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EXPLORING EFL STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORMS

The Case of Second Year Licence Students at the Department of Letters and English Language-Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla-Algeria

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DEDICATION

All gratitude goes to the Almighty, the most Merciful Allah who granted me the power to accomplish my research.

With a delicate heart filled with a great love, I would like to dedicate this dissertation first and foremost to my beloved parents who helped me to accomplish my educational path and who pray for me every time, and to all my sisters, my brothers and my family members who have been the source of support and motivation.

I would like to express my sincerely gratitude to my fiance and my best friends who have believed in me. A dedication to all poor children and everyone has not chance to learn.

I love and appreciate all of you more than words say.

Nour ElYakine Ghoula

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this dissertation first of all to my heavenly father (May he rest in peace and may ALLAH give him Jannah). I wish he is proud of me. Then to my dear mother for her financial and moral support. She is my lifelong supporter and lover. Words cannot be enough to express her endless love, patience, prayer and encouragement.

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Abstract

The present study aims at providing data in order to enhance the use of online learning platforms in EFL learning. Moreover, it aims to evaluate the effectiveness of using Moodle platform and to motivate the learners to use this e-learning platform. The sample that we rely on consists of (100) male and female students. Yet, only (40) students have participated. For collecting data, we have designed a questionnaire which contains twenty five (25) questions and four (4) sections. These sections comprise of likert scale and Yes/No questions. The questionnaire is directed to second year licence students at the Department of Letters and English Language at Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla-Algeria to know about their attitudes towards online learning platforms, specially Moodle in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The findings of the study revealed that most EFL students' attitudes towards using Moodle platform were positive. Moreover, they enjoy using Moodle platform in learning English as a Foreign Language.

Key-words: online learning, Moodle platform, EFL learning, EFL students, educational technology.

List of Abbreviations

CALL: Computer-Assisted Language Learning

CMS: Course Management System

DCU: Dublin City University

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

E-Learning: Electronic Learning

GPL: General Public License

IBM: International Business Machines

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

L2: Second Language

LMD: License, Master, Doctorate

LMS: Learning Management System

MALL: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

MIT: Massachusetts Institute of Technology

MOOC: Massive Open Online Course

MOODLE: Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment

PATO: Programmed logic for Automated Teaching Operations

SCORM: Sharable Content Object Reference Moodle

TELL: Technology-Enhanced Language Learning

TTT: Teacher Talking Time

UX: User eXperience

VLE: Virtual Learning Environment

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1. Background of the Study

Previously, we were not interested in learning English. By contrary, recently, we have a desire to learn it because it has become an international language due to the spread of using technology. As we have noticed, nowadays people are relying on online services in all their aspects of life. They utilize online tools in ordering food, in reserving for traveling and in making work meetings. Moreover, using online services has integrated in education too especially during the period of Corona Virus. In COVID-19, the majority of universities refuge on online teaching and learning process in order to keep the continuation of classes. During the pandemic, Kasdi Merbah University relied on Moodle as a suitable, convenient, and adequate online platform. Yet, students' perceptions were different towards online learning platforms specially Moodle. Thus, this study tries to determine and explore the EFL students' attitudes towards online learning platforms in Kasdi Merbah University.

2. Rationale

In the recent years, particularly during COVID-19, Kasdi Merbah University counts on online learning specially Moodle platform as a suitable pedagogy in order to keep the continuation of the learning process and to connect teachers with their students. However, we remarked that some students are with online learning because they see it as an effective method which facilitates the learning process. Whereas, others are totally against online learning because they think that it is an inconvenient method. Thus, we have decided to conduct a research about this topic to explore EFL learners' attitudes towards online learning platforms at Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla.

3. Statement of the Problem

In the last decades, the use of technology has increased in all aspects of life, especially in the few last years when Corona virus has impacted many fields. One of these fields is education which was affected by this unexpected problem and was in a difficult situation. The continuance of the learning process in the campus becomes dangerous on the health of educational staff.

In order to solve this problem, Ouargla University refuged to online learning system. It utilized Moodle as an online learning platform to help both teachers delivering their courses and students completing their studies.

We have remarked that most students who were used to be in traditional face-to-face classes, they refused online learning and receiving courses through Moodle platform. On the other hand, others accepted online learning and using Moodle. This conflict has led to inefficient learning during this period. Therefore, the present research is conducted to explore EFL students' dominant attitude towards online learning and using Moodle platform. Moreover, it is carried to reinforce the online learning and to motivate students to use Moodle platform.

4. Aim of the Study

The study aims to identify the students' perceptions towards the use of online learning platforms in education. It attempts to know whether students have engaged in online learning before or not. Moreover, it tries to identify the students' attitudes towards the effectiveness of using Moodle platform.

5. Research Questions

Since online tools have been integrated into educational system and Moodle platform becomes one of the learning pedagogy in Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla, the present study attempts to explore EFL students' attitudes towards online learning platforms through answering the following questions:

1. Do online learning platforms enhance EFL students' learning?
2. What are EFL students' attitudes towards the use of Moodle at the University of Ouargla?

6. Research Hypotheses

The following Hypotheses are formulated in order to answer the above-mentioned questions:

1. We assume that online learning platform can enhance the students' learning.
2. We hypothesize that learners have positive attitudes towards the role of Moodle in learning EFL.

7. Methodology and Research Design

To know to which extent the hypotheses are true in our present research work, we depend on the quantitative approach because it is the most appropriate. Hence, the research instrument that is applied is students' questionnaire which is the most applicable tool to gather data, information, points of view and attitudes of the students. The questionnaire consists of 25 inquests. It has been distributed to 100 students of second year licence at the Department of Letters and English Language at Kasdi Merbah University of Ouargla in order to check their perceptions towards Moodle as an online learning platform.

8. Organization of the Dissertation

In order to reach our objectives, this present dissertation is divided into two theoretical chapters and one practical chapter. The first chapter displays the literature review about technology and its integration in education. Also, it supplies information about traditional and modern education. The second chapter exhibits the main theoretical framework about the investigated topic. It provides some previous studies about the notion of online learning, learning management system (LMS), and Moodle platform. Finally, the third chapter deals with data collection and interpretations gained from the analysis of the answers of participants in the study. It identifies the students' attitudes towards online learning and Moodle platform.

Chapter One:

Educational Technology: An Overview

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Chapter One:

Educational Technology: An Overview

Introduction

Technologies affect every aspect of our lives; they have changed the way people gather information, conduct research, and communicate with others around the world. Technology has eliminated the distance obstacles and has facilitated most life activities. Furthermore, it makes learning possible and available to everyone. The integration of technology in education has increased due to the desire of educators to improve the teaching and the learning processes. A lot of universities have added the use of educational technologies in their systems for educational development.

English language teaching methods have extremely changed because of the entry of technology. Technology offers many benefits, including making teaching interesting and more productive in terms of progression. The use of technology helps learners to learn according to their interest. It has been considerably accepted for teaching English in modern world. Technology satisfies visual and auditory senses of learners (Solanki & Shyamleel, 2012).

