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EFL Learners' Beliefs about Distance Learning
The case of Master One Students of English at The
University of M'sila

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Dedication

In the name of ALLAH, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, and prayers and peace be upon His Noble Messenger.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Allah the Almighty, for has honoured me and helped me to be where I am in now.

I gift this humble work to the most precious parents in the world, my dear father and compassionate mother.

To the kindest man my heart has ever known, my husband.

To the little Angel who brought a gentle touch into my life, my Son.

To my beloved brothers, Hamza, fouzi and the little troublemaker Anes.

To my sweetest sister Souhila.

To my grandparents and grandmothers, I pray to God to heal them and prolong their lives.

To my dear aunt.

To my cousin and my best friend Kinza.

To all my family members.

To all my friends.

Dedication

I dedicate this work;

To my dearest parents who supported me morally and physically in each phase of my life.

To my grandparents may Allah prolongs their lives.

To my lovely uncles each one by his name.

To all my family and friends without exception.

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ABSTRACT

Taking into account students' beliefs about issues related to their education is an important thing that can play a significant role in the development of the educational system in all of its aspects. The aim of this study is to investigate EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners' beliefs about distance learning as a new teaching and learning method in Algeria. The study is divided into two chapters. The first chapter consists of two different sections. One section presents beliefs from its different angles. The other section spotlights on what has been said in literature about distance learning. The second chapter on the other hand, analyzes the students' views on the topic under investigation. The research was constructed on Master one English students of M'sila university. To achieve the research aims, a mixed Methodology was employed. Data were collected from a questionnaire distributed online and in the classroom. Briefly, the main findings of the research show that learners have positive attitudes towards distance learning. The conclusion can also be drawn that, EFL students are open and willing to rely on distance education. Some recommendations for improving the use of distance learning are also presented.

Key words: EFL Learners, Beliefs, Distance Learning.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LOTH : Language of Thoughts Hypothesis

L2: Second Language

FLL : Foreign Language Learning

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

U.S : United States

USDLA : The United States Distance Learning Association

ICTs : Information and Communication Technologies

IICD : The Internal Institute for Communication and Development

DL :Distance learning

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General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Getting rid of the traditional methods and introducing new techniques among Academic fields, was a significant issue that has been discussed by many scholars and researchers. The rise of digital technologies has been a leap in the educational system all over the world. It has paved the way for many researchers, educators, curriculum designers, and others, to create easier learning and teaching processes and to teach effective lessons without having to be in a specific time or place. This teaching and learning system is called distance education or distance learning.

Distance learning has been a method in use for many years. This type of teaching was neither a new procedure nor a new notion or idea (Gallogly, 2005). Greene (1993) has defined Distance learning as a process in which learning takes place where the learners study far away from their teacher's location (Cited in Gallogly, 2005). It enables learners to become responsible for their own studies, as they are considered the main focus of the course or the center of the learning process (Huhtanen, 2019).

However, distance learning has been used mainly in some developed countries. The Algerian educational system, for example, adopted distance learning last year as a way to overcome the problem of the Coronavirus pandemic and teach learners without requiring their presence in the educational institutions . Using this teaching method with learners who have never used it before, reduces our knowledge of the problems they may encounter while studying away from their teachers and leads to less understanding of their beliefs about this method. Beliefs seen as rules or notions that people generate in order to be able to adapt to their environment, understand factors, prove things and guide their own behaviors (solis, 2005; Radriguez &Marrero, 1993; Pajares, 1992; Savasci-Acikalın, 2009).

In fact, investigating and studying learners beliefs about distance learning is an essential issue that helps to understand their attitudes towards this system and identify the obstacles that they may face during their learning process.

2. Statements of the Problem

Distance learning is a revolution in the educational system all over the world. It opened doors for many learners to be more responsible for their learning process and teachers to use

new, innovated and effective strategies to instruct their students without needs to be presented in the classrooms. This is the case of Msila University students who started distance learning last year because of COVID-19. However, understanding learners beliefs about distance learning is a problem that needs careful attention. In fact, there are many obstacles that may encounter learners while using such technological method such as, Internet related problems. Thus, the main focus of this study is investigating learners beliefs on distance learning.

3. Aim of the Study

The main purpose of this dissertation is to provide detailed information about the learners beliefs regarding distance learning, identify the main problems they face while using this system, recommend solutions to overcome the obstacles and study effectively.

4. Research questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

Q1: What are the students' beliefs about the use of distance learning?

Q2: How can distance learning be a significant method in the learning process?

5. The Research Hypothesis

From the previous questions we can assume these hypothesis:

- Learners have positive attitudes towards distance learning.

6. Research Methodology

A questionnaire was used to conduct this research based on various questions. In addition to that, we have distributed the same questionnaire online. The questionnaires focuses on gathering data on learners opinions and attitudes towards distance learning, the obstacles that face them while using such method and how do they face those problems and overcome its breakdowns.

The population of this study comprised Master one linguistics students at the department of English at Msila university. Whereas, the sample of this study was constructed from thirty

eight (38) students who were chosen randomly. In addition to three (3) participants who answered the online questionnaire.

7. Significance of the Study

This study is very important for both teachers and learners. In fact, it will help to understand the benefits of this method on both sides and the problems that may face them while using distance learning in the teaching- learning process. In addition to that it will play a significant role in the development of the Algerian educational system regarding this method.

8. Structure of the Study

This dissertation is constructed on two chapters. The first chapter is about the theoretical part of the study, whereas the second one is devoted to the field work.

Chapter one is divided into two (2) sections. The first section tackles beliefs from different angles, such as; Beliefs as a concept, beliefs about language learning...etc. Concerning the second section, it focuses on distance education as a teaching and learning method, what makes it different from the traditional instruction and the factors that affect learners attitudes regarding distance learning.

The second chapter is devoted for the practical part. Starting with the description of the population and the sample, the research methodology design, data gathering tools and the students questionnaire description focusing on the analysis and the interpretation of the data gathered. Closing with recommendations and a general conclusion.

9. Limitations of the Study

In our way to investigate learners beliefs about distance learning, we have faced some problems and limitations. Since distance learning is a new method in the Algerian universities, the first problem was related to the lack of information collected from students. In addition to that, we did not find a big amount of freedom while contacting students because of the Coronavirus pandemic. Some limitations are related to the nature of the students' answers and how much they were serious about answering the questions. Furthermore, twenty-one (21) students did not return the questionnaire to us after answering it.

CHAPTER ONE:
REVIEW OF LITERATURE
AND RELATED
RESEARCH

SECIION ONE: LEARNERS' BELIEFS

Introduction

Since the study investigates EFL learners' beliefs about distance learning, this chapter provides basic information about the study presented separately in two different sections. The first section discusses beliefs from different angles, ranging from beliefs as a concept, beliefs' ideologies, their relationship to language learning to EFL learners' beliefs regarding language learning. While the second one explains the meaning of distance learning, its historical background, the difference between distance education and face-to-face learning, and so on.

1.1.1. Beliefs as a Concept

Many researchers have attempted to study the concept of “belief” and to provide its definition. The majority of the studies failed to come with a consistent definition, due to the complexity of this concept that is often viewed as a property of philosophy or religion (Pajares, 1992).

Pajares (1992), however, argued that beliefs are highly required in different spheres such as Psychology, Law and Medicine. It is not necessarily attached only to spirituality, but also to the fields that deal with personality, education and behavior. According to Schwitzgerbel, “forming beliefs is one of the basic and important features of the mind... belief plays a crucial role in both philosophy of the mind and epistemology” (2019). He stated what is called “The philosophy of the mind”. This kind of philosophy concerns with the way the mind thinks and the ability of the physical body to construct beliefs. On the other hand, epistemology ,which is a psychological field that focuses on knowledge , concerns much more on how and when beliefs become knowledge (Schwitzgerbel, 2019).

Rokeach (1968) defined beliefs as investigative suggestions that are ordered in a psychological manner and they may be illogical, as they may start with “I believe” (Cited in Richardson, 1996). That is, “belief” is not necessarily based on evidence or logic. Thus, it is possible for a person to believe in something that is false or it does not even exist. Philosophers view that beliefs characterized by being “propositional attitudes”. The term “propositional” in linguistics is about the sentence meaning. In fact, whenever there are two sentences that mean the same thing, even in two different languages, there is a proposition

(Schwitzgergel, 2019). For example, water consist of one oxygen atom and two hydrogen atoms (this is how water's chemical components is described in English) and l'eau se compose d'un atome d'oxygène et de deux atomes d'hydrogène (In French). Two different sentences written in two different languages, however, they have the same meaning. That is why it is said that the two sentences form propositions. In this regard Schwitzgergel (2019) said: "A propositional attitude, then, is the mental state of having some attitude...or opinion about a proposition".

Beliefs have influence on the person's manners and decisions. In this regard, Goodnough (1963) described beliefs as suggestions that are thought to be true, and they are used to controlling one's future and decision as well as judging others (Cited in Richardson, 1996). Consequently, almost all the actions performed by people are justified by their beliefs and doctrines that impose on them to behave in such way. Many factors such as family, society and religion contribute on the formation of these beliefs (Rokeach, 1968 as cited in Galvis, 2012). And these factors act an important role on the intensity and depth of the belief.

The resemblance between beliefs and knowledge can be regarded as a source of confusion for many experts. Therefore, it is important to contrast them in order to provide a better understanding of beliefs. Ennis (1994) differentiated between the two terms by referring to knowledge as the information upon which scholars agreed to be sound, while she associated beliefs with the person's experience, noting that beliefs have impact on the way knowledge is accepted. That is to say, beliefs are responsible for accepting or rejecting certain information, sometimes a person may not acknowledge a fact, because it contradicts with what he thinks it is true. Ennis's distinction is supported by Letham(2006) who asserted that there is something a person thinks it is true; which is a belief and there is a thing that is more than a belief, which is knowledge.(cited in Österholm,2010). And this implies that beliefs are associated with a certain degree of uncertainty, while knowledge is associated with certitude, due to the fact that knowledge is only based on an information that experts agreed to be true, unlike belief that is often based on information in addition to sensation ,intuition, etc (Bonnano,2000).

Ultimately, belief is a complicated issue, yet its significance in the field of research and education conceals its complexity.

2.1.1. Beliefs' Ideologies

Delving into beliefs has always been a thorny topic due to its intricacies. Therefore, there is a need to study the different ideologies that have discussed this term to get to know it more closely.

Schwitzgebel (2019) stated four different ideologies discussed beliefs as a concept:

1.2.1.1. Representationalism

Representationalism was the first ideology that discussed beliefs as a construct. Representationalists such as Fodor, viewed beliefs as something exists inside the human's mind. They described beliefs as facts that humans believe in and recall when necessary.

For example, when a person reads that every atom has a nucleus and that the nucleus contains protons and neutrons, he will build a belief within his brain tells him that atoms are made up of certain elements. This fact or this new belief according to Schwitzgebel is what they call “representation”, “the belief is the state of having such a factor representation stored” (Representationalism section, 2019). Noting that, the representation can cause a change on the level of a person's behaviour. In this case, it is best to use the previous example for a better understanding. The person who reads about atoms may feel curious and will research more about the topic, and at the end he will discover that every proton and neutron has positive and negative charge, and this is what makes the atom coherent. This will lead the person to build a strong belief about the nature of the atom.

In addition to the idea of building beliefs as representations in the mind, Schwitzgebel claimed that Fodor (1975) added a hypothesis called “Language of Thoughts Hypothesis” (LOTH). The hypothesis believes that humans' brains perform more like robots do. Murat Aydede described and defined the LOTH by saying that, “The language of thoughts hypothesis (LOTH) is...empirical thesis about how thoughts (as states) and thinking (as processes) are realized in creatures with sufficiently complex minds (oxford bibliographies, 2017).

While thinking, people rely on their own language to do so. That is to say, there are some structures inside the brain that help everyone to build a certain idea using specific patterns of language all along with some grammatical, syntactic and semantic rules. That is why, “Fodor” compared the human mind's function with machines.

2.2.1.1. Dispositionalism

When it comes to the traditional Dispositionalism, There is not much information to discuss or to display. However, Schwitzgebel shedded light on two different aspects.

