously?

In order to know if the student had a '*personal computer*' or '*Smartphone*' or he/she was obliged to share the same devices with the whole family members during the confinement period.



Graph 3.7 The Availability of Electronic Devices for the Whole Family Members

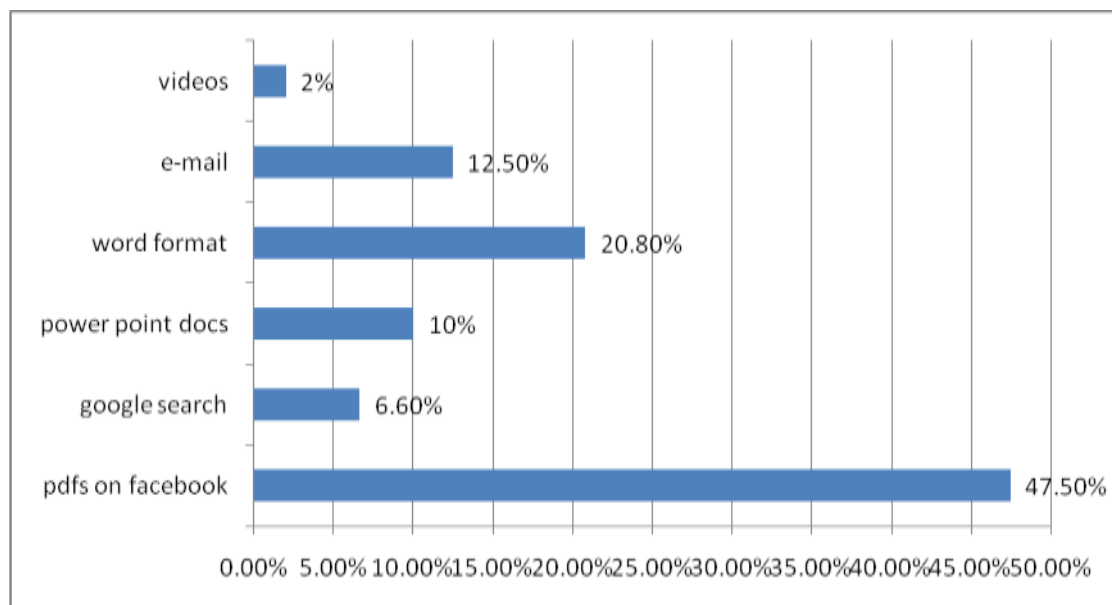
Graph 3.7 illustrates that (47.9%) of the surveyed students claimed that they had sufficient devices for all their family members to be used simultaneously; while, the majority of the respondents i.e. of about 62 students (52.1%) said that they had not had sufficient devices at home and that hindered them from a successful learning experience . some Parents and students face difficulties as many do not have the means to provide their children with a '*personal computer*' or '*Smartphone*' to study from a distance because of their financial constraints.

3.3.3. Learning Experience and ICT Infrastructure

The third section of the questionnaire focused on issues related to learning in a distant environment. This included the concerns that students faced in virtual classes during the remote instruction like the availability and the use of ICT tools and issues they had; while, learning online like the interaction with teachers and communication with fellow students and teachers' feedback.

Question- item 1: What sort of materials were used/ uploaded to deliver the content in distance education?

Here, we asked the participants to specify the materials used to follow the courses remotely during the confinement period; the responses were illustrated in **graph 3.8**.



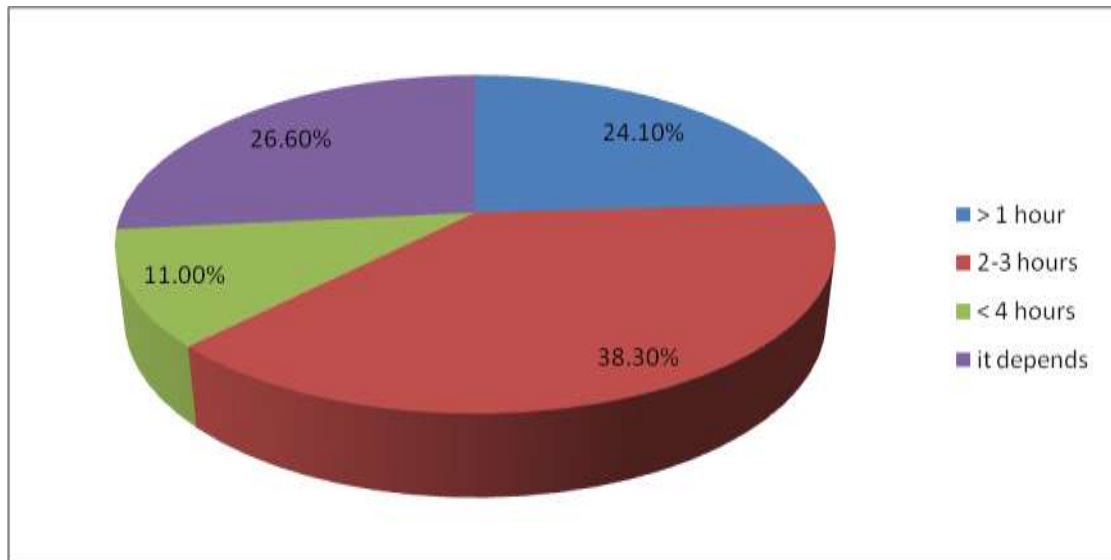
Graph 3.8 Materials Used to Deliver the Content in Distance Education

The answers in Graph 38 shows that most of the respondents got their courses in '*PDF form*' on social media (**47.50%**), and **25** students (**20.80%**) claimed that they received their courses in '*word format*', because it is the easiest way to follow and download lessons from a distance.

Nevertheless, **12** students (**10%**) used '*power point documents*'; while, (**12.5%**) of them used the '*electronic mail*' to share courses with their teachers or their classmates.

However; some students prefer to be autonomous and manage their own learning, 8 students (6.6%) use 'Google search' to learn by themselves and 2% of them learn from 'videos on YouTube'.

Question- item 2: How much time do you need a day to do well in distance learning?