1.1 The Integration of Technology in Education

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are very important in education because they can alter the classroom environment and make the subject matters more accessible to the learner (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Information technology has become a known tool in the classroom, helping to stimulate and exchange outdated pedagogical techniques and giving instructors the ability to create curriculum in advance with regards to discrimination (Mulrine, 2007). Even with regards to the amount and utilization of certain

technologies in the class, and even though some technologies may not have originally been designed to align with educational aims, many educators still find ways to integrate technology into the classroom (Zimlich, 2015).

EFL teachers must decide how -and how not- to employ technology in the classroom (Morgan, 2008). In this concern, incorporating technology into classroom instruction includes more than teaching computer skills; it demands that instructors look for means of innovation to motivate students' involvement and improve their learning; therefore, one way to fulfill this significant goal is the use of educational technology in an effective way.

Some theoretical and practical studies have been conducted to emphasize that the use of ICTs in the teaching and learning process is crucial. It has been proved that the use of technology reinforces the interest of students towards the contents to be studied (Mayora, 2006, as cited in Ilter, 2009). In this regard, Ilter (2009) claims that "technology might be one of the factors that affect students' attitude positively in the teaching-learning process" (p. 136). Moreover, O'Dwyer et al. (2005) view that technology enables learners to evolve critical thinking skills, high levels of understanding, and solve problems. Technology also can help facilitate the knowledge-constructed classroom.

There is a very close relationship between technology and English language education (Singhal, 1997). If we return to the past, multiple educational institutes used to supply classes in language laboratories that allowed students to carry out technology tools where educators controlled students' interaction. Though the use of technology was very positive in the learning process, it slowly became unattractive and boring (ibid.). Recently, the use of technology in the classroom has offered new possibilities for language education through the web generations that positively contribute to the teaching-learning process. Web 1.0 is the first one that was developed and which was used to send messages through unidirectional

system (Ban & Summers, 2010). Then, Web 2.0 opened a platform that enabled interaction, collaboration and better communication. Now, searching for required information in an organized way is offered by Web 3.0; the latter also proposed other contents related to the suggested topic (Miranda et al., 2010).

Various technological devices are applied to help English language students improve their learning skills. The devices that are worth mentioning contain English language learning websites, computer-assisted language learning programs (CALL), presentation software, electronic dictionaries, chatting and email messaging programs, CD-players, and learning video-clips (Nomass, 2013). The positive results of the devices listed above can only be possible with convenient methodology and educators' management applied in the classroom.

1.2 Definition of Educational Technology

Educational technology refers to different tools and materials used to improve the learning process and make teaching lively and delightful. It facilitates learning by using suitable technological processes and resources. According to Ely (1972, p. 36), educational technology is "a field involved in the facilitation of human learning" (qtd in Robinson et al., 2008). Robinson et al. (2008) reveal that educational technology depends on the evolution, organization and employment of learning resources. E-learning is a term related to educational technology; it is the use of technological devices such as computers and digital technology (Asta, 2010). Postman (1993) claims the following:

> technology is ideology. To be unaware that a technology comes equipped with a program for social change, to maintain that technology is neutral, to make the assumption that technology is always a friend to culture, at this late hour, stupidly plain and simple. (p. 135)

Technology is the knowledge branch that deals with the creation and the use of technical means and their interrelation with life, society and environment, drawing upon

subjects as industrial arts, engineering, applied science and pure science (Young, 2008). It pleases the audio-visual senses of the learners. Educational technology takes three aspects into account which are the level of students, the interest and training of the educator and the objectives of the institute.

The researcher thinks that educational technology is an area of study that utilizes the process of analyzing, designing, evolving, implementing and evaluating the learning materials in order to achieve instructional objectives or to improve teaching and learning processes. It is used to facilitate learning and improve instructors' and students' performance by creating, employing and managing appropriate technological processes and resources. U.S Department of Education (2017) states the following:

> technology can empower educators to become co-learners with their students by building new experiences for deeper exploration of content. This enhanced learning experience embodies John Dewey's notion of creating more mature learners. Side-by-side, students and teachers can become engineers of collaboration, designers of learning experiences, leaders, guides, and catalysts of change. (p. 28)

1.3 Technology in Teaching and Learning EFL

Previously, language classes were based on chalk, pen and chalkboard. Then, they started using whiteboards and markers. Nowadays, teaching and learning processes witness an interactive online whiteboard with a smart pen because of technology revolution. This online whiteboard is not like any normal board, but it is a kind of virtual learning space that gather learners and instructors in a real time meeting via the internet. In the 1950s and 1960s, language laboratory was one of technology types used widely to support language classes (Cahyani & Cahyono, 2012). For the time being, it is common that language educators bring online tools, applications and digital devices into the class to ease their teaching as well as to create more attractive and engaging learning sessions.

The virtual environment like MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) enables people to create their own rooms through verbal descriptions and to promote linguistic cues (Chun et al., 2016). In addition, e-learning, involving mobile device media makes time and place flexible for learners (Warni et al., 2018). Consequently, the terms as technology-based learning (Wichadee, 2013), technology-enhanced instruction (Stepp-Greany, 2002), blended/ hybrid learning, technology-enhanced language learning (TELL) (Alberth, 2013; Yang & Chen, 2007), and mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) (Eaton, 2010) have obtained a huge popularity among educators as well as they have been loudly echoed in the line with the expansion of technology and new emerging technological platforms into classrooms.

Technologies have been extensively fostered in the field of foreign language teaching in the term of lesson preparation, content/material development and language testing. For language course designer, the discussion and the study of technology are not new (Chalhoub-Deville, 2001). Chen (2012) maintains that it has evidenced to give positive impacts in widening the horizons of L2 learning and affecting the nature of acquisition process and the object of study in two ways: raising the amount of L2 exposure and expanding scopes of L2 input. Sekhan (2003) simplifies it by stating that technology is a potential source of language learning material and input. One of the main advantages of technology is connecting EFL learners with the native speakers of the target language both through synchronous and asynchronous modes in authentic communication and interaction (Alberth, 2013). Yulia et al. (2019) find out that online assessment increases students' mastery of listening and reading skills.

The practical part of tremendous previous studies have proven that technology-enhanced language learning has presented many authentic materials as well as a chance to practice language skills and be more participative on the course (Alberth, 2013). The use of multimedia technology brought positive effects to language teaching and learning in several

aspects: facilitating communication, decreasing anxiety, enhancing oral discussion, increasing students' motivation and improving writing skill, and thinking connection (Yang & Chen, 2007). Chen (2012) reports that the use of technology may stimulate positive attitudes. Moreover, Setiawan and Wiedarti (2020) clarify that Quizlet application is effective in increasing students' motivation; furthermore, Krishnapatria et al. (2019) deduce that English language teaching using online Google Maps application can evolve students' engagement and reinforce their writing skills.

1.4 Traditional Education vs. Modern Education

Teaching and learning are the main aspects of the curriculum for which teachers take responsibility. Teaching is the process of providing students with information by designing different courses and helping them to get knowledge (Nomass, 2013). It requires preparation and training. However, learning can be defined as the process of getting and acquiring knowledge consciously. It is the act of gaining a new knowledge or increasing the existing knowledge and skills. It occurs as a part of education (ibid.). Learning is about what students do and it is not about what teachers do.