The first one is related to Chisholm (1957). Chisholm (1957) claimed that the dispositionalist's aim is to understand the belief's core by analysing facts that are related to various behaviours.

However, Schwitzgebel views such analysis as something impossible since people behave differently even when it comes to behaving upon the same belief. The reason behind this, is the other beliefs' effect. In other words, human minds are constructed on various beliefs, these beliefs can impacted by one another and lead to a specific behaviour.

The second view On the other hand, focuses on the loose relationship that exists between beliefs and behaviours and how they function mutually, as studying who influences the other, beliefs or behaviours?

3.2.1.1. Interpretationism

It is important to recall some previous information for a better understanding to the Interpretationism ideology. It has been stated above that “Representationalism” focuses more on the linguistic structures that shape the human minds. Emphasising that humans' thoughts are tied to a language and so does their beliefs. Dispositionalism on the other hand, emphasized the idea of actions, which represents the person's representations or beliefs, and the idea of reactions which means the shift from an action to a behaviour. This was the common belief between both “Interpretationism” and “Dispositionalism”.

However, Dennett (1978, 1987, 1991) and Davidson (1984) added something that seems to make a lot of sense. These two pioneers believe that the person’s behaviours are something physical and tangible can be seen by someone else (an observer).

Dennett (1987) proposed differnt methods that can help to predict someone's behaviour. “The International Stance” is the most important one. It concerns with having certain expectations about the person's beliefs and predicting the way he is going to act according to that belief (Schwitzgebel, 2019). That is to say, humans tend to predict each others behaviours based on their own expectations on the person’s beliefs.

4.2.1.1. Functionalism

Schwitzgebel (2019) stated that many philosophers and researchers consider themselves functionalists, since it deals with both the human mind or "mental states" and the core of beliefs as well. The function of the mental state according to Schwitzgebel is related to the "stimulus" in relation to "the internal structures" (The cells and nerves it carries). For instance, if someone burned his hand, his reaction would be to withdraw his hand immediately due to the sensory nerves associated with the motor nerves in the brain. This is what functionalists described as "sensory inputs and outward behaviour" (Schwitzgebel, 2019). This means that, whenever there is a stimulus there will be a response to that stimulus (This happens in the unconscious state).

So, what is the role of beliefs here and their relationship to prior information? Simply, beliefs are shaped in what is called awareness. That is to say, the human awareness is what causes a reaction in different situations. For example, if there is a person who is going to cross the road and he sees that the green light is « ON », he will wait until it switched to Red. There is clearly an exchange between humans' subconscious and their conscious thoughts and this is what helps in forming their beliefs.

In conclusion, beliefs as a construct is a very complex term even when it is viewed, defined and described from different angles according to different ideologies. So, exploring its own concept is extremely difficult in the midst of different situations that require the existence of a particular belief.

3.1.1. Beliefs in relation to Language Learning

Understanding the core of the term 'Beliefs' in relation to second language (L2) or foreign language learning (FLL) was always a problematic. It caused many questions to appear seeking to understand the learner's mind and his internal psychology.

There are many definitions to the term 'beliefs'. It is a general term that researchers have encountered many times in different fields. However, the educational side has taken the most attention. In fact, being aware of the meaning of beliefs regarding foreign and second language learning will facilitate the learning process and pave the way for many teachers to choose the appropriate methods, techniques, and strategies for their learners.

Abdi and Asadi (2015) claimed that researchers have failed to provide an adequate definition of the term “beliefs” in relation to language learning. They saw that the reason behind this failure could be related to the researchers’ state of mind, whether the term is clear and does not need to be described or explained, or that it is complicated to know the exact meaning of this construct when it comes to language learning. They said that, “...Beliefs about language learning, is used as a known construct without providing further explanation while some studies define the term beliefs alone” (Abdi & Asadi, 2015, p.105). In many cases, the definition presented for the term “beliefs” as a single concept is more complex. Simply, because the term is roughly related to religious facts and concepts.

Abdi and Asadi stated that even researchers specializing in the fields of language learning did not mention a specific definition of the term beliefs. One of these pioneers is "Even Elaine Horwitz" who produced one of the most important instruments that later became a significant tool widely used for investigating the meaning of beliefs as a construct, did not provide an accurate description of beliefs about language learning (2015). She said, “The Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory was developed to assess student opinions on a variety of issues and controversies related to language learning” (1987, p.120. Cited in Abdi & Asadi, p.105). Horowitz argued that, recognizing language learning beliefs was aimed at understanding learners' perspectives on various issues that have to do with learning and nothing more.

As it was stated before, many research mentioned beliefs as a singular construct. However, no researcher agrees with another on the term’s exact meaning. In addition to that, Pajaras stated, “defining beliefs is at best a game of players choice” (1992, p.309. Cited in Abdi & Asadi, 2015, p.105). In Other words, each researcher defines beliefs according to his field of interest. In this regard Pajaras (1992), provided a list of terms that have been given as synonyms for "beliefs" regarding the field of language learning, such as; “Attitudes, values, ideologies, opinions, perceptions, rules, personal theories, principles, internal mental processes and social strategies” (Cited in Abdi & Asadi, 2015).

Recognizing beliefs' meaning has always been an interesting topic that has taken up a lot of researchers' work, especially when it comes to language learning, as there are many people with different mentalities and psychologies trying to learn new languages.

4.1.1. The Importance of Realizing EFL Learners' Beliefs in Language Learning

The past decades have witnessed a shift in the educational system from a teacher-centered system to a learner-centered one. Many aspects that are related to EFL learners started to take place while designing syllabus. Learners' beliefs are from those aspects that can present a significant issue while planning courses and instructing students.

Learners' beliefs in the educational field are viewed as attitudes, expectations, previous information, or even points of view on a course of study or ideas on specific topics. In other words, learners may have prior knowledge of an idea that helps build their beliefs and opinions on that idea or topic. It is important to note that learners' beliefs differ from one student to another and their beliefs do not necessarily fit the teachers' ones. For this reason, when it comes to teaching learners who have different ideas and beliefs on the same thing or the same topic, the study of “beliefs” becomes really a sensitive issue.

It is obvious that teachers plan their lessons before instructing learners, that is why they must plan the lessons in a manner that suits all learners' attitudes. Since this study is specifically about EFL learners, it is better to clarify things by providing a language related example. Siskin (2007) stated that every language class comprises learners who have various views and beliefs on different issues. While a teacher prefers to start instructing his students the English four skills starting with speaking for instance, learners may prefer to start with the listening skill, because according to their previous knowledge, listening is the key to enhance the speaking skill. Learners may claim that the reason they prefer starting with the listening skill is that children first learn the language by hearing speech from different speakers and then begin to speak. It is significant to note that Changing learners attitudes or beliefs is not always easy. For this reason, it is very important for the teacher to become aware of his students' beliefs before planning the course of the study.

Siskin (2007) added that opening topics and discuss them with learners is the best way to understand their own opinions, stating that: “Research on learner beliefs had demonstrated that no matter what teachers think, students have their own idea about language learning” (p. 4). These beliefs are either based on students' experiences or shaped by their cultural milieu (Horowitz, 1987. Quoted in Genç, Kuluşaklı, & Aydın, 2016). In addition to that, understanding learner’s beliefs is initial to clarify why are some learners more successful than others (Siskin,

2007). Hosseini and Pourmandia (2013) viewed that: “Teachers need to have a clear understand of the language being thought and student beliefs, because learners with realistic and informed beliefs are more likely to behave productively in the class” (Cited in Genç et al, 2016, p.55). In other words, instructors must be aware of the subject matter as well as clarify their learners attitudes and beliefs, because in many cases the learner’s attitudes and beliefs may act as a feature that a teacher can rely on to differentiate and distinguish between his active learners from the passive ones.

However, when it comes to lesson planning, beliefs are not the only thing that must be taken into account. In fact, there are many other factors that play an essential role in the teaching-learning process such as, the student’s age, gender, needs and previous experiences (Siskin, 2007). All of these aspects will help the teacher to provide his class with the best approach, methods and the suitable strategies that fit their goals and objectives.

Students' beliefs are among the most important factors that every teacher must take into account to ensure the success of the learning and teaching process.

SECIION TWO: DISTANCE LEARNING

1.2.1. Defenition of Distance Learning

Distance learning or distance education continues to gain a significant popularity among teachers, learners and educationists who have attempted to gain an insight and to define this vast concept.

In fact, the term “distance learning” may cause confusion since learning implies that the person who is taking the action of learning does not have any link or relation with the teacher. However, distance learning involves both teaching and learning, consequently it can also be called distance education (Moore, 1991, cited in Hana, 2010). In simple words, distance learning is not self-tuition but it occurs in an academic setting (Simonson, Berg, & Gary, 2016).

In 1972, Moore defined distance learning as a method of instruction in which “teaching behaviors” are separated from “learning behaviors”, therefore the teacher and the learner must use “print, electronic and mechanical devices” in order to communicate (quoted in Hana, 2010). Attrii (2012) claimed that distance learning is a teaching and learning strategy that is used by correspondence institutions. However, this definition is not accurate. To arrive at a consistent definition, King et al. (2001) separated the two terms and defined each one alone. By synthesizing the perspectives of behavior and cognitive theories, they defined learning as enhancing behavior and knowledge as a result of experience and interaction with the world. They referred to distance as separation in time or space or both. King, Richmond, Young, & Schrader (2001) concluded that distance learning is enhancing knowledge and behavior as a result of experience that is “constrained” by place and/ or time and the students and the teacher do not share the same situation.

On the other hand, Keegan (1995) summarized the five characteristics of distance learning. The first criterion that all the definitions agreed upon is the separation of the learner and the teacher. In addition to the implementation of technology and media as a bridge that links between the student and the instructor. The third criterion is the well preparation of the learning material. The fourth one is the use of two-way communication. Lastly, in most of times learners are taught as individuals rather than groups (cited in Hana, 2010). Thus, it can be deduced that distance learning is a teaching and learning strategy that occurs when the learner and the instructor do not share the same location during the learning process, this strategy makes use of technology that allows the interaction between the tutor and his students (Simonson et

al., 2016). The gap that is created because of that separation is filled through the use of computers, smartphones, emails, video chat, etc. For example, the teacher can record a lecture at his home and share it with the student who is free to listen to that lecture at any place and time of his choosing.

“Correspondence education, distance education, open education, online education and e-learning” are the terms that represent the evolution of non-traditional education or remote learning (Zafari, 2020). These terms are often used interchangeably to refer to distance learning that contradicts with the type of learning used in a traditional classroom. Despite the fact that they are not identical, they share the same criterion which is the use of technology and media. Originally, distance learning lessons were delivered via mails and with the development of the web and the emergence of new technologies, distance learning requires the use of the internet that enables students to have access to distant courses (“Types of distance learning”, n.d).

Experts differentiated between the types of distance learning, synchronous and asynchronous; the former refers to the type of learning that allows direct interaction between the teacher and his students who should get access to the course at the same time from different locations. The latter does not allow direct interaction, instead, it enables the student to study freely (“Types of distance learning”, n.d). With the use of synchronous distance learning, the lessons may be delivered via live videos, while asynchronous distance learning lessons are delivered via E-mails or prerecorded videos (priscila, 2020). The third type is known as blended or hybrid learning that combines between face to face classes and online classes (Siemens, Gašević, & Dawson, 2015). This type proved to be more beneficial for students because it provides them with a better understanding and it enables them to interact with their colleagues (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004, cited in Heng, & Sol, 2020).

In essence, distance learning is an educational method of lessons and knowledge delivery that makes use of technology as an intermediate between the teacher and the student. It changed the nature of education and overcome the barriers that hinder students from learning.

2.2.1. Evolution of Distance Learning

Distance learning is gaining traction in the world due to its versatility and to the options it brought to education, in spite of the fact that it is not a trend that appeared in the 21st century.

In fact, its origin goes back to 1728, it started as a correspondence education (Simonson et al., 2016).