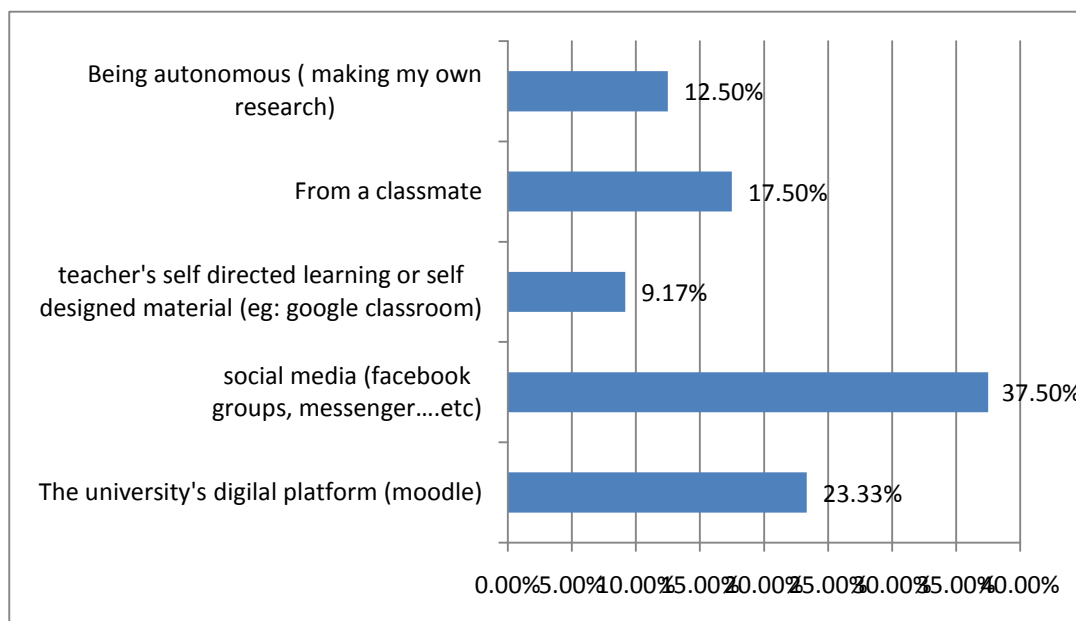


Graph 3.9 The Time Needed to do well in Distance Learning

At this point, we asked our respondents about the amount of time they need a day to do well in distance learning and the results show that 38.3% of them need from '2 -3 hours' a day to study online, and 24.1 % of the respondents said that 'less than one hour' was enough for them. Only 11 % spent more than four hours studying online; while, 26.6 % said that it depends , here we can assume that it depends on the online learning tasks students were required to accomplish , on students' motivation to complete an activity and on the students' connectivity and kind of device their using in online learning.

In distance education, students spend less time learning than they used to in traditional classroom instruction. This is because distance education functions differently from traditional schooling i.e. students can learn whenever they want and for as long as they like. There is no specific time on how long a student should learn online, everything depends on each student's individual responsibility or capacity, level, needs and devices used to learn. Ultimately, it is not just about the hours students spend studying online; it is a matter of how effective they are.

Question- item 3: How did you get your lessons during last year's quarantine?



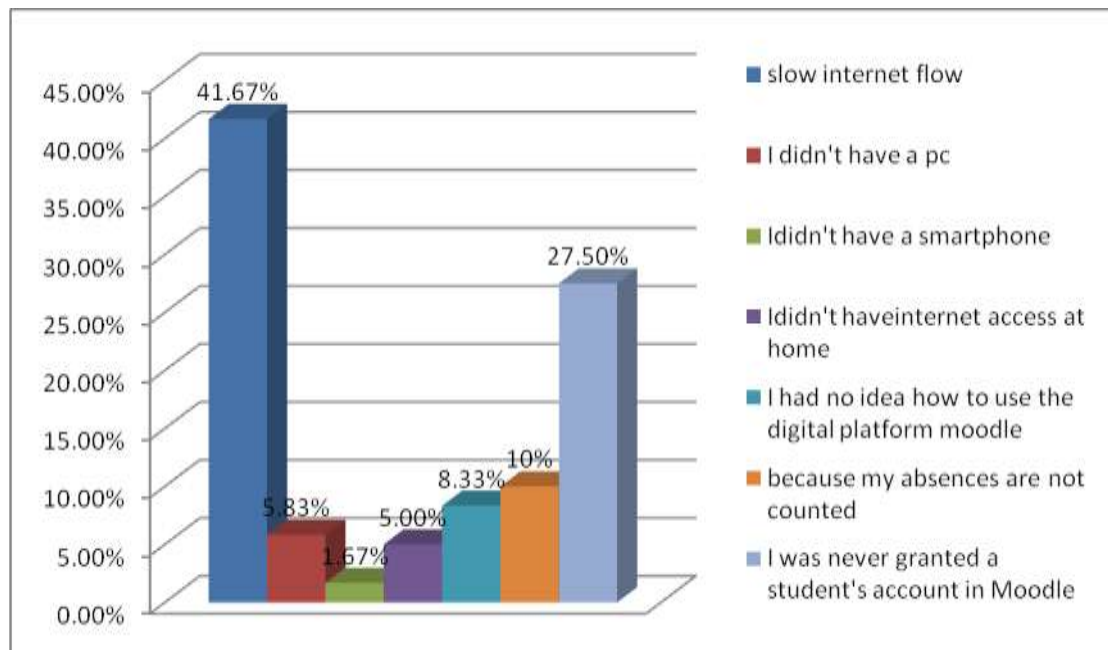
Graph 3.10 Means Used to Receive Lessons From a Distance

According to the results of **item 3**, which deals with how students get the lessons during the confinement period and the means used; **Graph 3.10** shows that the majority of students (**37.5%**) used the '*social media*' like '*Facebook groups*', '*Messenger*' etc as the easiest ways for obtaining the lessons during the quarantine period, and (**23.33%**) downloaded the lessons from '*the university's digital platform (Moodle)*'; while, **17.5%** of the respondents expressed that they had received the lessons from their classmates. However, **12.5%** claimed that they had been autonomous (managing their own learning and making their own research via internet).

According to these results, social media technology usage for maintaining academic teacher-learner communication and obtaining educational content was so common among students during the lock-down, students large turnout to social media in comparison to university's moodle platform firstly indicates that preference in ways and technologies of online learning and secondly complications and difficulties they faced using moodle platform.

Classmates coordination and cooperation also was a means for students of receiving lessons in addition to teachers self-designed material .and finally autonomous learning which is a significant student characteristic in such circumstances was a means of online learning among ibn khaldoun EFL students.

Question-item 4: What prevented you from using the digital platform?



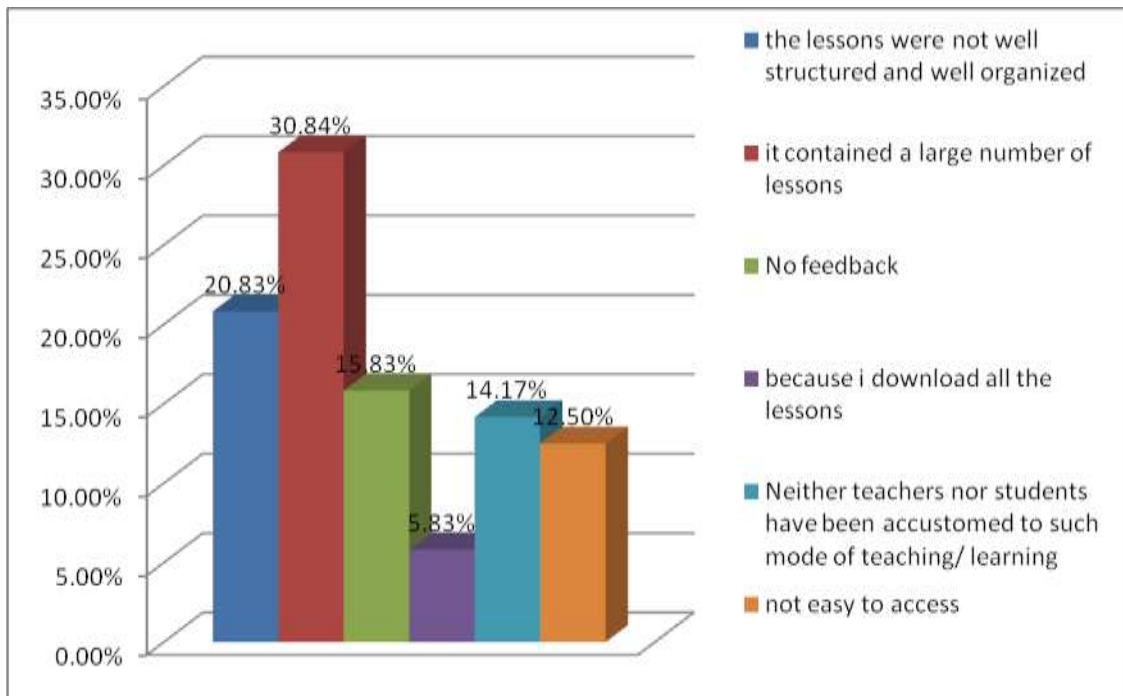
Graph 3.11 Reasons Why Students were Prevented From Using the Digital Platform

The **Graph 3.11** shows that the majority of the students **41.67%** replied that they faced problems with the slow internet flow; while, **27.5%** of them had never been granted a student's account in the digital platform. However, **10%** said that they had not use 'Moodle' because their absences were not counted and they were not obliged to use it. **8.33%** of the respondents had no idea how to use 'Moodle platform'. Others **5.83%** said that they had not possessed 'Personal Computers' and **1.67%** of them had not possessed 'Smartphones' ; while, **5%** had not even had 'internet access' at home to study online.