The teaching process has developed through time starting by the use of chalk till the appearance of educational technologies such as computers, tablets and smart phones. Although traditional and modern educations are both related to each other, there are differences between them. Each one has its own characteristics. Traditional or conventional education focuses more on the instructors rather than the students (Belias et al., 2013). Teacher talking time (TTT) is the most dominant feature in traditional classrooms where the teacher is the main responsible; whereas, students are passive and have limited opportunities to talk, and they just receive information. Conventional education relies on simple teaching

tools like chalk and blackboard which are utilized by the lecturer to improve his teaching (ibid.). It depends on the memorizing method and ignoring the use of critical thinking.

Today, many changes occur in different fields. Due to these changes and technological revolution which pushes instructors to seek for appropriate technologies for the educational system, educational system has developed and the way of teaching has changed (Belias et al., 2013). Hence, modern education is the process of teaching and learning that is based on technological materials. It offers different tools of sharing information. However, modern teaching is not only providing students with information, but also transforming them from passive recipients of knowledge into active constructors of knowledge. The educator is considered as a guide for his learners and this helps them to develop their autonomous learning. Modern teaching takes into consideration the individual differences of students and their needs. Then, they have more chances to improve their abilities and skills (ibid.). Modern education is concerned with the learner-centered approach unlike traditional education.

1.5 The Use of Technology in English Language Class

For learners, technology is an efficient instrument. They must utilize technology as a significant part of their learning process. Costley (2014) and Murphy et al. (2003) assert that instructors should incorporate the use of technology to encourage the curriculum so that learners can enhance the use of technology in learning their language skills. Technology increases learners' cooperation. The latter is one of the important tools for learning. Keser et al. (2011) claim that students cooperatively work together to design assignments and learn from each other through acquaintance at their peers' work.

The use of computer technology improves the teachers' teaching and the learners' learning in the classrooms (Bennett et al., 2000). Educators can meet their learners' educational needs through the use of computer technology. The application of computer

technology allows teachers and learners to make local and global societies that link them with the people and expand chances for their learning (Bransford et al., 2000). Brown et al. (2000) assert that the positive impact of computer technology does not come automatically; it depends on how teachers use it in their language classrooms.

Susikaran (2013) indicates that beside the teaching methods, basic changes occur in classes because chalk and talk teaching method is insufficient to effectively teach English. According to Raihan and Lock (2012), learners learn how to learn effectively with a well-planned classroom setting. Technology-enhanced teaching environment is more efficient than lecture-based class. Lecturers should find methods to apply technology as a beneficial learning tool for their students even though they have not learnt how to use technology as a computer expert.

Patel (2013) claims that English teaching strategies have been changed by the implementation of technology. It supplies many replacements as making teaching interesting and more productive in terms of advancement. Teachers, in traditional classes, give lectures, explanations, and instructions through using blackboard or whiteboard. This method was changed due to the development of technology. Students become familiar with vocabulary and language structures because of the usage of multimedia texts in class. Learners' linguistic knowledge is enhanced by the application of multimedia through the use of print texts, film, and internet. Arifah (2014) states that the use of print, film, and internet gives students the opportunity to gather information and offers them different materials for the analysis and interpretation of both language and contexts.

According to Dawson et al. (2008) and Pourhosein (2014), using technology can create a learning environment centered around the student rather than the teacher that in turn creates positive modifications. They affirm that language class, by using computer technology,

becomes an active venue full of meaningful assignments where the students are responsible for their learning. Drayton et al. (2010) argue that applying computer technology indicates a true learning experience that reinforces learners' accountabilities. Technology promotes learners to learn individually and to acquire responsible attitudes. Learners become self-directed by the independent use of technologies.

Arifah (2014) demonstrates that learners' motivation is increased by using internet. The use of film in teaching assists students to know the topic with enthusiasm and develop their knowledge. Learners can learn meaningfully when technology is used in the learning process like using computer and internet. Learning with technology helps students to develop their higher order thinking skills. To conclude, the integration of multimedia in teaching methodology is very important to attract students' attention towards English language learning.

Conclusion

The first chapter reviewed studies on the integration of technology in the field of education and how technology may affect students' attitudes positively in the teaching and learning processes. Then, it explained the meaning of educational technology. This chapter also briefly highlighted some technology tools which are used widely to support EFL classes and it clarified the differences between traditional and modern education.

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Online Learning

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Chapter Two:

Online Learning

Introduction

Technology has been integrated in education and made it more available, comfortable and flexible to learners. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, many universities around the world have fostered technology in education and have decided to adjust the education mode from face-to-face to online meetings using various learning management systems (LMS). Online learning is one of the most commonly used technological approaches in educational institutions. There are many e-learning platforms which can facilitate the learning process such as Moodle. The latter is a free and open-source learning management system (LMS) which is used for blended learning, distance education, flipped classroom and other e-learning projects in schools, universities, work places and other sectors. Therefore, the second chapter comes to clarify online learning concept and identify its advantages and disadvantages. Moreover, it introduces learning management systems. Then, it moves onto providing an account of the open-source learning management system Moodle.

2.1 Online Learning

The twenty-first century has witnessed an unusual worldwide spread of online learning. The latter has received much attention in all aspects of life, specially in education and it has become one of the most popular teaching and learning methods. Online learning rapidly became the solution for proceeding educational activities around the world when the COVID-19 pandemic forced campus-based education to be suspended (Paudel, 2021).

2.1.1 Definitions of Online Learning

Online learning is a very broad notion which has various meanings. Online learning, often called e-learning, is the buzzword which is used to describe the use of technologies to support learning, teaching and assessment (Vrazalic et al., 2009). Online learning can also be defined as a form of information technology implemented in education in the form of virtual space. It is a process of education through an internet network or the intranet with use of a management system for education. Hermida (2020) argues that online learning or e-learning means that students are physically far from the instructors who need some devices to deliver the course which are technology tools in order to connect learners with their teachers. Nuniek (2013) states that online learning is a form of learning model that is facilitated and supported by the use of information and communication technology. Also, it refers to the use of digital tools for teaching and learning (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2014). Online distance learning is a flexible approach that allows learners to study wherever they are aligned with other life commitments based on digital technology tools. Universities offered this kind of learning in the 1990s in the form of printed course materials while learners were attending a few sessions to do activities and assignments, also to discuss with colleagues and to do examinations at the end of semesters (Basaza et al., 2010). Nguyen (2015) claims that online learning is the process of providing all courses of distance learning exclusively over the internet. Online learning systems mean integrating internet connections with teaching and learning processes (Bentley et al., 2012).

E-learning is identified as courses that are conveyed through web to some places other than the real classes where the educator is instructing in a none-virtual way and students can speak and interact with instructors or other students. E-learning can be defined as classroom instructions that can be transmitted online by the use of the internet or multimedia platforms (Hall, 2003; D'Neill et al., 2004). Moreover, online learning is a type of distant learning

where students and teachers do not meet in a traditional classroom setting, and the internet is its main media (Stern, 2018; Jamil & Hamre, 2018). E-learning is considered as one of the most effective solutions to problems that face learning. It makes students doing learning activities completely without limited face to face time in class.