In 1728 Caleb Phillips made an advertisement in a newspaper, offering mailed lessons on shorthand to people (Ferriman, 2013). The same idea was adopted in 1840 by Isaac Pietman who took the advantage of postcards and used them as a medium through which he sends lessons to students and receives feedback. Correspondence education started to catch the interest of the educated class such as; Anna Eliot who established a society that impedes home studies (Freese, 2019). The second era of distance learning begun when Radio and Television were incorporated to the educational system (Dirmiray, İşman, n.d). The use of the Radio started to diffuse, by 1922 more than 73 educational institutions were authorized to have stations that are devoted for educational podcasts (Wood & Wilie, 1977, cited in Kentor, 2015). The rapid growth of the use of the Radio in education can be explained by its role in educating and informing a large audience, besides its low costs and the fact that it is more reliable than postcards (Kentor, 2015). In the same context, Television was expected to revolutionize the educational system, but it did not at first. Until it was used by teachers inside the classroom to show videos for learners (Verdium & Clarck, 1991, cited in Kentor, 2015). It was used as an assistant tool that helps the instructor to provide his students with better explanations.

The third phase of distance learning is “the interactive period” that is characterized by the interaction at distance between the tutor and the student through the use of Radio and Television (Dirmiray & İşman, n. d). Seemingly, after the use of electronic media was restricted to the classroom only, its use became prominent in studying at distance, thus it was used for broadcasting lessons and educating people. In 1956, Chicago public television collaborated with the local board of education and telecast college lessons for students, by doing so, they brought the idea of “Learning from home”. And obtaining degrees from televised courses became common (“The evolution of distance learning”, 2019).

The invention of computers and the foundation of the Web marked the history of distance learning (Dirmiray & İşman, n. d). Technology proved its existence in the field of education and made it possible for students and teachers to interact with each other and to carry on the learning process even when they are geographically separated (“The evolution of distance learning”, 2019). Phonex university took the Initiative and established an online institution system (Kentor, 2015). It took the first step towards prosperity and it changes the

conditions of education. The use of distance learning became indispensable from the field of education, it continues to stretch and by 2009, 4,6 million students were taking at least one online course (Ferriman, 2013).

Substantially, distance learning is not a new concept that appeared recently, it is revived with the fast progression in technology (Dirmiray& İşman, n. d). This progression enabled distance learning to shift from one-sided communication and nowadays distance learning is also called Online learning (“The evolution of distance learning”).

3.2.1. The Difference between Distance Learning and Face-to-Face Learning

Discovering the best educational methods that help increase the efficiency of students has been a fundamental topic of research for many researchers, as the rapid development in many fields around the world along with new technologies has stimulated online learning. For this reason, choosing the right method requires a distinction between distance learning and traditional methods.

Face-to-Face learning was the starting point in the educational field for centuries. Where in a small room there is a teacher and a number of students setting on their tables listening carefully to what is the teacher talking about and taking notes. However, the internet invention caused a revolution in the educational system. The emergence of online teaching was an outcome of this technological development. Traditional classes got substituted by online ones were students rely on e-learning to get access to such classes.

Wakil, Abdulfaraj, Sadula, Tofiq and Nawzad (2019) stated that, in 2015 about Six million students took online classes at least one time in the United States (Allen & Seaman, 2016). Hussenburg (2009) added that “more than 96% of the largest colleges and universities in the U.S. offered online courses and that more than three million students were taking at least one online course in the fall of 2005 (Sloan, 2006)” (p. 07). This indicates the popularity that distance learning has gained over time.

When online courses first started, they were used at the primary and the secondary Schools (Wakil et al., 2019). Wakil and his colleges (2019) added that the schools that were using online courses were categorized under a set of schools called “virtual schools” (Watson, Murin, Vashaw, Gemin, & Rapp, 2011). Dobrovolny, Edwards, Friend, Harrington, Gemin, Pape, ...& Watson (2015) stated that, the aim of these virtual schools is to use the benefits of distance learning to construct a “Holistic School organization” (Cited in Wakil et al; 2019).

These schools differ from traditional schools in that students do not need to communicate physically with their teachers and classmates, and the teaching learning process takes place in an online space. (Berge, 2005; Moore & Kearsley, 2011. Cited in Wakli et al; 2019).

In this regard Garrison & Shale (1987) Defined distance learning as, “Distance education implies that the majority of educational communication between (among) teacher and student (s) occurs non-contiguously (at different times and at separate places- separating the instructor- tutor from the learner). It must involve two-way communication between (among) teacher and student(s) for the purpose of facilitating and supporting the educational process. It uses technology to mediate the necessary two-way communication” (p.11) (Cited in Anaga and Biney, 2017). This means that, students participate in the learning process as they interact with their teachers at different times from different places in an online space, relying on the use of technology that plays an important role in this type of delivery. (Anaga and Biney, 2017).

Distance learning introduced and created new teaching and learning techniques, strategies, methods and environment (Bustos and Coll, 2010. Cited in Maldonado, Llorens, Acosta & Co, 2017). Hassenberg described Distance education as any form of instruction where the teacher is not present at the same time or the same location as the learner. This teaching methodology is based on the use of technologies such as videos, data shows and different ICTs via webcam (2019).

It is important to note that distance learning is tightly related to e-learning. E-learning is based on the use of various devices and tools to deliver lessons in an online space, such as; Computers, Internet connexion, different Applications (Telegram, Zoom...), Smartphones...etc. Wakil et al (2019) reported that in the United states, some universities and virtual schools allow learners to take all their schooling in an online manner (Barbour, 2009). However, in many other countries such as Algeria, distance learning is considered as a new form and a new introduced system of learning (Wakil et al; 2019).

When it comes to the impact of distance learning versus traditional or face to face education on the learner’s learning outcomes, Wakil and his colleagues stated that these two ways of teaching have no effect on the learner’s learning outcomes (2019). Their results were based on study made by “the United states distance learning association” (USDLA). Wakil and the other researchers (2019) added that, most of the researchers while investigating and evaluating the difference between online and traditional learning, they rely on the

measurements of the student's attitudes and beliefs (Alavi, Yoo, & Vogel, 1997; Aragon, Johnson, & Shaik, 2002; Caetano, Oliveira, Araújo, & Rêgo, 2018, Estelani, 2017; Geln, 2001; Johnson, Aragon, Shaik, & Palma-Rivas, 1999; Leszczynski, Charuta, Laziuk, Galazkowski, Wejnarski, Roszak, & Kolodziejczak, 2018; Ponzurick France, & Logar, 2000; Pratt & Williamson-Leadley, 2017).

Wakil et al (2019) stated that other researchers rely on grades taken from exams to test the learner's competence and performance using the two methods (Distance and face to face learning) (Ajiboye, Bakare, Fatima, & Shakira, 2018; Bidjerano, 2016; Garber, 2016; Hachey, Wladis, & Conway, 2015; Johnson et al; 1999; Leasure, Davis, & Thievon, 2000; Tuckman, 2002).

Before concluding, it is significant to report and sum up the main differences between distance education and traditional learning as illustrated in the table below:

Distance learning (Online learning)	Traditional learning (Face to face learning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •It does not require a specific location (learners learn wherever they are). •It requires no specific time (learners learn when they want). •It requires no physical presence (teachers are far away from their learners). •Requires the use of technological tools, internet connection, various applications, etc. •It does not require a lot of money (not very expensive). •The use of new learning strategies (the use of networking sites). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •It requires a specific environment or place (classroom). •Requires specific time (when to get started and when to finish). •Requires physical presence (a teacher and a number of students). •Requires the use of traditional methods and tools for teaching (technological tools are not widely used). •In many countries it requires a lot of money (highly expensive). •The use of traditional learning strategies (lecturing).

It is evident from the previous researches that each method has its benefits and as long as it does not affect the learning outcomes of the learner, the use of one of them is closely related to the choice of teachers and learners and the conditions of the educational system in the country.

4.2.1. Distance learning versus E-learning and the Role of ICTs

1.4.2.1. Distance learning versus E-learning

The discovery of the relationship between distance learning and e-learning and the role of information and communication technologies in online courses, was one of the main issues that attracted many researchers who seek to uncover its secrets.

The term E-learning first emerged, when distance learning entered the educational systems. Some people believe that distance learning means e-learning and use them interchangeably. However, researchers have proven the opposite. There are plenty of definitions to distance learning, some of them has been stated earlier in the previous information. Before the technological development that the world is currently aware of, distance learning in relation to universities has nothing to do with the physical distance between the teacher and the students. This is what Guri-Rosenblit confirmed in saying that “The idea of distance teaching university adopts the opposite course of a campus based university” (2005; p .469). Distance learning was used to describe how do learners learn without residing. They come from their houses to study and when they finish they leave the college again.

Nowadays, distance learning meaning is quite different from what it was years ago. Guri-Rosenblit (2005), Defines distance education as, “...The physical separation of the learner from the instructor, at least at certain stages of the learning process” (p. 469- 470). That is to say, students learn far away from their teachers’ location. E-learning, on the other hand, represents a new phenomenon related to the emergence of technology and it is based on the use of the electronic media for different learning objectives. E-learning can be used with traditional classes as well as with online courses (Guri- Rosenblit, 2005).

Furthermore, Sehra, Maghu and Bhardawaj (2014), made a distinction between the two concepts stating that, Distance learning is a system of delivery connects students with the educational resources (lectures...) in order “to keep them in touch with normal regular attending

students” (p. 824). In other words, not all students choose to take online classes, some of them attend regularly in face to face teaching and learning classes. While e-learning according to Sehra et al (2014) refers To the different teaching and learning Electronic materials such as; Computers, PowerPoints...etc, and is often associated with distance or online classes.

So, the distinction between distance learning and e-learning is in the answer of the “What?” and the “How?”. That is to say, online learning is a method while e-learning reports the tools needed to accomplish the use of this method.

2.4.2.1. The Role of Information Communication Technologies in Facilitating Distance Learning

The recent development has affected the entire course of life, as the conquest of different technologies in various spheres, such as education, has led to the progress and development of different countries.

Information communication technologies (ICTs) represent an important outcome of that development. It is widely used in the educational field, especially in foreign and second language teaching. Students tend to learn things as “static facts”. However, the use of ICTs changed the very traditional standards and norms. ICTs provide different choices and many options for both teachers and learners (kagugu, 2011).

Generally speaking ICTs represent the various technologies that help and allow people and organizations to interact in a digital world. Kagugu defined ICTs as “Electronic technologies” that teachers and learners use to gather, store, operate and transfer information (2011). Gunton (1993) on the other hand, distinguished between two different ICT categories presented by kagugu (2011; p. 9) as follows:

- a.** The first category is those which process information such as computer systems.
- b.** The second category includes those which disseminate information.

The teaching and the learning process was facilitated due to the interference of ICTs within distance learning programs. In fact, Kagugu (2011) in describing the fundamental role of ICTs in distance learning, he claimed that GAID (2009) informed that in the study that was done by “The internal institute for communication and development” (IICD) stated that, 80% of its candidates understood and realized things better due to the ICTs use in education. In

addition to that, 60% of its participants believed that the teaching and the learning process was positively impacted by the use of ICTs. In this regard, Muchi (2006) claimed that the use of ICTs in such courses (Emails, live chats...etc) will help teachers and students interact with each other without need to meet together.

ICT like other technologies helped Significantly in enriching the educational systems, programs, curriculums and facilitated the information grasping process for many learners and teaching for many teachers all over the world.

5.2.1. The Effect of Distance Learning on Students' Motivation

Exploring the relationship between the ways in which learners learn and their self-commitment has always been an important issue that has attracted many researchers for years. For that reason, many of them shed light on the effect of distance learning on learners' motivation and the relationship between them.

Traditional classes all over the world tend to have the same structure. A teacher who is instructing and learners listening, asking and taking notes (Rajae, 2015). Of course, the discovery and the use of new teaching methods is an important factor that contributed to the learners' understanding, especially the methods that focus on the learners' competencies and the shift from the competence (Input) into performance (Output).

Technology suggests different strategies and techniques that make the learning process more enjoyable and interesting to students (Keller & Suzuki, 2004. Cited in Rajae, 2015). Distance learning is one of these methods that have marked the shift from the traditional classroom to the new digital learning. As neither the teacher nor the student is required to be in the classroom.

Since the invention of the Internet, Distance learning became a revolution and a challenge in the educational system. This method is based on online teaching. The teacher and his students are in different places but together at the same time and sometimes at different times. Teachers are able to speak and learners listen. They can see each other easily as well. They can interact with each other and share plenty of information, this in case of online live lessons. Some teachers on the other hand, rely on distance learning to send lessons in a form of handouts to their students, test learners through Online tests and quizzes, inform students about an assignment deadline, give instructions... etc.