Poor internet connectivity was one of the major challenges for using the 'digital platform' that students encountered, weak internet affect how quickly they connect and communicate, if they need to immediately work on something they need a fast and reliable internet connection.

Question- item 5: What had hindered you in exploiting that digital platform?

At this point, we asked students if they were satisfied with the use of '*the digital platform Moodle*' and what had hindered them in exploiting it.

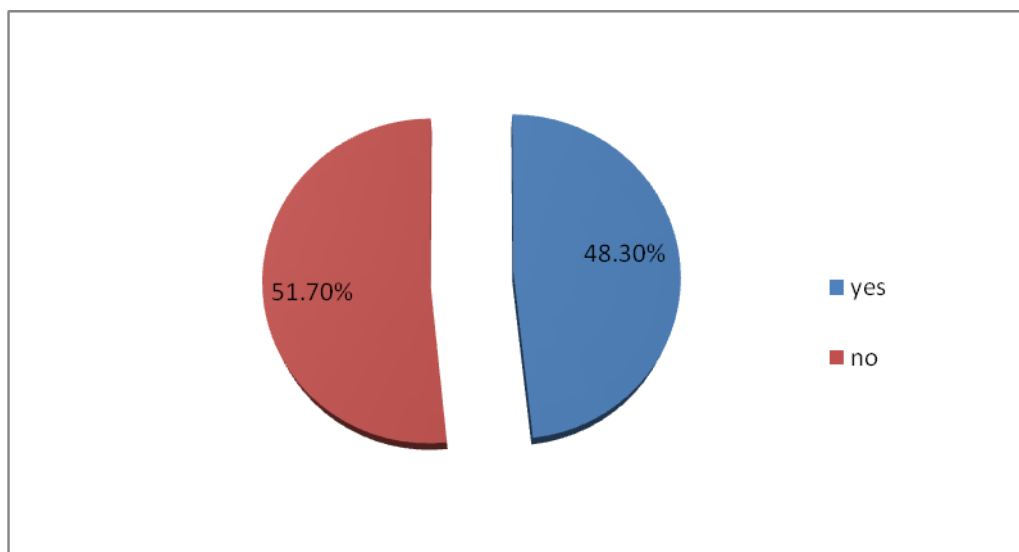


Graph 3.12 The Digital Platform Assessment

graph 3.12 shows that the biggest problem faced by the majority of students (30.84%) was '*the large number of lessons provided by teachers*', and 20.83% of them said that '*the lessons were not well structured*' and not well organized ; while, 15.8% of the respondents said that because they '*could not receive feedback from their teachers*'. However, some respondents (12.50%) said that '*it was not easy to access that digital platform*' all this concerns make them less motivated for using the digital platform and it affect their learning experience. 5.83% declared that they had not used the digital platform because they '*had already downloaded all the lessons by other means*' and 14.17% of them said that '*neither teachers nor students had been accustomed to such mode of teaching and learning*'.

Question- item 6: have you got any sort of feedback or received any corrective comments through the different means of distance learning?

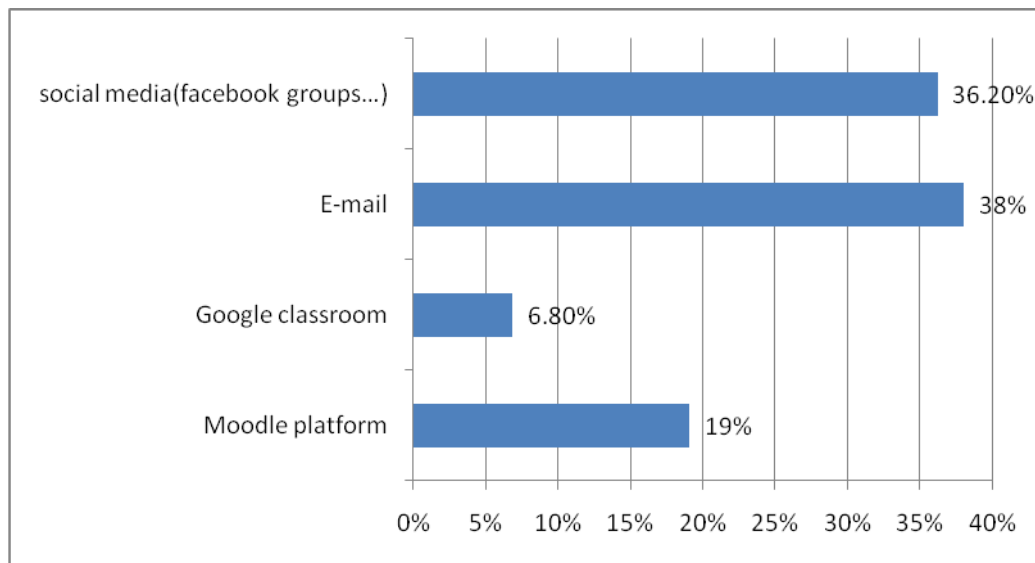
At this point, we asked our respondents if they got any sort of feedback or received any corrective comments from their teachers through the different means of distance learning. According to their responses illustrated in the graph 3.13.



Graph 3.13 Teachers' Feedback

Graph 3.13 the majority of the students (51.7%) '*did not receive any feedback from teachers*' ; while, 48.3% of them said that '*their teachers had provided them with feedbacks and comments about their learning during the confinement period*'. It is hard to keep students engaged without the teachers' physical presence. Teachers' '*feedback*' and corrective comments for students in distance learning keep them engaged and highly motivated. Distance learning requires interaction between students and teachers to complete tasks, stay engaged and make progress.

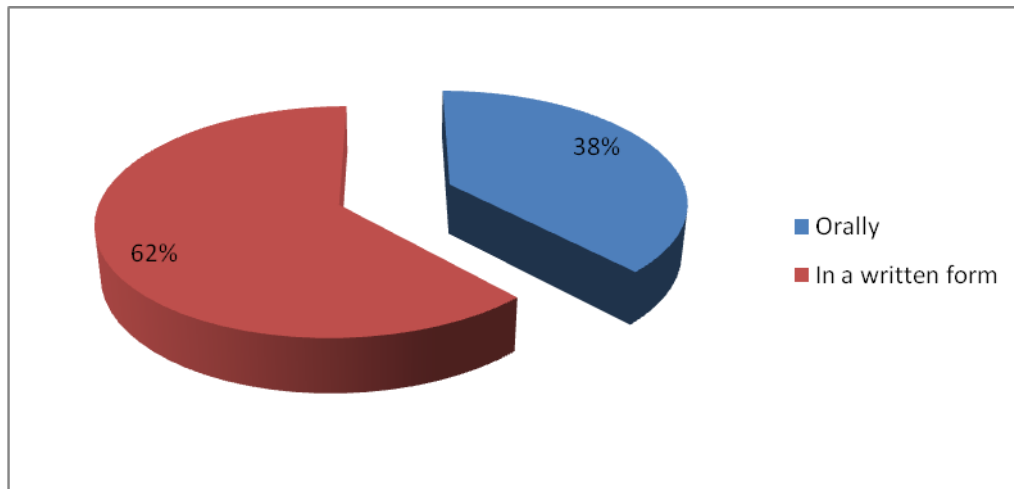
Question- item 7: If yes, which means has mostly been used by teachers?