2.1.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Learning

Online learning as any pedagogical approach has a variety of advantages and disadvantages:

2.1.2.1 Advantages of Online Learning

The application of online learning in education has been adequate in numerous contexts. Raspopovic et al. (2017) state that previous studies have presented many advantages associated by the implementation of online learning technologies into university education. E-learning has been seen as the capability to concentrate on the requirements of individual learners. For example, focusing on the needs of individual learners can convey knowledge in the digital age effectively as compared to educational institutions' needs or instructors (Huang & Chiu, 2015). Through e-learning, objectives can be achieved in the shortest time with least efforts. Online learning is effective as compared to traditional forms of learning. A lot of training time is reduced with respect to trainers, travel, course materials and accommodation. The online method of learning is suitable for everyone. The integration of online educational courses offers office goers, housewives and disabled people too an opportunity for advancing their education from any location.

Bates and Wulf (1996) classify the advantages of online learning as follows:

a. *Increasing Learning Interactions:* Online learning can increase the level of interaction between students-learning materials, learners-instructors, and students with other learners.

Students will feel free to express their thoughts and opinions because they are separated from the teacher and other students.

b. Flexibility of Time and Place: E-learning saves time because students do not need to travel to the training venue. They can take up online educational sources depending on their availability and comfort of time and place.

c. The Potential to Reach a Global Audience: Everyone can reach to unlimited online learning activities in anytime and anywhere because in e-learning place and time are no longer barriers.

d. Easy Updating of Content: Online learning keeps the learners in synchronization with modernization. Thus, it enables them to access updated content.

2.1.2.2 Disadvantages of Online Learning

Due to the absence of face to face meetings between teachers and students, e-learning may be less effective. Doing online assessments increases the possibility of falling in illegitimate activities such as cheating and plagiarism (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015). Islam et al. (2015) claim that the most noticeable drawback of e-learning is the absence of essential personal interactions between students-students and students-teachers. Moreover, in the online learning environment, student-instructor interaction is the most prominent comparing with student- student engagement which leads to the scarcity of community. Most students dislike to interact with their classmates because of shyness and fear from hesitation and bad comments, so they prefer online learning where there is no interaction. Hence, they will not develop their skills such as facing audience, sharing ideas and expressing feelings and thoughts, and as Gilbert (2015) highlights that most of the students wish to work autonomously to avoid the need to interact with their classmates. Furthermore, internet, electricity, telephone, computer and other devices are not always available in all places. Software and availability are limited because of the cost is still relatively expensive. Another

disadvantage of online environment is the lack of an arranged schedule, repeatedly studying, disciplined as well as self-motivation (Sun, 2014). Moreover, the body language in e-learning is neglected, neither the teacher can see students' body language nor the student can see the teachers' body language. Therefore, this leads to misunderstanding which makes the interaction in the learning process less effective.

2.2 Learning Management System (LMS)

LMS is considered as an essential part of the university educational system. It is important to examine how students adopt the e-learning activities as a part of their fundamental learning process.

2.2.1 LMS Concept

Learning management system (LMS), also called course management systems (CMS) or virtual learning environment (VLE), is series of software tools that are particularly created to support the educational process. Learning management system is a tool of e-learning which has used to develop the learning experience and the construction of students' understanding of specific topics. According to Ryan and Ellis (2009), Learning Management System is a software application that automates the administration, trucking, and reporting of training events. LMS is a web-based software application that is designed to handle learning content, learner interaction, assessment tools and reports of learning improvement and student practices. Learning management systems are also platforms that contain instructional management systems, portals, learning systems, course management systems and content management systems.

Learning management systems (LMS) enhance the process of learning via online classroom environments. A standard LMS reinforces an inclusive learning environment for academic progress with interceding structures that encourage online collaborative-groupings,

professional training, discussions and communication among other LMS users (Dias & Dinis, 2014; Jung & Huh, 2019; Oakes, 2002). LMS provides employees with a fruitful learning environment to assimilate various components of systematic applications (Jung & Huh, 2019; Watson & Watson, 2012). In an educational era , computer users have access to procedures with non-traditional terms, and many computer users in instruction could have access to applications with non-traditional terms and confusing acronyms to understand (Kuosa et al., 2016; Watson & Watson, 2012). Thus, users may not realize which interpretations are appropriate to use; it is fundamental to distinguish an LMS from similar technologies (Watson & Watson, 2012). Nasser et al. (2011) argue that LMS usage provides online learners with consistent information concerning their performance. Watson and Watson (2012) recommend that as schools integrate the use of an LMS, they should make LMS use a functional requirement. They debate LMS administrative management techniques, comprising enabling profile characteristics, guidelines for following the syllabus, guidelines for managing assessments, discussion boards, resources for writing and updates from the teacher. LMS users get access to material and information disseminated by the educator in synchronous or asynchronous settings (Jung & Huh, 2019; Kuosa et al., 2016; Watson & Watson, 2012).

LMS use enables online learners to become independent (Blau & Hameiri, 2010; Nasser et al., 2011; Strayhorn, 2010; Wood et al., 2011). LMS platform cultivates an environment for involvement and learner fulfillment, permitting students to register for classes, track their levels, and check updates and course announcements (Al-Fraihat et al., 2020; Oakes, 2002; Watson & Watson, 2012). LMS has several online operations and behaves as a framework to capture multiple layers of progressive learning (Jung & Huh, 2019; Kuosa et al., 2016; Oakes, 2002; Watson & Watson, 2012). LMS functions involve promoting especially designed information for capturing learners' progress in meeting expectations (Oakes, 2002; Watson & Watson, 2012). LMS behaves as a platform to

distribute and control pedagogical materials (Watson & Watson, 2012). Learning management systems represent a transition from the processes and systems advanced by specific institutions to register learners on certain courses and retain records of learners' practices. Different learning options developed to allow learners to take online courses, sometimes as part of the formal curriculum and sometimes due to the need for institutional certification. LMS can also help learners to access learning information through course guidelines, uploading assignments and downloading marks, active interactions between learners and teachers, interactions between learners, interactions between students and learning tools, sharing knowledge and taking online exams and quizzes.

2.2.2 LMS Timeline

Chaubey and Bhattacharya (2015) sum up the development of learning management systems from its first evolution up to its modern innovation. In the 1960's, the notion of Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations (PLATO) emerged as the very initial computer-based learning system and online community (ibid.). The term "LMS" was first coined to refer to the management part of the system. The year 1983 witnessed enormous leap in computer-based learning systems. Project Athena was launched. It was a join project of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Digital Equipment Corporation and the International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) (Cheikh, 2020). During 1990, FirstClass was introduced. FirstClass was originally created for what is known as Macintosh Platform by SoftArc and pioneered many of the features still in use today.