It is clearly realized that the shift in the learning process and the educational system affects the learner primarily. This is what attracted the researchers' attention. Many of them tried to figure out how a learner's motivation can be affected by distance learning?

For a better understanding, it is important to have a look on motivation meaning. Motivation represents the fuel that pushes someone to do something. It is the person's desire to achieve a goal, an object or an aim. When it comes to acquiring and learning new information or new knowledge, motivation is considered as a significant factor that can affect the learners' capacities. In fact, studies have shown how much motivation matters. The more the student is motivated the more he becomes active and productive. It is easy for the teacher to realize whether his students are motivated or not. If the student wants to participate and learn from an activity, then this means that he is motivated to learn, if not, it means that the learner is not motivated (N.Garavan, Garbery, O'malley & O'Donnell, 2010. Cited in Rajae, 2015).

Furthermore, Wigfield, Tonks (2002) and Gardner (2001) stated that a motivated person is the one who tries his best to achieve his goals, he is energetic and completely focused on the task, pick the right strategies and the suitable techniques to reach his objectives (Cited in Solek, 2012).

1.5.2.1. Historical Perspective in the study of Foreign Language Learning Motivation

Experimental research on the relationship between second and foreign language learning were first started in Canada.

In 1959s, Gardner and Lambert, the founders of the socio educational model about the second language acquisition, claimed that the learning process differ from one subject to another, arguing that the way students acquire the second language differ from their way in learning other things (Gardner & Lambert, 1959. Cited in Solek, 2012). The findings of Gardner and the other Canadian pioneers to the social psychological approach contributed a lot in the language learning motivation research especially in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. The focus of their approach was the study of the relationship between the social and the individual psychology, to understand how people learn the language of other societies and the reason behind their motivation to do so (Solek, 2012). The outcome of their research was that an

individual's learning behaviour is completely tied and related to his beliefs towards the second or the foreign language learning (Gardner, 1988. Cited in Solek, 2012).

In addition to the social psychological approach, Crooks' & Schmidt's (1991) "Cognitive-situated model" and Dörnyei's and Ottó's (1998) "second language motivation model" added a lot to the second and foreign language acquisition researches (Solek, 2012). The cognitive situated and the second language models view the motivation as a "dynamic process" that changes overtime (Solek, 2012). That is to say, learners' motivation fluctuates according to the circumstances of the educational process.

This was nothing but an overview on the historical perspective in the study of motivation in relation to foreign languages. Now, it is important to have an idea about the types of motivation.

2.5.2.1. Types of motivation

While trying to identify the reason behind an individual's behaviour and the motivation types, Solek (2012) claimed that there are three items proposed by Dörnyei (2001). These categories are important while trying to identify the motivation type in general. The three items are:

- Why Do people make a decision to do an activity?
- How long they are willing to keep active during the activity?
- How difficult is it to continue the activity?

In addition to that, McDonough (2007) stated that motivation is what pushes people to act or to do an action. In fact, it is what helps them to learn and acquire the language, learn how to teach and instruct that language and teach that language (Solek, 2012). McDonough (2007) stated four different elements that help to identify the type of motivation (In relation to language learning). These elements are:

- The reason why we want to learn
- The strength of our desire to learn
- The kind of person we are, and
- The task and our estimation of what it requires of us. (Solek, 2012; p. 242).

Gardner (1985) In addition to his colleagues proposed two different types of motivation explained by Richards (2003):

1.2.5.2.1. Instrumental motivation: Instrumental motivation is the willingness to acquire a particular foreign language such as English for its benefits. For example, to get an occupation in a respectful Canadian company.

2.2.5.2.1. Integrative motivation: This kind of motivation appears when a person wants to learn the language in order to be able to communicate with and become like native speakers (Solek, 2012).

In addition to the previous motivational categories, Özen (2017) in her article “The effect of motivation on student achievement”, added two types of motivation proposed by Deci and Ryan (2002) as follows:

3.2.5.2.1. Intrinsic motivation: “ If the factors that direct the individual to a certain behaviour comes from his own inner world, in a manner that is independent of the drives outside of the individual, this is intrinsic motivation” (Ural, 2009. Cited in Özen, 2017; p. 36). In other words, Intrinsic motivation appears when there is an internal desire to achieve an objective for its sake to provide “satisfaction” (Solek, 2012). That is to say, individual's needs and objectives is what create intrinsic motivation (Özen, 2017).

Moreover, it is important to note that when it comes to the learning process, understanding and comprehending the subject or the topic will increase the student’s motivation. There is a study on the importance of such motivation stated that learners learn more easily if they are motivated to understand the topic and grasp it (Çelen, 2010. Cited in Özen, 2017).

4.2.5.2.1. Extrinsic motivation: is the result of external factors, or when an individual is motivated as a result of an outside reason. External motivation is the different behaviors that appears from “external sources” as a result of the person's actions, such as rewards (Erdogan, 2013. Cited in Özen, 2017). In this case, the motivated person is not motivated because of an inner desire, but because of external benefits (Sen, 2006).

It is important to note that researchers such as, Richards (2003); Sawyer (2007) and Dörnyei (2001) claimed the role that teachers play in affecting their learners' extrinsic

motivation, especially when the teachers themselves are motivated when teaching (Solek, 2012).

So, there are four types of motivation. However, many researches discussed the term “Amotivation”. Amotivation is not a type of motivation, but rather a term which describes unmotivated person. Özen stated that, “In this case, individuals cannot make an association with the impact of actions or the impact of their surroundings, and thus, they cannot be motivated either intrinsically or extrinsically” (2017; p. 36). In other words, in case a person do not feel that an action will be beneficial for him he will not take that action, this is what Amotivation means. (Özen, 2017).

Finally, It is quite clear that motivation plays a significant role and have a big impact on the learnen’s learning process be it instrumental or integrative, intrinsic or extrinsic. That is why teachers are required to help their learners learn effectively through encouraging and guiding them to find their own objectives and desires.

6.2.1. Advatages of Distance Learning

Distance learning took the field of education a step forward. It proved to be advantageous thanks to the lucrative chances it offers to students and institutions.

This teaching mode enables the learner to expand his knowledge anytime in any place (Oliveira, Penedo, & Pereira, 2018). Contrary to the traditional classes that obliges the student to respect a timetable, distance learning allows him to make his own schedule of studying. Along similar lines Oliveira et al. (2018) claimed that DL is a good option of studying for the individuals who are working. Likely, it enables them to balance their jobs and their studies since they can study in their spare time or in their break time. Furthermore, distance learning meets the needs of people who thirst for knowledge, but they could not join school for a reason or another (Valentine).

Another striking feature of distance education is making studies attainable for people who live in isolated areas (Vlasenko & Bozhok, n.d.).Attending classes for this category of people is almost impossible, thanks to the internet and other electronic devices, getting access to courses and other sources of information becomes easy. Increasingly, this type of learning ensures the same interaction between the learner and the instructor as in face-to-face teaching (Kiryokova, 2009).The teacher can deliver lessons using video chats through which he can ask

students and get feedback. Students, in their turn can ask the teacher for more explanation and discuss with their classmate about the lesson.

There has been a consensus among teachers and experts that the good teacher should adapt an eclectic method in addition to a variety of activities that meet the different styles of learners. The same can be said about distance learning that makes use of the internet that can be suitable for every learner's preferences (Busëlić, 2012). In the same context Zapalska and Brozik (2006) added that, some students prefer to learn by watching and some learn best by listening, while others like to practice and move when learning. All students with their diverse preferences can learn in distance using the internet, thus videos and pictures are available for visual learners, as for auditory learners can listen to the recorded lessons as much as needed. Kinesthetic learners who like to learn by experiencing can put the theoretical lessons into practice (Wood & Massinger, 2016).

Distance education is profitable also for the teacher, by using this method his responsibilities are shortened to preparing a lesson and sharing it for several classes of the same level, contrary to the traditional classes that oblige him to repeat the same lesson for several classes (Oliveira et al, 2018). Additionally, students become self-directed learners and less dependent on the teacher since they have a lot of sources of information (Arkorful, 2011).

Negrle (2013) stated that distance education eliminates commuting from one place to another (as cited in Sadeghi, 2019), thus it saves efforts, time and money for learners (Sadeghi, 2019). Therefore, students who are opting for getting higher degrees or multiple diplomas from famous universities do not have to travel from one country to another; all what they need is a computer or a smart phone in addition to a good internet connection. Sadeghi's claim is supported by Huang, Tlili, Jemni, and Burgos (2001) who stressed on the importance of remote learning in facilitating the learning process for handicapped who cannot attend face-to-face classes. Remote learning allows them to overcome the obstacles and to cope with regular students. Additionally, Melvina, Langknawati, Wirza, Alicia, and Yulmata (2020) claimed that distance learning plays an important role in preventing the spread of Covid-19, by staying home teachers and students will protect themselves and others from the danger of the disease.

Students and knowledge-seekers should profit from the privileges offered by distance learning, such as easier access to education, the ability to study without going to school and to get multiple diplomas simultaneously.

7.2.1. Disadvantages of Distance Learning

Literature shows that there is a consensus among experts that all of the teaching methods have weaknesses and distance learning is not an exception. In spite of its numerous advantages it still has a set of disadvantages.

Busëlić (2012) stated that distance learning does not provide the learner and the teacher with the instant feedback, consequently the student cannot be evaluated by the teacher immediately. Considering the fact that the instructor cannot always perform live videos in order to explain the lessons, so the learner cannot ask the teacher for more explanation unless he sends an e-mail and waits for a response. Thus, he may forget that question, as for the instructor, he cannot assess his students' competence and understanding immediately. Additionally, the applications that are used for live videos such as Zoom are not always the best options, because the students may be distracted by the appearance of their classmates, or they may miss important information because of the internet cutout (Melvina et al., n.d). With the adoption of remote learning, any technical problem that occurs, the whole class may be concealed (valentine, n.d) especially, the internet cutout during a live session. These technical problems affect students' intentions and hinder them from studying.

The major difficulty in adopting distance learning in the educational system is the management of online tests that are not reliable since the teacher cannot prevent students from cheating (Lee, Yoon, & Lee, 2009). Unethical behavior may rise while using such method of teaching and learning, students may search for answers in search engines or exchange ideas with their classmates, therefore, the instructor will not be able to identify the actual level of his students. Another weakness of this teaching mode is related to the students attitudes towards distance learning, generally students have negative prejudgments about non-face classes due to their lack of knowledge and experience of the new method (Oliveira, 2018). Their beliefs play an important role in their acceptance and adoption of distance learning.

With the implementation of distance learning, time management becomes a real challenge for the learners because of the lack of communication between them and their classmates and their instructor (Rinkema & Williams, 2021). To put it more simply, the learners may be distracted from learning since they are not exposed to the atmosphere of the real classroom that prompt them to study. Subsequently, they must be self-dependent and take the responsibility of their learning. In effect, this teaching mode proved to be helpful for the teacher,

nonetheless, it demands a huge effort from him, thus he should devote a considerable amount of time to answer e-mails and to record videos (Busèlić, 2012).

For people who are intending to get degrees and diplomas to start their careers are not advised to depend fully on online degrees. In this regard Busèlić (2012) developed the claim that certificates that are obtained through distance learning are not recognized by all the employers. Besides, not all of distance learning degrees are valid (Top Ten (10) disadvantages of distance learning). Learners may be exposed to fraud and theft by some institutions. Arkorful (2011) added that distance learning cannot be used in all the fields, especially the fields that require practice such as medicine, such specialties entail the presence of learners in classrooms or laboratories. Moreover, distance learning does not give the chance for learners to develop their oral performance especially foreign languages learners who need to interact with their peers. (Top Ten (10) distance learning disadvantages).

Certainly, distance learning may seem cheaper since it frees students from the fees of traveling, but in fact, it requires expensive tools such as computer and a reliable internet connection, in addition to electricity costs (Bijeesh, n.d). Training teachers, learners and technicians on the use of distance learning and its devices is really beneficial, but it turns out to be a problem because the training of the staff demands a large budget (Bijeesh, n.d).