Graph 3.14 Means Used by Teachers to Provide Feedback

Graph 3.14 illustrates that most of the respondents (38%) said that they received feedback through 'e-mail' and 36.20% of the questioned students claimed that their teachers provided them with feedback via the 'social media' like 'Facebook groups'; while, 19% said that their teachers preferred using 'Moodle platform' and 6.8% through 'Google Classroom' to interact with students and provide them by feedback and comments on their learning. Most of students received feedback through 'e-mail' because it can have the advantages of being timely, individual and motivational.

Question- item 8: How has feedback been done?

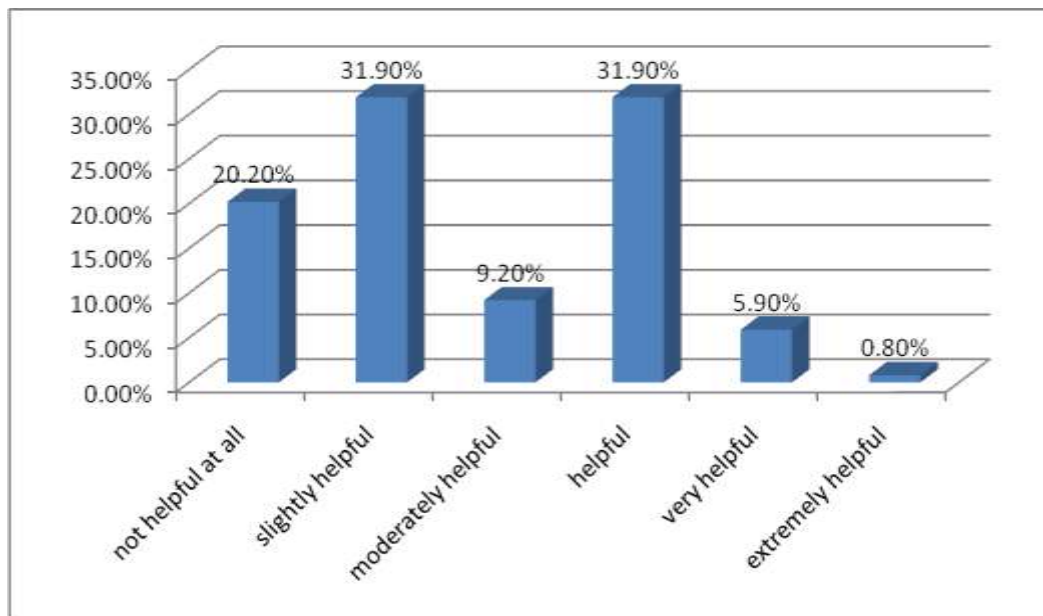


Graph 3.15 Forms of Feedback

Graph 3.15 shows that most of the students (62%) prefer feedback in a written form; while, only 38% preferred oral feedback from their teachers. In other terms, the results showed that 30 students preferred '*feedback in a written form*' because it was more understandable and practical so that the student could revise and they said '*the written form feedback*' helped improve their writing accuracy to some extent.

However, 19 students had preferred '*oral feedback*'. Some of them said it was more beneficial because it helped to improve the speaking skill. For further explanation, others said '*oral feedback*' could be a very powerful and more effective tool as it could be provided easily and in short times.

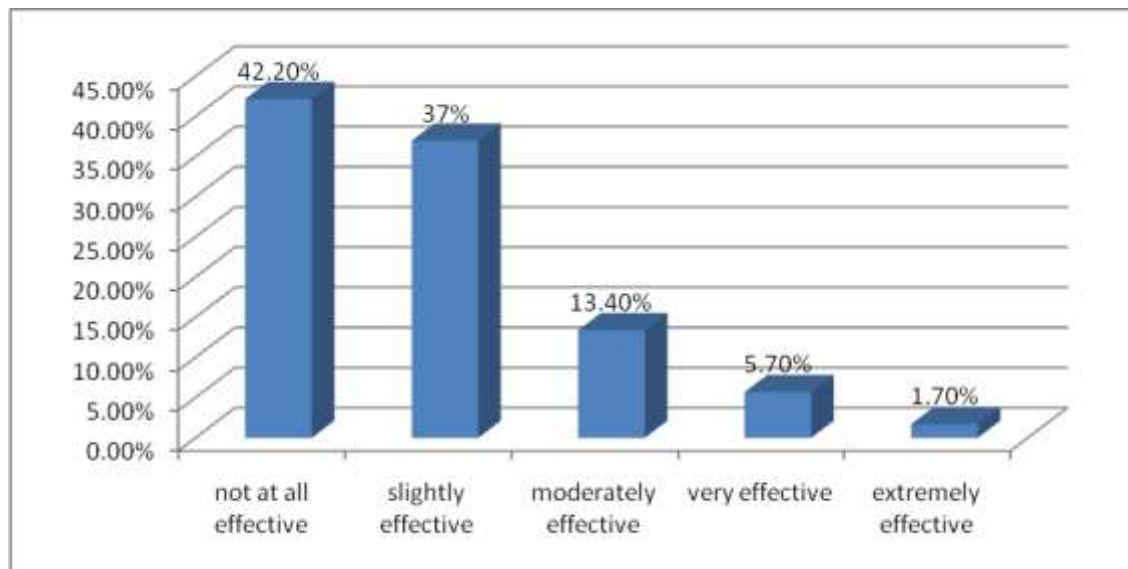
Question- item 10: How helpful were teachers when you had a question?



Graph 3.16 Teachers' Support

Graph 3.16 shows that most students (31.9%) said that their teachers were '*helpful*' during the distance learning, and 31.9% of them answered that teachers were '*slightly helpful*'; while, 20.2% answered that teachers were '*not helpful at all*'; Besides, 9.20% said that they were '*moderately helpful*' and only 6.7% of the respondents showed their satisfaction and they said that teachers were '*very/extremely helpful*' and teachers helped them a lot by providing materials, environment, guidance, prompt and accurate feedback to students to facilitate learning from a distance.

Question- item 11: How effective has distance learning been for you?