Interactive Learning Network has been launched in 1997. Now one of the two companies forming BlackBoard, Inc., CourseInfo designed the Interactive Learning Network and set it up on sundry campuses including Cornell University and Yale Medical School (Chaubey & Bhattacharya, 2015). The year 2002 marked the revolution of open-source LMS

which initiated with Moodle (ibid.). Moodle has given educators and trainers more flexibility to create and administer trainings. By 2004, SCORM was released by the Advanced Distribution Learning Initiative. In the year after, Virtual On Demand by Nacon Consulting came to existence (Cheikh, 2020). It witnessed the first distance education system with only a web browser enabling users to train in software programs. In 2008, Eucalyptus began the basic aim which is to provide free, open-source private cloud technology that was born with the release of Eucalyptus, the API for building Amazon Web Services environment (ibid.). Starting from the year 2012 onwards, LMS relied on the cloud technology allowing full access to LMS tools without a need for installing a single piece of extra software systems by the institution's computer and simply accessing the LMS through the web (Chaubey & Bhattacharya, 2015).

2.2.3 General Components of Modern LMS

A learning management system is a software that delivers learning automatically through its functions digitally. This software system consists of major and minor components (Wang & Chen, 2009, as cited in Babo & Azevedo, 2011).

a. *Course Management System (CMS):* It is considered to be the brain that connects with other systems. It allows developers to perform functions as adding or elimination a course joining students to a course, appointing teachers to a specific course or a section of it, classifying courses according to the curriculum and monitor different systems processes (Watson &Watson, 2007, as cited in Babo & Azevedo, 2011). A common belief is that this is what an LMS is, but in fact these functions are primordial and it is required to link with other systems. LMS operates well when it ensures that everything is delivered to its appropriate location in the appropriate way (Babo & Azevedo, 2011).

b. *Learning Content Management System (LCMS):* The main function LCMS serves is the distribution of multimedia content; it is a system with subsystems enabling it to perform assignments and most of its operations appear in the background where users are incapable to witness them, such as course content authoring. Developers can utilize this system to design courses and upload the content without the need for them to understand what is taking place to do so since it is stored as a content object; however, it is necessary that these operations function appropriately (Watson & Watson, 2007, as cited in Babo & Azevedo, 2011).

c. *Collaborative Learning System (CLS):* It is considered as the quickest changing component and it is not available to all LMS (Babo & Azevedo, 2011). It needs third party apps to accomplish this system's functions. It enables the use of Web 2.0 tools of interaction and communication like discussion groups, newsgroups, instant messaging, blogs, bookmarking, notice board, search tools and emails ...etc. It also manages mobile connections. This system requires developers to grasp social learning theory to reach the desired results (ibid.).

d. *Assessment Management System:* The system manages assessment forms to make sure that all assessment outcomes are properly recorded and delivered (Babo & Azevedo, 2011). It must provide the developer with the required tools to have the ability to design these operations in a flexible manner in order to assess performance (ibid.).

2.3 Moodle

Moodle is an online platform which has become very popular among instructors around the world. Ouargla University has adopted Moodle during the pandemic period in order to manage and promote the learning process. This tool helps educators to create online communities for true learning. Moreover, it allows them to manage, organize, and deliver course materials.

2.3.1 Moodle Platform

Moodle actually stands for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment (Cheikh, 2020). It was invented by Martin Dougiamas in August 2002. Moodle is a free software learning management system providing a platform for online learning and it helps the instructors in explaining the courses, course structures, and curriculum thus facilitating interaction with online learners. Moodle platform is a free open-source learning management system (LMS). Developed on pedagogical principles, Moodle is used for flipped classroom, distance education, blended learning, and other online learning projects in higher education (ibid.). It is the world's most popular and trusted learning management system that provides a central space on the web where learners can access a set of tools, courses, and resources anytime and anywhere.

Moodle is a renowned online learning platform. In the words of Moodle creators, "it is a learning platform designed to provide educators, administrators, and learners with a single robust, secure, and integrated system to create personalized learning environment" (Moodle Organization, 2020). Many educational institutes use Moodle as a fundamental tool to conduct online classes. It helps to create a virtual class where instructors and learners can share thoughts, ideas and knowledge (Sabharwal, 2018). It is also e-learning that helps learners to improve their knowledge through practices that enhance their creativity, communication, collaboration and critical thinking in learning EFL. Moodle is one of the most popular LMS apps and it is the most suitable for online learning. It is an application program that can turn learning media into web forms. Moodle becomes one of the ways to improve the effectiveness of learning. Learners are able to conduct learning activities online, access multiple learning materials, and interact with their educators and friends by using Moodle (ibid.).

Moodle is one of the most widely used open source learning management system that has become the most prominent software (Onal et al., 2006). It is a learning management system that can be facilely used by users as an online lesson and course management system that can cover the plurality of needs related to online teaching and learning. Moodle, a prestigious open source course management system, is now widely preferred by instructors and educational institutes (Seferoglu, 2016). Teachers can utilize the Moodle platform to create web-based courses with a wealthy content by classifying lessons. They can also benefit from the tools that create group activities for instance tests, exams, materials and projects in categories (Simsek, 2015). Moodle is an online learning platform that can be successfully used nowadays in private or public institutions in the education curricula. In addition, this platform is often employed in educational systems at universities for several purposes. It can facilitate some aspects of learning such as flipped classroom model, e-learning, mixed learning and distance learning (Oproiu, 2014). It is an open source that supplies learners with the ability to create, deploy, and run e-learning websites and applications. Downes (2006) and Sahinoglu (2012) claim that Moodle is based on social constructivist theory. Brandi (2005) defines Moodle as "a course management system of online learning" (p. 16).

Moodle is a virtual learning environment (VLE) which makes it simple to supply online support for different courses, and its layout depends on the principles of constructivist pedagogy (Brandi, 2005; Suppasetseree & Dennis, 2010). According to Feizabadi et al. (2016), Moodle is a kind of free learning management system or an open software with no charge for making efficacy and finding solutions for several educational system issues. It was invented and designed according to constructivism institution which maintains that learners can engage successfully in the learning process through communication and interaction with their teachers and other learners. Albee et al. (2012) explain Moodle as a learning space where learners can interact, share, create, connect and communicate. They can give feedback over

the course of study. It is a learning management system which is considered as a freeware (Moodle Organization, 2014). Moodle is basically an open source e-learning platform created to facilitate collaboration, based on e-learning approach and findings (Cahir et al., 2014; Chourishi et al., 2015).

2.3.2 History of Moodle

Moodle is an acronym for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment which started and continued in its evolution since 1999. The authentic or the first version of Moodle was evolved and introduced to the public by Martin Dougiamas who grew up in the Australian outback in the 1970s. He was an Education and Computer Science graduate of Curtin University where he had his experience with WebCT. What in fact led to the development of Moodle was his PhD thesis entitled "The Use of Open Source Software to Support a Social Constructionist Epistemology of Teaching and Learning within Internet-based Communities of Reflective Inquiry" (Evans & Underhill, 2013). The failure of the then existing commercial software solutions for the teachers and students' use was the reason that leads Martin to research, think, and write a thesis about the topic (ibid.).