Evidently, distance learning contains numerous drawbacks such as lack of interaction between the learner and the instructor and poor time management. But it still can be useful if it is managed well.

8.2.1. How to Ensure the Effectiveness of Distance Learning

Making distance learning successful is a challenging mission, because many hurdles and problems may arise while implementing this method. Thus, teachers, learners, institutions as well as the ministry of education should work in cooperation to surmount those challenges and to profit from the benefits of distance learning.

Naffi, Davidson, Patino, Beatty, and Gbetoglo (2020) stressed on the necessity of providing learners and institutions with the needed equipment that facilitates the learning process. In the same context, Sun (2020) added that the government should ensure electronic devices for the poor class students in order to give them a chance to experience distance learning. According to Altunay's study (2019) many students do not have laptops, therefore, he

said that universities and campuses should be supplied with computers and other devices in order to ensure equity and to enable all students to get access to online courses.

After providing the learners with the suitable electronic devices, the educational institution should offer help for the teachers by training them to use those devices effectively (Lee et al., 2009). Most of the instructors are not familiar with the use of the internet and ICT, thus updating their knowledge of the use of new technologies and educational platforms is a must, in order for them to accommodate the sudden shift that occurred in the field of education. Institutions should also provide students with introductory courses on the use of computers and network (Attri, 2012), although most of the students are accustomed to the use of digital media, yet, the majority are experiencing distance learning for the first time, especially in the developing countries. Therefore, providing them with instructions and guide to use remote learning is fundamental.

The role of the teacher is indispensable in education, either in face-to-face or in remote learning. Keriekova (2009) stated that the teacher should carefully prepare distance lessons taking into consideration his students' needs. Additionally, he may change his methods of teaching in order to meet the distant learners' expectation and needs (Attri, 2012). Learners' needs in the real classroom atmosphere differ from their needs when studying through distance, due to the lack of communication between them and the instructor. In order to rectify this problem Heng and Sol (2020) advised tutors to organize online meetings to interact with their students and to create a dynamic atmosphere that promote learning, this will strengthen the teacher and the learner relationship and motivate students to take online courses.

The key problem with the adoption of remote learning is the full reliance of the student on the teacher, because of the nature of traditional classes that impose on the student to be passive. Therefore, it is highly recommended for the instructor to train his learners to be autonomous, i.e. to be able to determine a goal for learning, to select techniques and tasks for achieving it and to assess their performance (Brockette & Hiemstra, 1991 cited in Aggeliki et al., 2017). According to Andrade (2014) it is expected from the distance student to take advantage of distance learning and its tools to study on his own (cited in Firat, 2016). The fact that the student cannot ask questions or ask for the clarification of the tutor anytime, this urges him to seek for information and to study on his own method. Besides, there are many alternatives that make the student more dependent on himself and less dependent on the teacher

such as the search engines, educational websites and tutorial videos that provide students with the needed knowledge.

Overall, lack of equipment, lack of interaction between the student and the teacher and lack of training are the sample of many problems that are associated with distance learning. Unless these problems are solved, distance learning may deteriorate and lose its validity.

Conclusion

Distance education is considered as one of the main significant methods that has imposed itself in the world of study. Therefore, it has taken a specific attention from teachers, learners as well as curriculum designers. Studies on such fields must be conducted in relation to the student who is the pivot of the teaching process, his opinions and presumptions regarding such topics are of a huge interest.

From tackling beliefs and distance learning in this chapter, we discovered that beliefs are indispensable in the learning process. Thus, beliefs bear a certain degree of responsibility when it comes to learners' acceptance or rejections of distance learning. In addition to the learners' beliefs, there are many other factors that play an undeniable role in the success of the distance learning process, such as motivation, students' backgrounds, students' willingness to respond to change, availability of technological tools in addition to the materials provided by the teacher. Some issues that may affect students' attitudes towards distance learning and ways to eliminate the disadvantages of distance learning are proposed throughout this chapter as well.

CHAPTER TWO:
THE PRACTICAL
PART

Introduction

This study is about investigating EFL learners beliefs about distance learning. We have relied on distributing questionnaires in doing so. Students questionnaires were used in order to gather the learners views and attitudes towards distance learning.

This chapter constructs on a description of the population and the sample under study, questionnaire's description as well as an analysis to the results and data we collected from the learners. Moreover, this chapter includes a discussion to the results, Suggestions and recommendations and ends up with a conclusion.

1.2. Research methodology design

1.1.2. Methodology

Since we have relied on the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods while conducting and analysing data, our study belongs to a Mixed research method. The choice of the Research methodology was determined by some factors such as, the research questions, objectives, the population and the data gathered from the questionnaire.

2.1.2. The population

EFL learners' opinions and suggestions are required in this investigation, thus the subject of this study is Master one linguistics students at the department of English at M'sila university.

3.1. 2. The sample

The selected sample consists of thirty eight (38) participants who were randomly chosen. The target population is Master one linguistics students at the English department of M'sila university. The reason behind this selection, is that Master one students have introduced to distance learning and have experienced it for two years. In addition to their advanced level in English and their ability to express their preferences and clearly distinguish between the different teaching and learning methods.

4.1.2. Questionnaire Description

A questionnaire was used to collect data from the chosen sample. We have done a pilot study on the questionnaire before it was actually distributed to the students. At this stage, we have distributed the questionnaire online to make sure that the questions are valid and clear. The results obtained from this study showed that all the questions were interpreted correctly and answered easily by the students.

The questionnaire composed of nineteen (19) questions, mixed between Close ended questions where students are required to choose Yes or No answers , Open ended questions where students reply and answer the questions freely according to their points of view and Multiple choices questions where learners pick one choice and justify their answers. Every question has its own objectives:

Q 1: Attempted to know whether the students have good or poor Internet connexion.

Q 2: Find out if students are relying on distance learning during COVID-19.

Q 3: Exploring learners opinions about distance learning education as a learning method, whether it is new or not in Algeria.

Q 4: Ask the learners if they used to use distance learning before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q 5: Determine learners' opinions about the impact of distance learning on their language skills.

Q 6: Attempting to know the learners' views on distance learning, whether it is an effective study method or not.

Q 7: It aims to determine the learners' opinions about the additional research they are doing, and whether or not they consider it part of distance learning.

Q 8: See how often learners log on to Moodle.

Q 9: Find out if students are having difficulties accessing Moodle and if yes, what these difficulties are.

Q 10: It aims to know how often teachers do online lessons.

Q 11: Trying to figure out what learners rely on when studying: online lessons, handouts, or both.

Q 12: It aims to explore whether learners' motivation is affected by distance learning and whether it is affected in a positive or negative way.

Q 13: Finding out if distance learning requires more efforts or not.

Q 14: Determine learners' opinions about the amount of information they would receive regarding distance learning and traditional learning (using handouts).

Q 15: Ask students to choose one answer about how useful distance learning is for their studies.

Q 16: Determine learners' perspectives on replacing traditional classes with distance learning.

Q 17: Ask students to mention three advantages of distance learning.

Q 18: Ask students to list three problems they encounter while using distance learning.

Q 19: Ask students to mention some suggestions to promote the use of distance learning in Algerian universities.

5.1.2. Data gathering tools

To answer the research questions, thirty eight (38) questionnaires were distributed to Master one students. Additionally, the same questionnaire was distributed online and was published on Facebook to the same participants. The total number of the gathered questionnaires is twenty (20), three (3) of them were the outcome of online questionnaires, the other seventeen questionnaires (17) were collected from students directly in the classroom. While, twenty-one (21) students did not return the questionnaire to us.

2.2. The Questionnaire Analysis and Discussion

Item 01 : Do you have a good internet connection ?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	09	45
No	11	55
Total	20	100

Table 01 : The Internet Connection

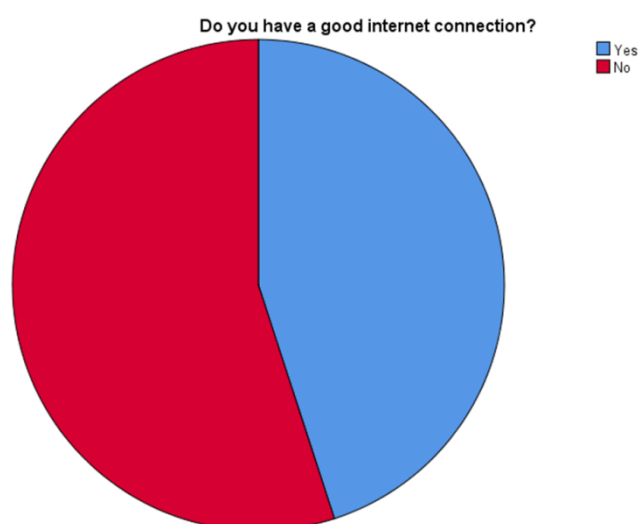


Figure 01: The Internet Connection

The first item aims at knowing if all of the students have simple conditions that enable them to use distance learning. The table above shows that more than half of the students 11(55%) do not have a good internet connection. However, 9(45%) declared that they have a good internet connection. Perhaps the majority of the respondents live in remote areas or they do not have a reliable internet service.

Item 02 : Are you using distance learning during the Corona virus pandemic ?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	15	75
No	05	25
Total	20	100

Table 02 : Distance Learning during the Coronavirus Pandemic

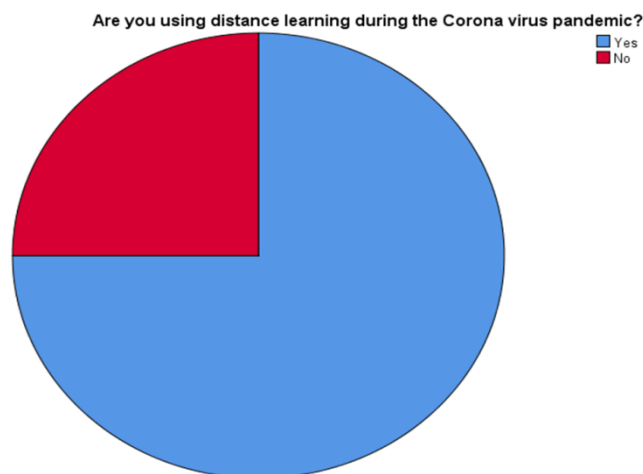


Figure 02: Distance Learning during the Coronavirus Pandemic

The table represents the frequencies and the percentages of the students' answers towards whether they are relying on distance learning during COVID-19. As it is shown 15 students which means 75% of them answered "Yes", while only five students 25% answered "No". From that, we come out to the result that most students are relying on distance learning during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Item 03 : Do you think that distance learning is a new method in Algeria ?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	19	95
No	01	05
Total	20	100

Table 03 : Distance Learning a New Method in Algeria

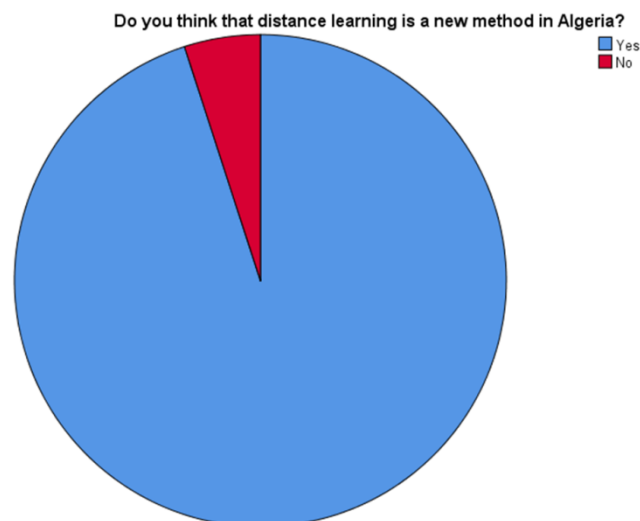


Figure 03: Distance Learning a New Method in Algeria

In this item we attempt to examine learners' background knowledge about distance learning. The results shown in the table demonstrate that a big proportion of the participants who represent 19(95%) think that distance learning is a new method in Algeria, only 1 (5%) think the opposite. The cultural factor may be responsible for this result, thus ,Algerian students are more familiar with traditional methods of teaching and learning and they did not get the chance to experience it in the educational institutions before 2020.