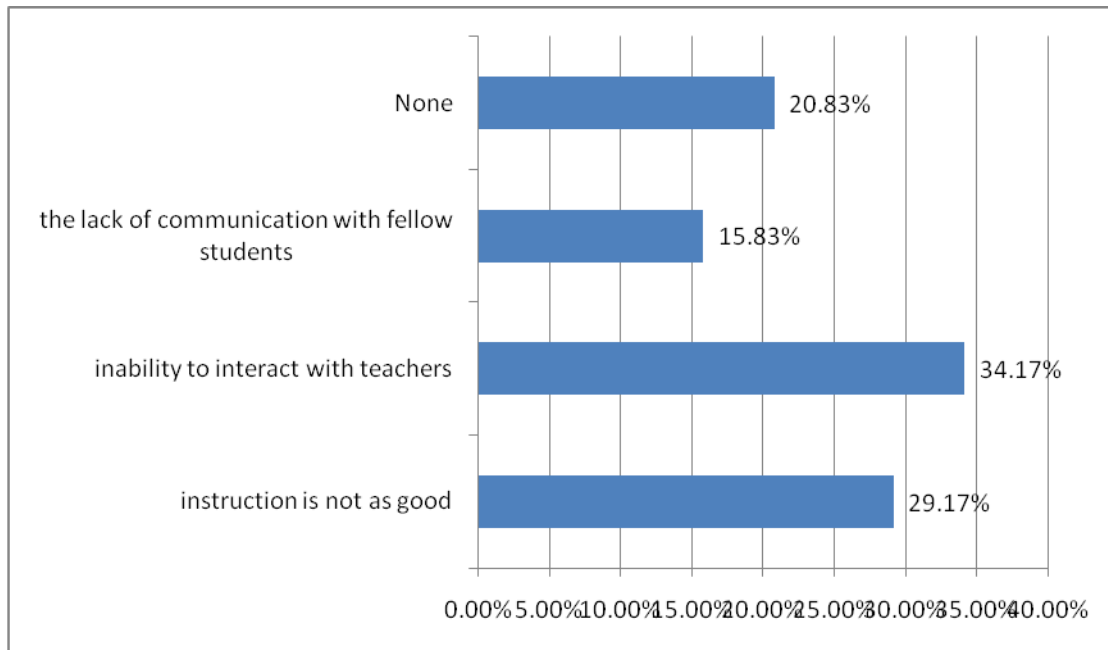


Graph 3.17 The Effectiveness of Distance Learning

Graph 3.17 demonstrates the students satisfaction about their experience with distance learning during the confinement period. The results shows that the majority(42.2%) were not satisfied and they said distance education was '*not at all effective*'; while, 37% of them said it was '*slightly effective*' and 13.4% of them said it was '*moderately effective*'; However, 5.7% showed their satisfaction and said the distance learning was '*very effective*' and only 1.7% said it was '*extremely effective*'.

The technical problems, the luck of internet connection, sense of isolation , lack of parents and teachers support may affect negatively the students' learning experience.

Question-item 12: What difficulties have you encountered in distance learning?



Graph 3.18 Difficulties In Distance Learning

At this point, we asked students about concerns or difficulties that they had been facing during the confinement period since classes transitioned to remote instruction. The results were provided in graph 3.18.

Graph 3.18 shows that The main difficulty faced by students (34.17%) was the '*inability to interact with teachers*', 29.17% of the respondents indicated that they had troubles during their learning and they said the '*instruction was not as good*' and 15.83% said that they had '*difficulty in communicating with their classmates*'; while, 20.83% of the respondents were satisfied with remote learning and they had '*no difficulties*'.

For the majority of students, not having enough interaction with teachers and classmates is among the biggest challenges of studying from a distance.

3.3.4. The Main Findings of the Students' Questionnaire

According to the obtained results from the students' questionnaire, many students face a number of challenges and barriers due to different factors. First, students at Ibn Khaldoun University had never experienced distance learning before the pandemic, so they revealed having challenges with technology, devices used for distance learning and financial constraints. Then, Students were experiencing technical difficulties and problems with the use of the digital platform "Moodle". Most of the students owned only smart phones that they used for learning from a distance; however, the use of only Smartphone may impact negatively their learning.

The lack of affordable and adequate internet access was one of the major challenges found in this study that students encountered in distance learning, also the lack of interaction and communication with teachers and fellow students, Lack of interest/ motivation and commitment among students to use e-learning and study from a distance. Finally, the time management also was a big challenge experienced by some students.

3.4 Teachers' Interview Results

3.4.1. Type of the Interview

In the present study, a semi-structured interview was selected as a second data gathering tool. The major advantage of the semi-structured interview is that the interviewees feel at ease while expressing their insights freely which is very helpful to this study.

3.4.2. Aim of the Interview:

The main aim of the interview was to corroborate the present study with an in-depth understanding of teachers' perceptions on the drawbacks of online/distance education in the Section of English at the Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret. In other words, the present interview round off the students' answers previously stated in the questionnaire. In fact, the combination of the questionnaire and the interview serve the present study and enhance the possibility of obtaining both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.4.3. Description of the Interview

A total of **16** teachers were asked to answer **9** questions designed to gather information about the different aspects and angles surrounding distance education during last year's covid-19 pandemic. The questions that were asked are ranked as follows:

- 1- How long have you been teaching (English) at University?
- 2- Have you ever experienced online/distance teaching? If so, when was it the first time and how long have you been doing so up to now?
- 3- Has it been done voluntary or imposed on you (especially in such pandemic)?
- 4- Have you been trained about such mode of teaching? If so, how? If no, what did you do then instead?
- 5- Is distance teaching efficient in such a situation? Why? Why not?
- 6- Which devices, electronic tools and/or applications do you use do so? Why do you prefer/choose it/them i.e. what were your objectives behind that?
- 7- To what extent has distance learning succeeded and/or failed at the Algerian university? What are the substantial reasons behind each one? (I.e., if it is succeed, how and why and if not, why?)
- 8- Will distance learning be compulsory one day? Why or why not?
- 9- What is the best alternative means in teaching/learning in such situations?

Question-item 1: How long have you been teaching (English) at University?

	Number of teachers	Percentages
From 2 to 5 years	10	62.5%
From 6 to 12 years	6	37.5%
Total	16	100%

Table 3.1 Teachers' Professional Experience at University

The results displayed in **table 3.1** show that our informants had different teaching experience, with respect to teachers' academic status. Our interviewees can be divided into novice university teachers and experienced university teachers. **10** teachers (**62.5%**) are teachers with experience ranges from '2 to 5 years', and **37.5% (10)** of our participants' careers at university is between '6 to 12 years'.

The purpose behind asking this question is to get different perspectives as well as accurate and extra information about the different aspects of the theme under investigation namely teachers' familiarity with distance education, teachers' level of digital literacy, and whether they received training or not.

Question-item 2: Have you ever experienced online/distance teaching? If so, when was the first time and how long have you been doing up to now?

	Teachers' number	Percentages %
Haven't experiences online/distance teaching	13	81.25%
Already have experienced online/distance teaching	3	18.75%
Total	16	100 %

Table 3.2 Teachers' Prior-Covid-19 Experience with Online/Distance Education

On the whole, it can be observed in our interviewees' responses that nearly all of the teachers (**81.25%**) '*had not experienced online/distance teaching*' i.e. **13** out of **16** teachers who were interviewed stated that their first experience with teaching online at a distance was during the first weeks of the covid-19 pandemic curfew in Tiaret on March 21st, 2020 which compelled them to substitute presence by online teaching.

However, only three teachers (**18.75%**) stated that they '*already had been teaching English online*' before the crisis.

Moreover, it is worthy to mention that they gained distance/online teaching experience at different universities rather than the Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret.

The aim of this question is to get viewpoints on teachers' professional experience with online and distance education before the forced distance education dominance on the educational system across the country in 2020.

Question-item 3: Has It been done voluntary or imposed on you (especially in such pandemic) ?

	Number of teachers	Percentages
Imposed	12	75%
voluntary	4	25%
Total	16	100%

Table 3.3. The Imposition of Distance Education on Teachers

Based on the data displayed in table 3.3, **75% (12)** teachers among the **16** who were interviewed declared that the rapid shift to online/distance education has been '*mandatory*' for all teachers by decision of the university ,mentioning that such mode of teaching has been the only solution for continuing studies due to the health procedures were taken in the covid-19 confinement.

The fact that the vast majority of teachers were '*obliged*' to adopt online / distance education is comprehensible especially that Ibn Khaldoun University depends on traditional face to face education and the shift towards online/distance education, which was a result of the emergency call of Ministry of Higher Education to find and/or adopt an alternative teaching method that is online/distance education.

Yet, according to the results demonstrated in table 3.3, only **25%** i.e. four teachers stated that there already was an adoption of this mode of teaching as off-campus support to provide extra assistance for their students.