Moodle was first released in 2001 under General Public License (GPL), the first ever Moodle was Peter Taylor's site http://smec2001.moodle.com at Curtin University (Cheikh, 2020). Its source code was accessible to all and anyone could modify Moodle by just releasing the modifications code of the redistributed modified version back to the public domain (Costello, 2013). Martin Dougiamas and Peter Taylor published a paper titled "An Interpretive Analysis of an Internet Based Course Constructed Using a New Courseware Tool Called Moodle" which tried to sum up the links between the participants' experiences and Moodle and to develop the ability of Moodle as a tool to create online courses that incorporate and further evolve a social constructionist pedagogical framework. Moodle 1.0 was released

in August 2002 (Cheikh, 2020). Dublin City University experienced adopter of Moodle in 2003, its evaluation committee proved that Moodle's open source, unrestricted technical access and social constructivist philosophical pedagogy were appropriate to Dublin City University (DCU) educational processes and despite some characteristics of Moodle were lacking it was ranked the same as WebCT in terms of practicality and hoped for the lacking characteristics to be available in the near future or developed by the university itself (Costello, 2013).

In 2005, Moodle grew bigger and associations rallied to become Moodle confederates with the first Moodle Moot contracted in Oxford 2004 (Cheikh, 2020). In 2007, Moodle had better documentation and a new certification and it became established as an award-winning open source learning management system. There were more than one million registered users in 2010 and it was translated to over 100 languages with more than 50 partners around the world. Moodle 2.0 was released in November 2010; the platform had feature enhancement releases every six months. In 2013, Moodle's official HTML5 app was released. Moodle MOOC took place in January 2015 and it runs every six months. Furthermore, in July 2015, Moodle undergoing a main redesign. Moodle Cloud has been presented to offer "free HQ-managed hosting" and during 2016 the HQ concentrated on the improvement of User eXperience (UX) by setting the first UX team and presenting the new Boost Theme which was a fresh default theme Statistics on Moodle.net showed how it surpassed 100 million users in 2017. Moreover, by 2017, a handful quantity of projects took place like Project Inspire with a purpose to integrate open source solutions to learning analytics, setting the first Education Team and releasing Moodle Desktop. Moodle Net was established in 2018 and started final testing in January 2019. Moodle surpassed 160 million users on more than 106.000 sites in June 2019 (ibid.).

2.3.3 Moodle Features

Here are features of Moodle that make it the most popular learning management system and that improve EFL students' learning according to Yildiz (2018):

a. *Open Source:* Moodle is an open source platform which its source code is available to everyone. It is distributed under General Public License. In other words, users can freely run, share, and alter it to meet their particular needs.

b. *Cost-effective:* Moodle learning management system is free and only development and maintenance costs are not.

c. *Simple Interface:* Because of the simple interface, Moodle becomes a user-friendly platform. This interface is based on HTML 5 and can be accessed on any mobile device.

d. *Easy to Customize:* To fit any organization's requirements, LMS needs customization as any software platforms. To make it look as a training management platform, one need to company name, logo and to brand colors. Doing this with Moodle is quite easy. Teachers and students can sign up, access and receive a password if it is forgotten. Manager is assigned with the user management authority where he can add, edit, update the user details, assign roles and delete a user (Ippakayala & El-Ocla, 2017).

e. *Offline Access:* For developing countries, internet bandwidth is considered as a major barrier while delivering online training. After all, Moodle users can be allowed to download and log in their own devices from their device.

Conclusion

This chapter attempted to investigate some previous studies about online learning. It has defined the notion of online learning and has identified its advantages and disadvantages. Then, it has provided an explanation about learning management system. It has defined the LMS concept and has explained its timeline. Also, it has identified the general components of

modern learning management system. In the final part, Moodle has been introduced, highlighting its definition and pointing its creator, and moving on to clarifying the origin and the development phases of Moodle platform. Finally, it numerated the major Moodle modules features.

Chapter Three:

Students' Questionnaire

Chapter Three: Students' Questionnaire

Introduction

3.1 Research Method

3.2 Population and Sample of the Study

3.3 Research Instrument

3.4 Description of Students' Questionnaire

3.5 Validity and Reliability

3.6 Data Analysis

3.7 Findings and Discussions

Conclusion

Chapter Three:

Students' Questionnaire

Introduction

The aim of this study is exploring EFL students' perceptions towards the online learning platform Moodle. This chapter is devoted to the clarification of the research methodology and design. It attempts to describe and analyze the collected data. Firstly, it describes the population and the sample that have been chosen in this research. Furthermore, it identifies the adopted tool in the study. Then, it clarifies the validity and the reliability of the research. At the end, it shows the data analysis and the discussion of the findings.

3.1 Research Method

The research method is considered as a scientific procedure or method of collecting data for a specific purpose. While conducting any research, it is very necessary to use a convenient method that helps the researcher to gather and analyze data easily.

In order to achieve the objective of this research, which is exploring the students' perceptions towards online learning platforms, we used a quantitative approach. We distributed a questionnaire to second year LMD students of English Department at Ouargla University.

3.2 Population and Sample of the Study

The population of our research is students at the Department of Letters and English Language in Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla. From this population, we have selected second year LMD students of English language as a sample to answer the questionnaire. This sample consists of 100 students. We have chosen second year English language students

because they have already got an idea about Moodle and they are able to answer the questionnaire since they have experience with online learning.

3.3 Research Instrument

The questionnaire is the most common way of mastering opinions or perceptions towards organizations, procedures, or individuals (Gay, 1981). Macky and Gass (2005) state that questionnaires are instruments of gathering data which enable researchers to collect information that students are able to report about themselves.

In this study, we utilized one instrument for data collection which is a questionnaire to explore EFL students' attitudes towards online learning platforms and to gather the data that may help in answering the research questions.

3.4 Description of Students' Questionnaire

In our study we rely on a questionnaire as a research instrument to collect data. This instrument is addressed to second year students at the Department of Letters and English Language in Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla. The questionnaire contains 25 questions. It is a mixture of likert scale and Yes/NO questions. It starts with a small introduction. Through this introduction, we have asked participants to answer kindly the questionnaire. Also, we have tried to give them the main aim of our study. Moreover, we divided the questionnaire into four sections. The first section is about the profile information of the participants and the second one includes eight questions about educational technology. In addition, the third section tackles nine questions about online learning. The last one is about using Moodle platform and it contains six questions.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Biggam (2008) states that validity is the extent to which the research strategy, data collection, and analysis techniques are convenient to reach the goal of the study. There are two strategies to measure validity in quantitative research, called content validity and construct validity (Brown, 1996). In the present study, after preparing the questionnaire, we gave it to some university teachers in order to determine if the questionnaire achieves the aim of the study or not. These teachers made some remarks concerning the questionnaire design and some questions' reformulation. We took these remarks into consideration. Therefore, we made the questionnaire short and thus its questions were clear and comprehensible for students. This strategy ensures the validity of the research.