Item 04 : Did you rely on distance learning as a tool to improve your English even before the Covid 19 ?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14	70
No	06	30
Total	20	100

Table 04 : Distance Learning as a tool to improve English even before COVID-19

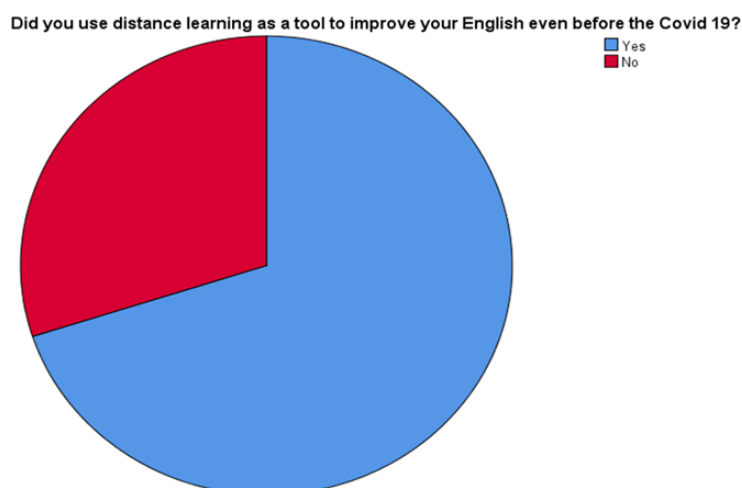


Figure 04 : Distance Learning as a tool to improve English even before COVID-19

According to the results shown in the table and the pie chart about the learners use of distance learning to improve their English language before COVID-19, we find that, 14 students or 70% of the them answered "Yes", while only six (6) students which means 30% answered "No". From the results we realise that students are familiar with this way of learning and used to use it as a method to improve their foreign language (English) even before it becomes a method approved by the educational system in Algeria.

Item 05 : As an EFL learner, do you think that distance learning will help you improve your language skills ?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14	70
No	06	30
Total	20	100

Table 05 : Improving language skills using Distance Learning

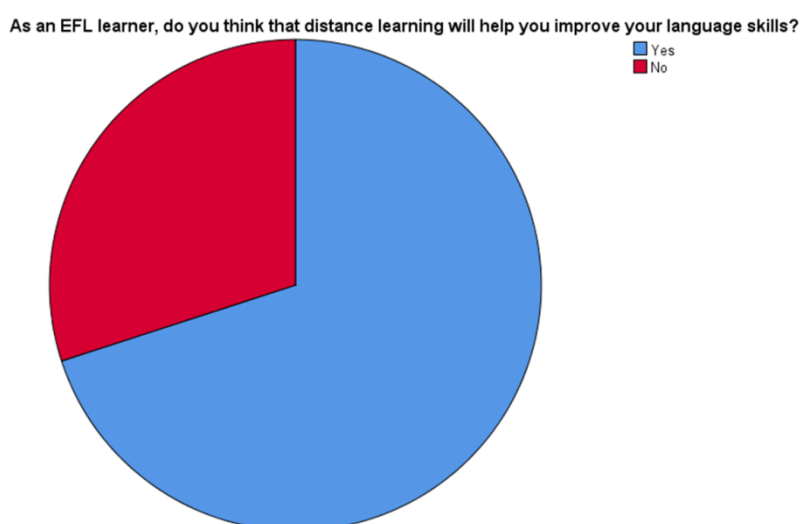


Figure 05: Improving language skills using Distance Learning

The table and the chart above reflect students' opinions regarding distance learning, whether or not it helps them enhance their level in the four language skills. The results are as follows: 14(70%) think that it helps them reach an advanced level in English and 6 (30%) think that it is not helpful. In the second part of the question, the participants were asked to justify their answers. In stating reasons behind their negative attitudes, they said that mastering a second language implies a lot of practice and distance learning excludes student- student and student- teacher interaction. On the other hand, the students who have a positive attitude stated that this method is adequate for language learning because it gives them a chance to be exposed to authentic English and to practice it.

Item 06 : Do you think that distance learning is an effective learning and teaching strategy ?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	09	45
No	11	55
Total	20	100

Table 06 : Distance Learning an Effective Learning and Teaching Strategy

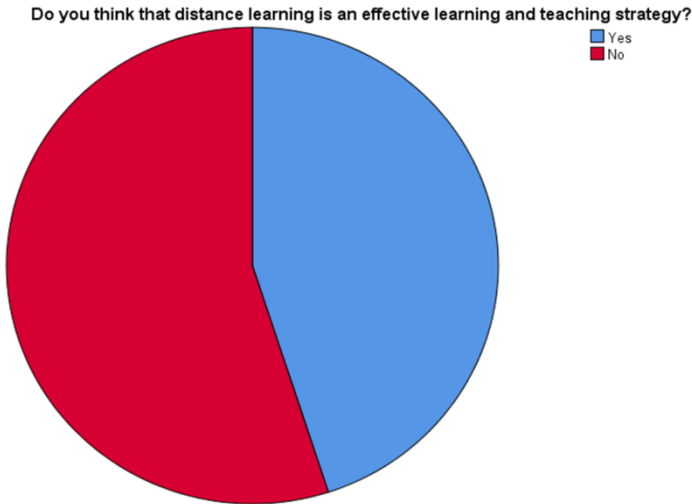


Figure 6: Distance Learning an Effective Learning and Teaching Strategy

The table and the pie chart above show the statistical results of the students answers regarding how often do they log into Moodle platform. 45% (8 students) answered "Sometimes", seven (7 students) or 35% said "Rarely", where the percentage of students who answered "Never" and "Always" is 10% which means two (2) students for each answer. So, we can see that students do not access Moodle very often. The reason behind this may be related to the small number of lessons that teachers put on this platform, so there will be no need to check it very often. When it comes to learners who answered “never”, the reason is quite clear in the next question. Learners claimed that they found some technical issues while trying to login to the platform such as; the Password rejection problem.

Item 07 : Do you consider the extra researches you do on Google or YouTube and other search engines as a part of distance learning ?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	85
No	03	15
Total	20	100

Table 07 : The Other Search Applications as a Part of Distance Learning

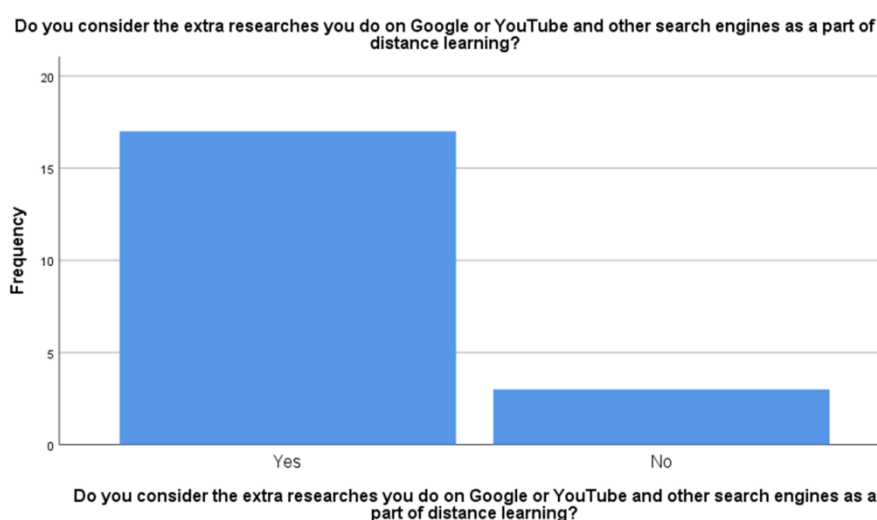


Figure 07: The Other Search Applications as a Part of Distance Learning

The chart above is about students' understanding of distance learning, it also seeks to find out the extent to which they are self-dependent learners. The results obtained show the following: 17 (85%) consider the extra research as a part of distance learning, and 3 (15%) do not consider the extra research as a part of distance learning. This indicates that the majority of learners take the responsibility for their learning. This question also requires the respondents' justifications. Approximately all of the respondents (85%) agree that distance learning provides them with additional information and better understanding of ambiguous lessons. They further stated that the search engines are the only alternatives that fill the gap created by the absence of direct interaction between them and their instructor.

Item 08 : How often do you login to moodle ?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Never	02	10
Rarly	07	35
Sometimes	09	45
Always	02	10
Total	20	100

Table 08 : Accessing to Moodle

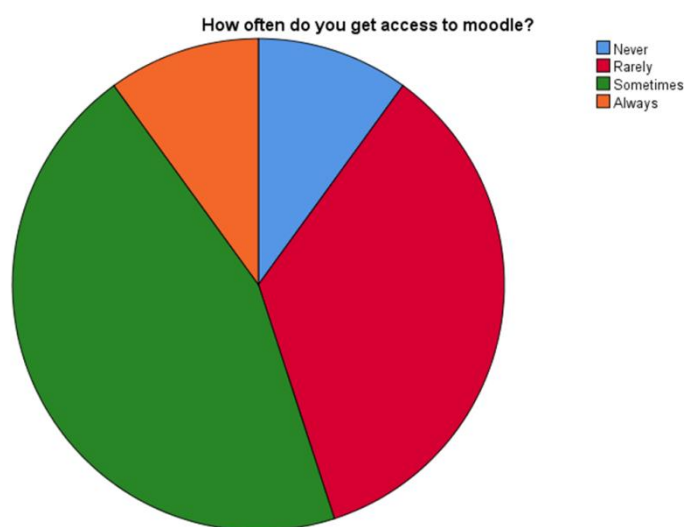


Figure 8: Accessing to Moodle

The table and the pie chart above are to investigate whether or not distance learning is an effective learning and teaching strategy. 55% (11) students picked "No" and 45% (9) students selected "Yes". We have asked learners to justify their answers. For those who answered "No," most of them preferred face to face learning where students interact with and receive information directly from the teacher. Others argue that not all students have the financial ability to provide computers, smartphones, or internet access. Some of them said that learners

used to rely on the teacher to understand things, while some learners have claimed that lack of information about the correct use of technology drives teachers to publish lectures on the Moodle platform without creating videos to explain lessons and clarify information.

The participants who answered "Yes" on the other hand, claimed that distance learning gave chance for them to become independent, learn freely and rely on themselves. Others said that it is effective because it helps them to save time and efforts. While some participants answered "Yes" but, they stated that the choice still related to the person's preferences and whether he is an extrovert or introvert person.

Item 09 : Do you find difficulties when login to moodle ?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14	70
No	06	30
Total	20	100

Table 09 : Difficulties in Accessing Moodle Platform

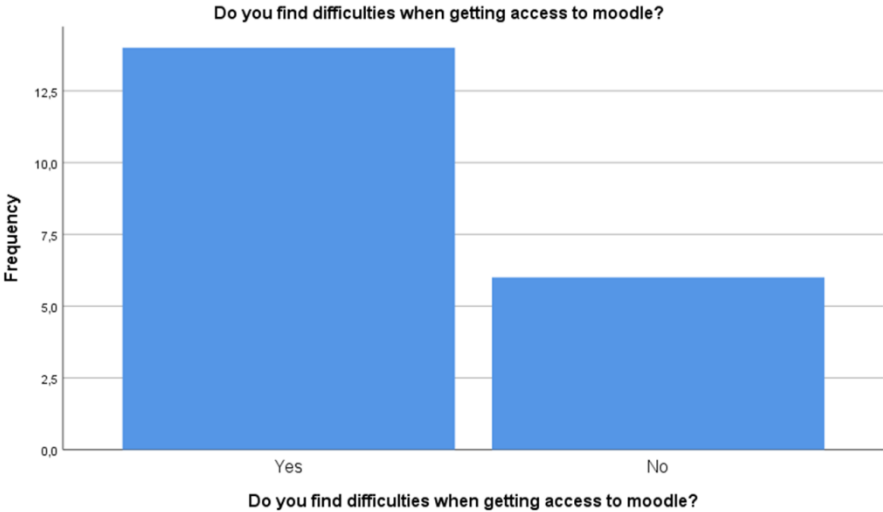


Figure 09 : Difficulties in Accessing Moodle Platform

Throughout this item we attempt to know whether or not our participants face problems when using the educational site of their university. The results in the table above reveal that high percentage of students (70%) confirm that they find difficulties. On the contrary, (30%) do not find difficulties. To go deeper and identify those problems, students were asked to write the kinds of difficulties they face. A big proportion said that the crucial problems they encounter are the technical problems related to Moodle, such as, the rejection of the password even if it is correct, the registration to the platform requires a lot of personal data and many students do not have accounts in Moodle. A lot of students declared that they suffer from the cutout of the internet, which means they rarely or never get access to the site.