Question-item 4: Have you been trained about such mode of teaching? If so, how? If no, what did you do then instead?

	Number of teachers	Percentages %
Teachers who were not trained	10	62.5%
Teachers who recieved training	6	37.5%
Total	16	100 %

Table 3.4 Trained and Untrained Teachers about Distance Education Prior to Coronavirus Outbreak

According to the results in **table 3.4**, **62.5% (10)** of our participants claimed that they '*had not received*' any training before the crisis.

Moreover, some teachers stated that the adjustment to the sudden shift to online teaching was very hard on them. One of the teachers expressed his surprised saying: "I haven't been trained about that (distance teaching), in other words, we were surprised to deal with such distance teaching by the ministry of higher education...".

Yet, all of the untrained teachers were unanimous in adapting and acclimatizing to the new situation by self-development and autonomous learning about distance education technology reflecting their acceptability and flexibility that is crucial in such an emergency. Due to the lack of technical expertise and hardware problems, they turn to effortless educational technology such as '*social media*' namely via using '*Facebook groups*' and '*Messenger*', and replace the famous '*Moodle App*' by '*Google-Classroom*' that is less complicated and easy to use.

On the contrary, teachers who '*were already trained*' on online/distance teaching represent only **37.5% (6)** of the total responses. It is crucial to mention that **3** of them have benefited from an online training offered to newly recruited teachers/lecturers on the use of

educational software. The rest of the trained teachers were offered either workshops for using Moodle or gained experience on e-learning abroad.

On the one hand, the previous answers revealed the unpreparedness of the majority of teachers especially veteran teachers for adopting online/distance teaching due to their digital illiteracy. On the other hand, the answers of novice teachers who were trained reflect a systematic attempt from the Ministry of Higher Education to promote and adopt online education.

Question-item 5: Is distance education efficient in such a situation? Why? Why not?

	Number of teachers	percentages
Distance education is efficient	11	68.75%
Distance education is not efficient	5	31.25%
Total	16	100%

Table 3.5 Teachers Perceptions on the Degree of Efficiency of Distance Education

During the Lockdown

The results represented in **table 3.5** reveals that the majority of the teachers **68.75%** (11) find that distance education is '*efficient*' during the closure of the educational departments. They emphasized the necessity and the incomparability of distance education during the shutdown using expressions such as "the sole mode of teaching available ", "Great alternative ", "a good plan B".

However, they accompanied their approval of the efficiency of distance education with a set of conditions that must be fulfilled to meet the effectiveness of such mode of education claiming that teachers must be trained, students must have a sense of responsibility and self-direction, as well as facilitating access to university's sites for both teachers and students by fixing the non-permanent and non-organization of the learning platforms.

Oppositely, **31.25% (5)** of our interviewees find distance education '*inefficient*' and list several factors behind its ineffectiveness including lack of interactivity with students because of the unavailability of internet access for a large number of students who live in rural areas and even if they access educational platforms "It is hard to control their presence" as a teacher. Other teachers criticised the technological constraints as one teacher stated: "students struggled with Moodle platform and the shortage of gadgets among their students. "

Generally, all teachers indicated deficiencies in the distance education system that is mainly accredited by the university namely poor internet, weaknesses of university's educational platforms.

Question- item 6: Which devices, electronic tools and/or applications do you use do so? Why do you prefer/choose it/them i.e. what were your objectives behind that?

As Far as the first part of the question is concerned, all of our informants were unanimous on the use of devices namely '*laptops*' and '*Smartphones*' to engage in the online/distance education.

Most frequent application used	Number of teachers using the app	Percentages %
Google classroom	5	31.25%
Moodle	3	18.75%
Google meet	2	12.5%
zoom	2	12.5%
Social media	2	12.5%
Email	1	6.25%
Power point presentation	1	6.25%

Table 3.6 Technologies Used by Teachers for Distance Education

Table 3.6 summarises the various applications used by teachers as pedagogical tools for delivering distance education courses in distance education. It also demonstrates the most frequently used applications and the uncommon ones to be used among teachers during last year's corona virus confinement when they were forced to be engaged in digital teaching when the university urged them to shift into online teaching.

At the fore, we have '*Google classroom*', which was used by **31.25% (5)** of our participants. Teachers stated that their implementation of '*Google classroom*' in their online teaching ran successfully, and they attributed it to the easy accessibility through their laptops

and smart phones by teachers and students and the App's ability to manage a large number of students, who can be too easily evaluation.

Next; **18.75% (3)** interviewed teachers, said they were using '*Moodle platform*' provided by the institution as an official learning platform. The participants have turned out to '*Moodle*' because of several reasons such as '*Moodle*' being official, it allows teachers to verify students' names to check their attendance hence evaluate them; and its availability of significant requirement features such as written content sharing, video meetings, and PowerPoint sharing, etc.

The upcoming applications are: '*Google Meet*' which was mentioned by **2** of our informants (**12.5%**); and '*Zoom*' the cloud-based video communication app that was preferred to be used by two teachers (**12.5%**); both apps were used for synchronous teaching with the use of a video-conferencing feature which is convenient for online distance teaching

'*Social media apps*' such as '*Facebook*' and '*Messenger*' were preferable to be used by **12.5%(2)** of our participants .They were described as extremely practical and easy to be reached by students. As for '*Emails*', only **one participant (6.25%)** relied basically on them due to technical problems namely poor internet connectivity; Finally, '*PowerPoint*' software was used by only **one teacher (6.25%)** to create electronic presentations of the courses and emailed them to students.

In addition to everything else, Other applications were mentioned by our interviewees such as '*Camtasia*', '*SnagIt*', '*Web Xh meet*', '*Slight share MS (Microsoft) teams*', '*Flipgrid App*'.

To end with, teachers managed to, during the sanitary crisis, explore and use the most convenient alternative educational software rather than '*Moodle*' to keep the process of teaching ongoing thanks to the ubiquitous presence of technology. The majority of the teachers interviewed complained about Moodle's lack of flexibility and not clunky interface, due to its complicated features.

Question-item 7: To what extent has distance learning succeeded and/or failed at the Algerian university? What are the substantial reasons behind each one? (I.e., if it is succeed, how and why and if no, why not?)

	Number of teachers	Percentages%
Distance learning succeeded	2	12.5%
Distance learning failed	6	37.5%
Indecisive	8	50%
Total	16	100%

Table 3.7 Teachers Perceptions about the Success or Failure of Distance

Education

As **table 3.7** shows, only **12.5%** of teachers (**2**) believed that distance education '*was successful*' to some extent during last year's covid-19 pandemic. Those teachers agreed that the Algerian university suggested a quick and relevant solution i.e. online/distance education which could achieve the desirable purpose that enabled students to reach lessons online. It is worthy to mention that these teachers' declarations were out of an institutional perspective.

On the contrary, **6** teachers (**37.5 %**) out of the **16** interviewees agreed with one accord that distance education '*was a complete failure*', and supported their claims with several observable facts such as Low level of digital literacy among teachers due to absence of training and lack of technical assistance, The virtual absence of students due to several causes, primarily technological constraints illustrated in low internet connection alongside students' inability to have internet, and shortage of gadgets like laptops; Additionally, a lack of interest and motivation among students which have been expressed by one of our interviewees who said: "based on my experience, among 390 of 3rd-year students, less than 5 check in regularly, and less than 20 who have made one or two checks during the lockdown" ; another factor was The lack of coordination between teachers which caused the great amount of educational content introduced to learners.

Moreover, the majority of the interviewed teachers **50% (8)** '*were indecisive*' about whether approving or disapproving the success of distance education under the pretext of that is too early to judge as well as there is no research as evidence available to confirm its success or failure.