Morgan (1991) argues that a reliability check on in the research refers to whether the description of the data or report displays a recognizable reality to the reader or to everyone who acquaints on the situation. Based on Kothari (2004) "it is always advisable to conduct pilot study (pilot survey) for testing the questionnaires [...] the significance of pilot survey is felt very much. Pilot survey is in fact the replica and rehearsal of the main survey" (p. 97). Our aim of the pilot test is to examine that all the items are relevant, suitable, comprehensible, and be interpreted in the right way. Firstly, we have submitted the online pilot test (the students' questionnaire) to a group of 10 students at the Department of English. The results of this pilot test represent that all the questions were clear and all the students answered the questions easily. Then, the questionnaire was distributed to the students of the sample via second year Face-book page.

3.6 Data Analysis

The aim of the questionnaire is to explore the students' attitudes towards educational technology, online learning and Moodle platform. Although the questionnaire is directed to

(100) second year English language students of Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla, only (40) students have answered. The distributed questionnaire comprises of four (4) sections.

Section One: Profile Information

The first section contains two (2) questions about students' profile information.
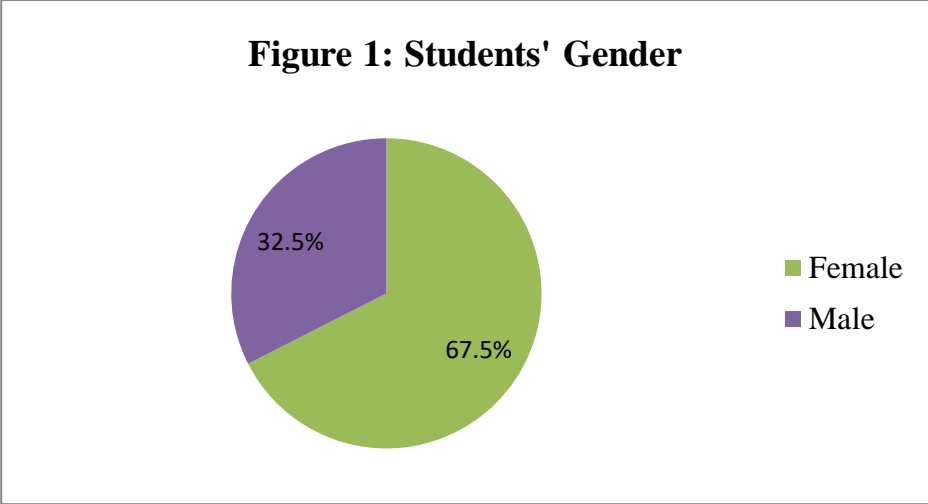
Question 1: What is your gender?

Figure 1: Students' Gender

Figure (1) shows that the majority of the participants (77,8%) are females whereas (22,2%) are males. Thus, females are the dominant.

Question 2: How old are you?
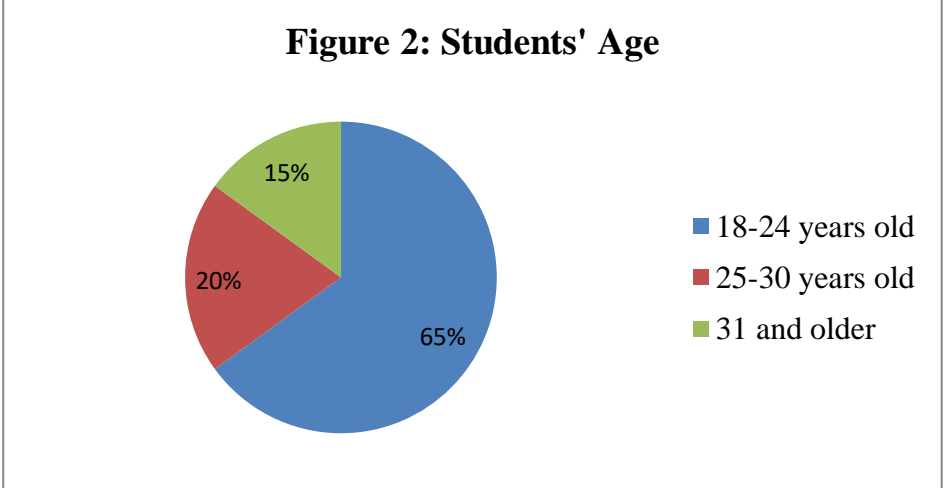
Figure 2: Students' Age

Figure (2) reveals that more than half of students (65%) are between 18 and 24 years old. However, (20%) are between 25 and 30 years old. While the remain (15%) are 31 years old or older. Thus, the most partakers are the young.

Section Two: Educational Technology

It consists of eight questions about educational technology.

Question 3: Do you use Information Technology (IT) for learning?

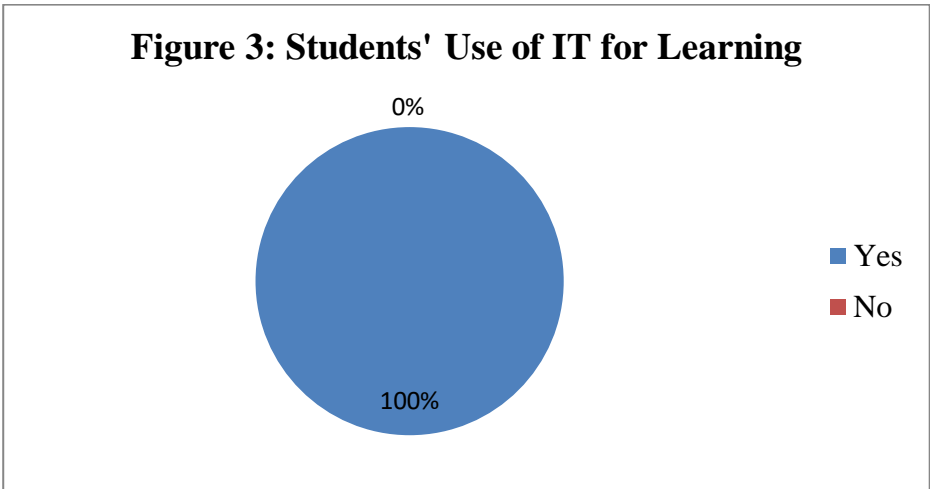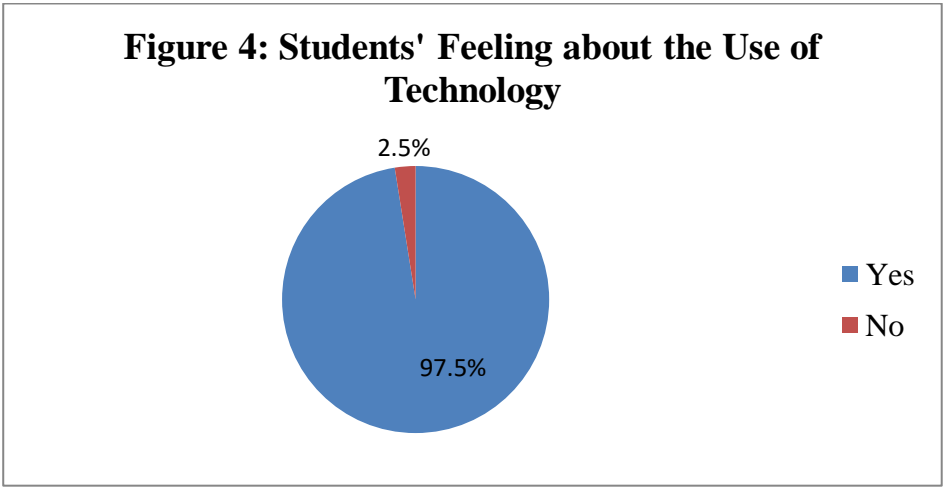**Figure 3: Students' Use of IT for Learning**

Figure (3) exhibits that all the students (100%) are using Information Technology (IT) for learning.