Item 10 : How often do your teachers make online sessions ?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Never	10	50
Rarly	05	25
Sometimes	04	20
Always	01	05
Total	20	100

Table 10 : Teachers’ Online sessions

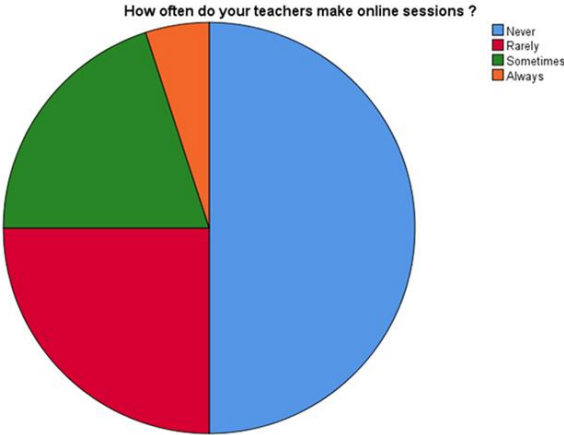


Figure 10: Teachers’ Online sessions

The table and pie chart above are about students' responses towards how often their teachers conduct online sessions. 50% of them (10 students) selected "Never". 25% which means five (5) students choosed "Rarely". Four (4) students which means 20% answered "Sometimes" and only one (1) student 5% said "Always". The students who answered "Never" justified their answers by saying that teachers are not familiar with such kind of lessons and they face problems when it comes to the use of technological applications. Others claimed that teachers think that PDF handouts are enough and there is no need to make online sessions. Some participants on the other hand, said that teachers take into account learners' circumstances (not everyone has the ability to access online lessons due to the Internet problems) and that is why they avoid making online lessons. Generally speaking and according to the learners' answers we can realise that teachers do make online sessions but not that often.

Item 11 : Do you attend online sessions or you rely only on the handouts posted on moodle platform ?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Online	/	/
Handouts	17	85
Both	03	15
Total	20	100

Table 11 : Attending Online sessions VS Relying on Handout

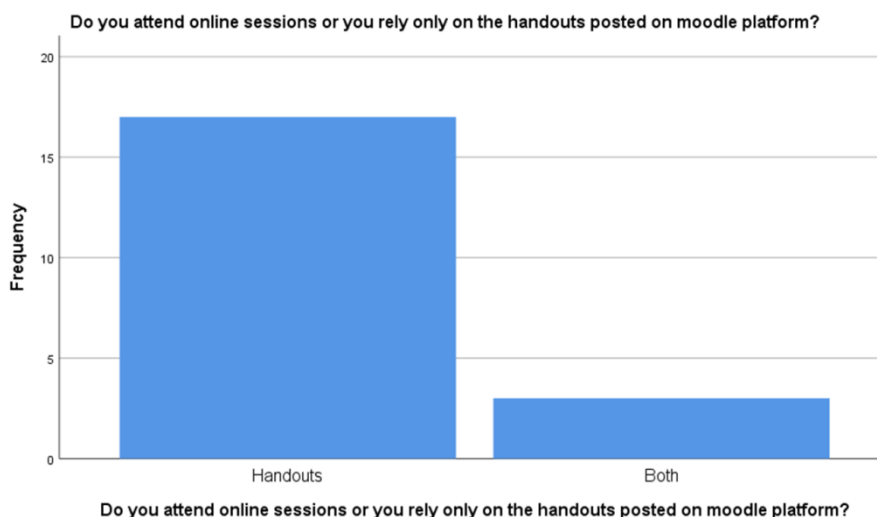


Figure 11: Attending Online sessions VS Relying on Handouts

When students were asked about the way they use distance learning, as the results indicate, 17 (85%) use handouts, no one relies on online sessions. Whereas, 3 (15%) of them rely on both handouts and online sessions . The results imply that most of the participants find the handouts sufficient for their studies, in addition to some reasons that are mentioned in item 9.

Item 12 : Does distance learning affect your motivation ?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	90
No	02	10
Total	20	100

Table 12 (A) : The Impact of Distance Learning on Students Motivation

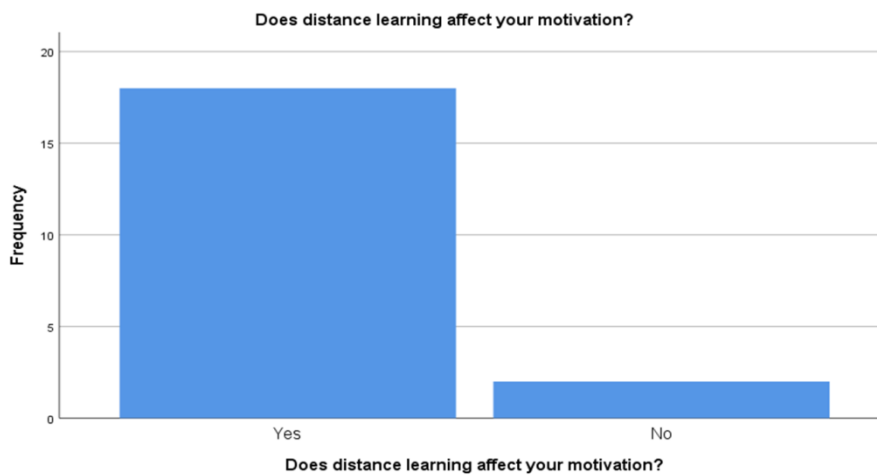


Figure 12 (A): The Impact of Distance Learning on Students Motivation

The table and bar chart above show the results of students' answers regarding distance learning and whether or not it affects their motivation. 90% or 18 students answered "Yes" while only 10% or (2) two students answered "No". This indicates that distance learning affect learners motivation. In the second part of this question we have asked learners who answered "Yes" to pick whether distance learning affects their motivation positively or negatively and to justify their answers.

Item 12 (B) : The Impact of Distance Learning on Students Motivation

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Positively	11	55
Negatively	07	35
Total	18	90

Table 12 (B) : The Impact of Distance Learning on Students Motivation

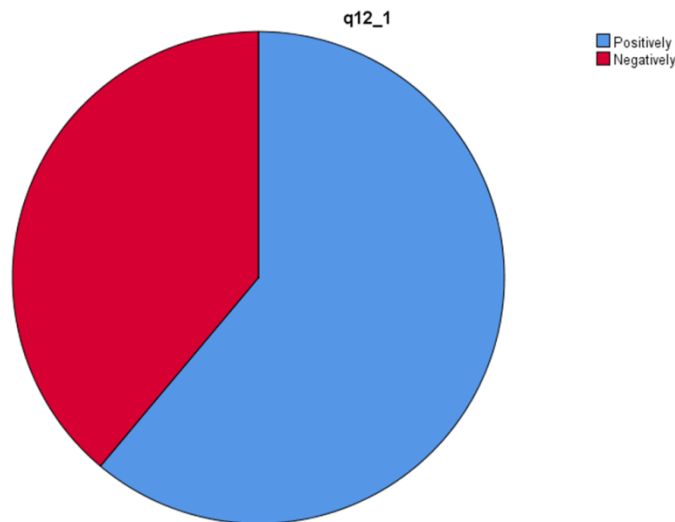


Figure 12(B) : The Impact of Distance Learning on Students Motivation

The results are as follows: 55% or 11 students selected "positively" while seven (7) students 35% answered "negatively". The majority of students who answered that distance learning motivates them in a positive way justified their answers saying that, distance learning gave them the opportunity to test their abilities to learn on their own at home. Others saw distance learning as a good opportunity to search for obscure information freely without being restricted to a specific time period. Some students stated that distance learning positively affects their motivation due to the freedom they find while trying to organize and revise their lessons.

Regarding the participants who said that distance learning affects their motivation in a negative way on the other hand, stated that they better understand the information from the teacher and that they used to rely on taking notes while the instructor lecturing, claiming that the handouts are unclear and need someone to clarify them.

Therefore, from the results we got from the question, we can realize that distance learning affects the motivation of learners. However, when it comes to whether it affects them positively or negatively, we can say that this depends on the personality of the student whether he is an independent or dependent student.

Item 13 : Do you think that distance learning requires more effort from the student ?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	15	75
No	05	25
Total	20	100

Table 13 : Distance Learning and Students Efforts

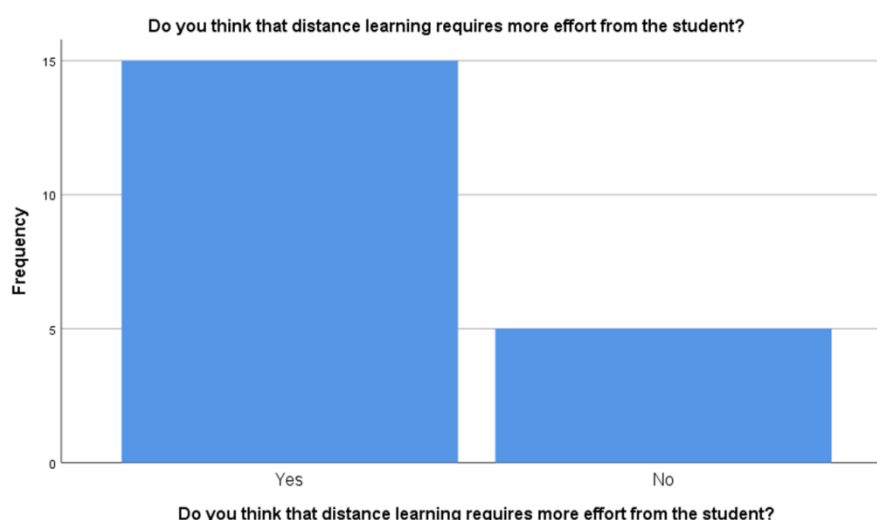


Figure 13 : Distance Learning and Students Efforts

This question seeks to identify the participants' views concerning distance learning, if it is effort consuming or not. About (75%) of the students view that distance learning demands much effort, and other 25% view the opposite. Learners justified their answers on the second part of the item. Out of (75%) indicated that distance learning is effort consuming because, they work hard to understand the lessons provided by the tutor, noting that the handouts are not enough. Others developed the claim that the majority of students do not have the devices needed in distance learning, so they make huge efforts to get the lessons. Five (5) of the respondents preferred not to reply to this question. Out of (25%) who said that distance learning is effortless, they indicated that it does not require commuting.

Item 14 : In case online courses were not available (only handouts), do you think that learners will get the same amount of information as in face to face learning ?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	03	15
No	17	85
Total	20	100

Table 14 : Information in Face to Face Learning

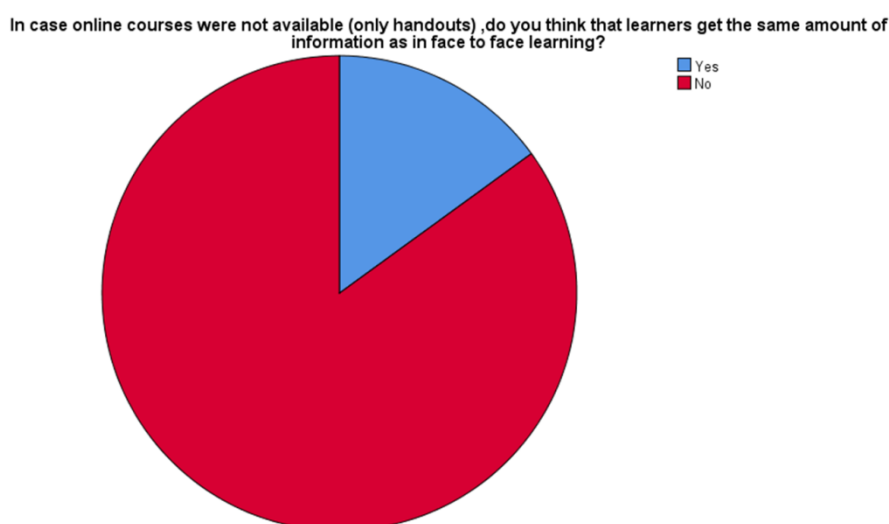


Figure 14: Information in Face to Face Learning

The table and pie chart show the results obtained from the students' answers about their views of the amount of information they will obtain regarding distance learning and traditional learning (using handouts). The results are as follows: 85 % (17 students) said "No" and only 15% or three (3) students selected "Yes". The majority who answered "No" think that handouts are not enough. They said that they need teachers to clarify, expand and explain the handout information. Others said that students' needs differ from one student to another and according to them not all the learners have the ability to understand the handouts by themselves. The rest

of the participants who answered "Yes" did not see a difference in the information they got from either the online lessons or the handouts. Therefore, we can come to the conclusion that most learners use handouts as illustrated in Item (11), However, they prefer to deliver it through online lessons.