Accordingly, teachers' attitudes towards distance education during last year's corona virus pandemic were generally negative with hesitation to validate its success. Such information is unsurprising standing on the fact that distance education is a new model of teaching which was forced on educational institutions during the outbreak of covid-19 while Algerian universities were not equipped for such kind of situation simply for the reasons that there poor internet flow according to the latest statistics, and the teachers' lack of mastery of technology devices and software .

Question-item 8: Will distance education be compulsory one day ? Why or why not?

	Number of teachers	Percentages %
Distance education will be compulsory	10	62.5%
Distance education won't be compulsory	5	31.25%
Indecisive	1	6.25%
Total	16	100%

Table 3.8 Expectations of Distance Learning in The Future

As **table 3.8** shows, the majority of teachers **62.5% (10)** foresee '*compulsoriness of distance education*' in post-covid-19 period. Teachers with these statements emphasized the necessity of distance education. One teacher stated that: "distance education is the future of education".

Many teachers stated that even after the covid-19 curfew, they have been still required to teach online using applications such as Moodle and Google classroom besides their traditional teaching which is known as hybrid education.

Still, distance education is gaining more and more interest due to its characteristics such as flexibility, distance and time shortage, and its structural relationship to several forms of online learning such as mobile learning, e-learning, etc.

Next, **31.25%** of participants (**5**) see that '*distance education will not be mandatory*', with a strongly worded emphasis on traditional education being irreplaceable considering online/distance education as a complementary teaching mode that works conveniently for certain modules and doesn't work for others that require face-to-face learning and direct teacher-student interaction .

On the other hand, **one(1) teacher** stated that the settlement on keeping or stopping distance education system must be considered after the general evaluation of its end-results.

Based on the teachers answers, we can spot out two main attitudes towards the implementation of distance education; on the one hand, positive ones which stress the significance of distance education, and on the other hand, negative attitudes which can be considered as one of distance education barriers that is a philosophical barrier which is the feeling that face-to-face learning is crucial for education.

Question-item 9: What is the best alternative means in teaching /learning in such situation i.e. covid-19 pandemic ?(optional question).

This question aimed at getting teachers' experience-based recommendations and potential solutions based upon their perspectives? The majority of teachers recommended '*hybrid education*', which takes the best of both distance/online education and traditional one and minimize their shortcomings suggesting '*the flipped classroom model*' in particular due to the impossibility of shifting to online teaching exclusively overnight.

Other teachers suggested well-management of '*small groups of students*' that work with the teacher in a face-to-face education with adherence to social distancing measures i.e. the interaction should be allowed within health procedures and using mini-whiteboards to demonstrate students' answers is a great application of social distancing inside the classroom doors. This method is used by the British Council in Bangladesh.

3.4.4. The Main Findings of Teachers' Interview

The compulsory transition to distance education during the 2020 covid-19 pandemic revealed a set of deficiencies in the educational system in the Algerian University which hindered both university teachers and students from achieving quality in online/distance education.

With relevance to teachers' feedback and contributions to the present study, a set of teachers-related barriers are highlighted and presented as follows:

1- Low level of digital literacy among teachers: the sudden shift to online/distance education collapsed with the unpreparedness and the lack of technical expertise among university teachers.

2- Untrained teachers: the majority of teachers did not receive training prior to crisis-distance education.

Moreover, taking into consideration teachers' observations; we spot out two **other** obstacles which fall into two different categories

3- Technical constraints due to poor digital infrastructure such as slow internet, the unorganized and non-prominent university educational platforms.

4- Lack of interest and motivation among students.

3.5. Recommendation

Distance education and the integration of technology in Higher Education have become an urgent necessity that can create flexibility and variety in the learning environment and improving university results. In this study, we recommend the possible practical solutions that can be followed to address the barriers in order to reach the effective implementation of distance education and to make such mode of teaching and learning more successful. They are listed as follows:

1. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific should develop a systematic solution via a well designed platform with a specific curriculum as well as fair and effective ways of assessments.
2. Providing the needed materials and make the access to the university platform easier.
3. Providing a reliable internet access.
4. A combination between face-to-face and distance education (hybrid learning) for better experience.
5. Setting up the necessary infrastructure to enable all students to access resources and lessons via the digital platforms.
6. Providing a clear feedback through online electronic system.
7. Training and continuing education opportunities must be provided for all.
8. Improving follow up and interaction between teachers and students.
9. Teachers and students readiness and motivation for online/distance education.

3.6. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, distance education has become an urgent necessity and has a great importance for valuable learning experience. In this chapter, the results of the data collected from the teachers' interview and students' questionnaires reveal the main obstacles and barriers for achieving quality in distance education in Algeria. Therefore, some solutions have been recommended for better learning atmosphere in predictable critical sanitary situations.

General Conclusion

To go over the main points, then, since our research aimed at identifying the main obstacles that hinder achieving quality in distance education, quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted to estimate the number of barriers and obstacles that both teachers and students have faced during the emergency adoption of distance education in the period of the covid-19 confinement that started in the mid-march 2020, herein at the Section of English at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret.

In view of the fact that our study was backed up with solid empirical data/evidence, our hypotheses have been confirmed. First, it has been found that English language teachers at the University of Ibn Khaldoun University have received neither the required training on how to use of the educational software nor overviews on the strategies to be applied in distance education. More to the point, the Ministry's hasty decisions, digital illiteracy among both teachers and their students, shortage in digital gadgets, lack of affordable and adequate internet access besides the University's poor ICT infrastructure have even worsen the so called distance learning in the Algerian context.

Last of all, our study concludes that students' lack of interest and motivation in studying at a distance have been significant factors in the obstruction of distance education mainly because of the Ministry's spur-of-the-moment decision.

Appendices and Bibliography

Appendices

Appendix (A)

Students' Questionnaire

Dear participants,

We invite you to participate in our research study that aims at checking the pros and cons of exploiting modern technologies in higher education in Algeria and/or assessing online learning difficulties faced by EFL students at the Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret during the Covid-19 pandemic i.e. to find out spot the obstacles and overcome the barriers/challenges of distance learning to help making such type of education more effective.

Section one: personal information

1- Sex :

Male female

2- Age :

.....

3- Level :

Lisence degree Master degree

Section two: technology and accessibility

QQ 1: Did you have an internet access at home?

Yes No

QQ2: did you have a personal computer (laptop or desktop) you use for distance learning?

Yes No

QQ3 : what or which devices did you use for distance learning?

Appendices and Bibliography

Laptop Smartphone Desktop

QQ4: Did you have sufficient devices for the whole family members to be used simultaneously?

Yes No

Section three: Learning experience and ICT infrastructure

QQ1: What sort of materials were used/ uploaded to deliver the content in distance education?

E-mail videos Google search word format

Power point docs pdfs on facebook

QQ2: How much time do you need a day to succeed with online learning?

> 1 hour 2-3 hours < 4 hours it depends

QQ3: How did you get your lessons during last year's quarantine?

Being autonomous (making my own research)

From a classmate

Teachers self directed learning or self designed materials e.g (google classroom)

Social media (e.g facebook groups, messenger groups)

The university's digital platform (Moodle)

QQ4: What prevented you from using the digital platform?

Slow internet flow I didn't have a personal computer

I didn't have a smartphone I didn't have internet access at home

I had no idea how to use the digital platforms because the absences are not counted I was never granted a student's account in Moodle

Appendices and Bibliography

QQ5: what had hindered you in exploiting that digital platform?

The lessons were not well structured and well organized

It contained (the platform) a large number of lessons

The Lessons contained no pictures, charts, or tables.