Item 15 : I believe that distance learning is beneficial for my studies.

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	02	10
Disagree	05	25
Undecided	03	15
Agree	08	40
Strongly agree	02	10
Total	20	100

Table 15 : Distance Learning is Beneficial for the Learners’ studies

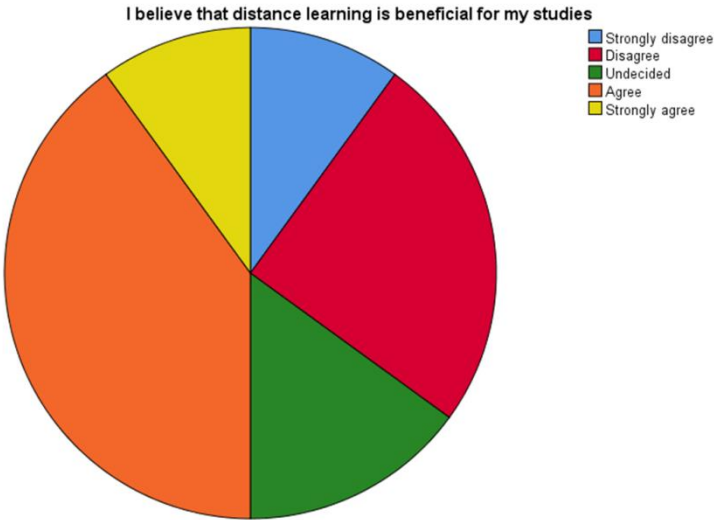


Figure 15: Distance Learning is Beneficial for the Learners’ studies

The result in the table and chart above show that 8(40%) agree that distance learning is beneficial for their studies, 5 (25%) disagree, 3(15%) of the respondents choosed undecided. Two 2 (10%) students picked strongly agree, others 2 (10%) responded with strongly disagree. The fact that half of the participants responded positively, this pushes us to deduce that they are acknowledgeable of the positive side of this method and its importance on their education. Whereas the others who responded negatively, they may be affected by the obstacles that hinder them from using such method.

Item 16 : Traditional classes can be totally substituted by distance learning.

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	04	20
Disagree	04	20
Undecided	03	15
Agree	09	45
Total	20	100

Table 16 : Substituting Traditional classes By Online Classes

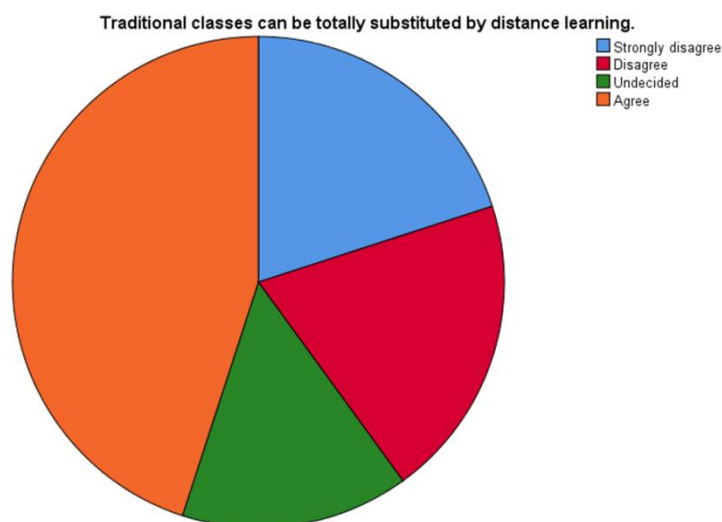


Figure 16: Substituting Traditional classes By Online Classes

The table and pie chart on learners' perspectives regarding the substitution of traditional classes with distance learning revealed that a significant proportion of nine (9) 45% students "Agree" with the system replacement. 20% of the students choosed "Disagree" and the same number of students choosed "Strongly Disagree" for this substitution. Only 15% three (3) students responded "undecided". We have asked students who did not agree to justify their answers. The result of their answer was that, most of them believe that there are some characteristics found in traditional classes that cannot be found in distance learning, such as; the atmosphere, teacher learner interaction and so on. So, we can say that most learners disagree on the substitution of traditional classes by distance learning.

Item 17: Relying on your experience, what are the advantages of distance learning? Mention three advantages.

This question sheds light on the key features of distance learning that should be recognized and exploited by students. Flexibility, facilitating learning in addition to effort, time and money saving are the main advantages that more than the half of the respondents agree upon. Four (4) of the participants did not provide us with their answers, the other remaining four (4) reported that they cannot find any advantage of such method. It can be deduced that EFL learners greet the idea of integrating distance learning to the universities.

Item 18 : According to your personal experience, what are the obstacles you face when dealing with distance learning? Mention three obstacles.

In this question, participants were asked to identify three problems they encounter while using distance learning. Their answers vary from candidate to another. However, most of them agree on three major obstacles :

1. Most students suffer from a lack of internet connection.
2. The students stated that they cannot login to Moodle because their password was rejected.
3. Students complained about the large amount of handouts they had to study and the lack of online lessons that could explain the lessons included in these handouts.

Item 19: What are your suggestions for enhancing and developing the use of distance learning in Algerian universities ?

The last item revolves around EFL learners' suggestions for making distance learning successful in the Algerian universities. Their suggestions can be grouped in three categories. The first category is related to the Internet issue; most of the respondents appeal for enhancing Internet services and make it free for every student. The second category is related to the educational site, many students stressed on the necessity of the maintenance of Moodle and make it more accessible. The last category is related to the teacher, some of the learners suggested that the teacher should mix between online sessions and face-to-face sessions, additionally, he should focus more on online sessions rather than on PDF lessons.

3.2. General results

The outcome of the students' questionner analysis has shown that, the majority of the students have positive attitudes towards distance learning and most of them welcomed the use of this teaching and learning method.

The results initially showed that 55% of the students had poor quality of their internet connection. The majority of students (75%) are relying on the use of distance learning during the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. Almost all students (95%) believe that distance learning is a new teaching and learning method in Algeria. 70% of learners emphasized using distance learning to improve their English even before the onset of COVID-19, with 85% of them relying on using different applications to do so. In addition, 70% of them believe that using distance learning will help them as EFL learners improve their language skills. 55% of students did not agree on the effectiveness of distance learning as a teaching and learning method in Algerian universities. the questionnaire's analysis revealed that students (45%) tend to log into Moodle from time to time, and most of them (70%) stated that the reason behind this is related to the difficulties they encounter while trying to access that platform. 50% of students said their teachers did never make online sessions and 85% stated that they rely only on the use of handouts. The results showed that 85% of the students expressed their dissatisfaction with the use of handouts only and expressed their desire to study in the presence of teachers through online lessons. The majority of respondents (90%) said that their motivation is affected by distance learning and 54% of them showed that distance learning positively affects their motivation. Regarding the amount of energy learners need to put into distance learning, 75%

said that distance learning requires more efforts. Finally, 40% of the candidates considered distance learning as a useful method of their studies and most of them (45%) agreed to replace traditional classes with online lessons.

4.2. Recommendations

The final results obtained from this research can help us provide some suggestions for teachers and students alike for a better use of distance education.

First of all, teachers are advised to update their teaching methods and incorporate ICT tools into their sessions. In addition, they should be encouraged to set up online lessons to make learners familiar with distance learning. Most importantly, teachers are required to lead and guide learners in a way that can help them shift from being teacher-dependent students to independent learners.

As for the students, they are required to rely on themselves in understanding the lessons by using different technological applications to search for ambiguous and unclear information. They should also respect the timing and attend the online lessons regularly to encourage teachers to create more lessons and facilitate the handouts they put on Moodle.

This study has also yielded other suggestions for the administration to ensure the smooth use of this type of lessons. The administration should plan training programs for both teachers and students to provide them with opportunities and instructions on how to properly use technological devices and educational sites. Scheduled online sessions are required in order to integrate distance learning into the university's curriculum. For this reason, it is highly recommended that the English Department of the University of M'Sila fix the issues that prevent students from logging into the Moodle platform.

General conclusion

The rationale of this study is to investigate learners' attitudes towards distance learning and its implementation in the Algerian universities. In an attempt to explore the effectiveness and drawbacks of distance learning and to find out key solutions for surmounting the difficulties resulted from the use of that method, we chose Master one linguistics students at M'sila University.

This research is devised into two parts, the theoretical chapter and the practical one. The first chapter tackles the concept of beliefs from different sides, it further discusses various aspects concerned with distance learning. The second chapter places the learner at the center of the study and provides answers to the research inquiries resulted from students' questionnaires.

After the analyses of the questionnaire, it can be said that the data obtained goes in the same direction with what we assumed as a hypothesis. The sample of the study held positive beliefs about distance learning. Generally, learners are aware of the pros and the cons of distance learning. Additionally, being foreign language learners, they recognize its role on their mastery of the four language skills.

Overall, the obtained data confirmed our hypothesis, EFL learners have positive beliefs about distance learning. Despite their experiences that were not one hundred percent successful, the majority of students revealed their willingness to accept and acknowledge that distance learning plays an undeniable role in their studies. This necessarily means that distance learning is an effective teaching and learning method. Therefore, students should be surrounded with proper atmosphere which contains suitable conditions that enables them to use distance learning and to get better results.

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Appendix : The students' questionnaire

EFL learners' beliefs about distance learning

Dear students,

We would be grateful if you answer these questions. Your cooperation will help us in conducting an academic research on EFL learners' beliefs on distance learning. Your answers will be taken into account and will be confidently treated.

1. Do you have a good internet connection ?

Yes

No

2. Are you using distance learning during the Corona virus pandemic ?

Yes

No

3. Do you think that distance learning is a new method in Algeria ?

Yes

No

4. Did you use distance learning as a tool to improve your English even before the Covid 19 ?

Yes

No

5. As an EFL learner, do you think that distance learning will help you improve your language skills ?

Yes

No

-Explain ?

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6. Do you think that distance learning is an effective learning and teaching strategy ?

Yes

No

-Why ?

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7. Do you consider the extra researches you do on Google or YouTube and other search engines as part of distance learning ?

Yes

No

-Explain why ?

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.....

8. How often do you login to moodle ?

- Never

- Rarely

- Sometimes

- Always

9. Do you find difficulties when login to moodle ?

Yes

No

-If yes, which kind of difficulties?

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.....

10. How often do your teachers make online sessions ?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Always

-If they never did, tell why ? According to your opinion.

.....
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.....

11. Do you attend online sessions or you rely only on the handouts posted on moodle platform ?

- Handouts
- Online sessions
- Both

12. Does distance learning affect your motivation ?

Yes

No

-If yes, explain how ?

Positively

Negatively

-Justify your answer.

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13. Do you think that distance learning requires more effort from the student ?

Yes

No

-Why?

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14. In case online courses were not available (only handouts), do you think that learners will get the same amount of information as in face to face learning ?

Yes

No

-Why?

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.....

15. I believe that distance learning is beneficial for my studies.

- Strongly agree

- Agree

- Undecided

- Strongly disagree

- Disagree

16. Traditional classes can be totally substituted by distance learning.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- disagree
- Disagree

-If you do not agree, justify your answer

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17. Relying on your experience, what are the advantages of distance learning? Mention three advantages.

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18. According to your personal experience, what are the obstacles you face when dealing with distance learning? Mention three obstacles.

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19. What are your suggestions for enhancing and developing the use of distance learning in Algerian universities ?

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