No feedback

Because I downloaded all the lessons

Neither teachers nor students have been accustomed to such a mode of teaching and learning

Not easy to Access(Moodle has problems)

QQ6: have you got any sort of feedback or received any corrective comments through the different means of distance learning?

Yes

No

QQ7: If yes, which means has mostly been used by teachers?

Moodle platform Google classroom Email social media

QQ8: How has feedback done?

Orally in a written form

QQ9: which one do you think is better and?

why?.....

QQ10: how helpful were teachers when you had a question?

Not helpful at all slightly helpful moderately helpful helpful

very helpful extremely helpful

QQ11: How effective has distance learning been for you?

Not at all effective slightly effective moderately effective effective

Appendices and Bibliography

Very effective extremely effective

QQ12: What difficulties have you encountered in distance learning?

Instruction is not as good Inability to interact with teachers

The lack of communication with fellow students None

Appendices and Bibliography

Appendix (B)

Teachers' interview

Dear teacher,

We invite you to participate in our research study that aims at checking the pros and cons of exploiting modern technologies in higher education in Algeria and assessing distance education difficulties faced by EFL teachers and students at ibn khaldoun university of Tiaret during the Covid-19 pandemic i.e to find out the obstacles and overcome the barriers/challenges of distance education to help making such type of education more effective

Questions:

- 1) How long have you been teaching (English) at University?
- 2) Have you ever experienced online/distance teaching? If so, when was it the first time and how long have you been doing so up to now?
- 3) Has it been done voluntary or imposed on you (especially in such pandemic)?
- 4) Have you been trained about such mode of teaching? If so, how? If no, what did you do then instead?
- 5) Is distance teaching efficient in such a situation? Why? Why not?
- 6) Which devices, electronic tools and/or applications do you use do so? Why do you prefer/choose it/them i.e. what were your objectives behind that?
- 7) To what extent has distance learning succeeded and/or failed at the Algerian university? What are the substantial reasons behind each one? (I.e., if it is succeed, how and why and if not, why?)
- 8) Will distance learning be compulsory one day? Why or why not?
- 9) what is the best alternative means in teaching/learning in such situations?

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“We are entering a phase of global English which is less glamorous, less news-worthy, and further from the leading edge of exciting ideas. It is the ‘implementation stage’, which will shape future identities, economies and cultures. The way this stage is managed could determine the futures of several generations.”

(David Graddol)

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Summary

Due to the worldwide outbreak of Covid -19, the Algerian higher education system shifted from presential learning to online/distance education. The current study attempts to assess the distance education in the Algerian Higher Education during the Covid-19 pandemic and consequently examines the main obstacles and challenges faced by both EFL teachers and students at the University of Ibn Khaldoun of Tiaret. A descriptive analytical method is utilized, consisting mainly of: a structured questionnaire addressed to 120EFL students, and an online interview conducted with 16 EFL teachers at the English section of the Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret. The results of the study indicate that the majority of teachers did not receive training on the use of adequate ICT tools prior to the crisis distance education, along with students experiencing technical difficulties and problems with the use of the digital platform “Moodle”, in addition to the lack of affordable and adequate internet access, the University’s poor ICT infrastructure, the luck of teachers-students interactions and communication and the lack of students’ motivation and commitment to study from a distance. All these factors had formed the major obstacles that hinder the right implementation of online/distance education at the Algerian University. Therefore, ministry of education officials have to consider multiple systematic solutions namely hybrid learning, the use of a well designed platform with a specific curriculum, as well as a fair and effective way of assessment, and last but not least providing the needed ICT tools along with reliable internet access for students, and at least an adequate training for teachers on distance teaching.

ملخص

جراء الانتشار العالمي لكوفيد-19 غير نظام التعليم العالي في الجزائر النظام التعليمي من تعليم حضوري إلى تعليم الكتروني/ عن بعد. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم التعليم الإلكتروني عن بعد لدى التعليم العالي الجزائري إبان جائحة كوفيد-19 و عليه البحث في أهم المعوقات و التحديات التي واجهها طلاب و أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية على حد سواء في جامعة ابن خلدون بتيارت. تم الاستعانة بالمنهج الوصفي التحليلي استنادا على استبيان الكتروني تم توجيهه إلى 120 طالب و مقابلة مع 16 أستاذ بقسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة ابن خلدون بتيارت هذا و أشارت نتائج الدراسة على جملة من المعوقات و التحديات أهمها: عدم تلقي غالبية الأساتذة للتدريب المهني اللازم لاستخدام أدوات تكنولوجيا المعلومات و الاتصال قبل الاعتماد الاضطراري للتعليم الإلكتروني / عن بعد بالإضافة إلى الصعوبات التقنية التي واجهها الطلبة فيما يتعلق باستخدام المنصة الإلكترونية "موودل" إلى جانب عوامل أخرى كضعف الاتصال بالانترنت ضعف البنية التحتية الإلكترونية للجامعة محدودية التواصل بين الأساتذة و الطلبة و أيضا افتقار الطلبة للتحفيز اللازم للدراسة عن بعد. كل هذه العوامل شكلت أهم المعوقات التي خالت دون التطبيق الصحيح للتعليم الإلكتروني/ عن بعد و عليه وجب على مسؤولي وزارة التعليم العالي النظر في تطبيق حلول ممنهجة كالتعليم الهجين و اعتماد منصة رقمية جيدة التصميم مزودة بمنهج دراسي محدد بالإضافة إلى اعتماد طرق تقييم عن بعد عادلة و فعالة أخيرا وليس آخرا توفير معدات تكنولوجيا الإعلام و الاتصال و توفير التدريب المناسب للمعلمين و المحاضرين عن أساسيات التعليم عن بعد.

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Résumé

En raison de l'épidémie mondiale de Covid -19, le système d'enseignement supérieur algérien est passé de l'apprentissage présentiel à l'enseignement en ligne/à distance. La présente étude tente d'évaluer l'enseignement à distance dans l'enseignement supérieur algérien pendant la pandémie de Covid-19 et examine par conséquent les principaux obstacles et défis auxquels sont confrontés les enseignants d'EFL et les étudiants de l'Université Ibn Khaldoun de Tiaret. Une méthode analytique descriptive est utilisée, consistant principalement en : un questionnaire structuré adressé à 120 étudiants EFL et un entretien en ligne mené avec 16 enseignants EFL de la section anglaise de l'Université Ibn Khaldoun de Tiaret. Les résultats de l'étude indiquent que la majorité des enseignants n'ont pas reçu de formation sur l'utilisation des outils TIC adéquats avant la crise l'enseignement à distance, ainsi que les étudiants rencontrant des difficultés techniques et des problèmes avec l'utilisation de la plateforme numérique « Moodle », en plus au manque d'accès Internet abordable et adéquat, à la mauvaise infrastructure TIC de l'université, à la chance des interactions et de la communication entre enseignants et étudiants et au manque de motivation et d'engagement des étudiants à étudier à distance. Tous ces facteurs ont constitué les obstacles majeurs qui entravent la bonne mise en œuvre de l'enseignement en ligne/à distance à l'Université algérienne. Par conséquent, les responsables du ministère de l'Éducation doivent envisager plusieurs solutions systématiques, à savoir l'apprentissage hybride, l'utilisation d'une plateforme bien conçue avec un programme spécifique, ainsi qu'un moyen d'évaluation juste et efficace, et enfin et surtout la fourniture des outils TIC nécessaires ainsi que avec un accès Internet fiable pour les étudiants, et au moins une formation adéquate pour les enseignants sur l'enseignement à distance.