Question 4: Do you enjoy using Information Technology (IT) during your learning process?

Figure 4: Students' Feeling about the Use of Technology

As seen from Figure (4), most of the students (97,5%) answered by 'Yes'. While only (2,5%) replied by 'No'. Hence, students are enjoying using Information Technology during their learning process.

Question 5: What do you think of the utility of Information Technology (IT) in learning English?

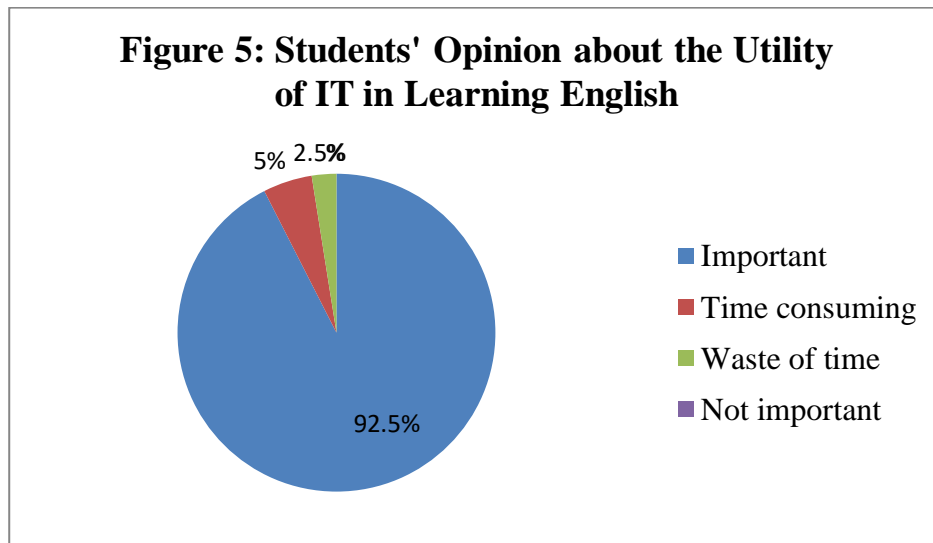**Figure 5: Students' Opinion about the Utility of IT in Learning English**

Figure (5) points out that almost all the students (92,5%) stated that the utility of Information Technology (IT) in learning English is 'important'. However, (5%) claimed that it is 'time consuming' and (2,5%) argued that it is 'waste of time'. While no one selected 'not important'. Students saw that the utility of Information Technology (IT) in learning English is important.

Question 6: Is the English Department where you study equipped with enough technological materials?

Figure 6: English Department Equipment with Technological Materials
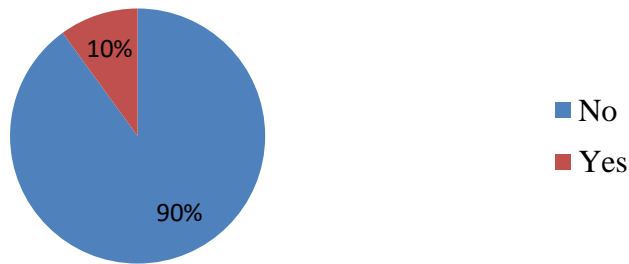
- No — 90%
- Yes — 10%

Figure (6) shows that the majority of participants' responses (90%) are 'No'. Only (10%) of students replied by 'Yes'. These results revealed that there is a lack of technological materials in their English Department.

Question 7: Do you think that the use of Information Technology (IT) enhances your English learning?


Figure 7: Students' Opinion about the Role of Using Educational Technology in Enhancing English Learning

- Never — 5%
- A little — 30%
- A lot — 65%
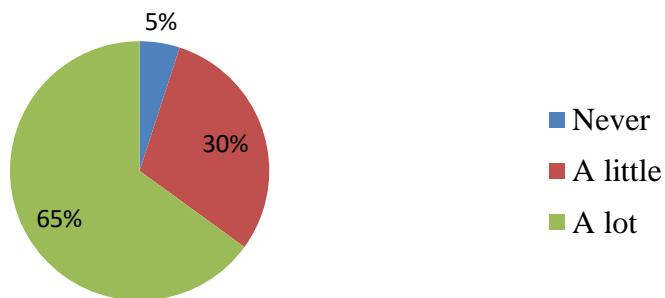
In Figure (7), many of second year students of KMU (65%) selected 'a lot'. Whereas, (30%) chose 'little'. Above all, only (5%) answered 'never'. Therefore, most second year students argued that using Information Technology (IT) enhances their English learning.

Question 8: The use of Information Technology (IT) makes you: motivated/ less motivated

Figure 8: **The Impact of Using Information Technology**
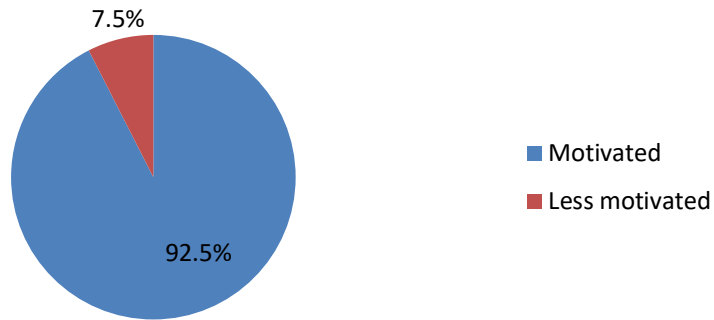
According to Figure (8), most students (92,5%) answered 'motivated'. On the other hand, (7,5%) answered 'less motivated'. Hence, the use of Information Technology (IT) makes them motivated.

Question 9: Which one do you prefer? Traditional education/ Educational technology

Figure 9: Students' Choice between Traditional Education and Educational Technology
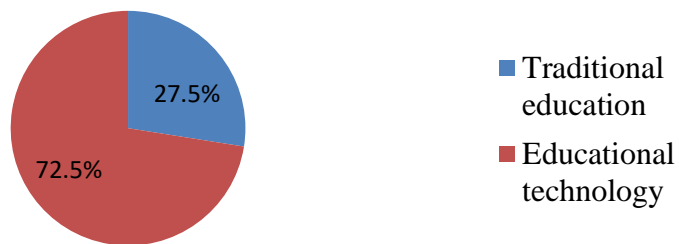
Concerning Figure (9), (72,5%) of the students preferred 'educational technology' whereas (27,5%) of them prefered 'traditional education'. In students' opinion, educational technology is better than traditional education.

Question 10: How often do you use Information Technology (IT) in your studies?

Figure 10: The Frequency of Using Information Technology in Students' Studies
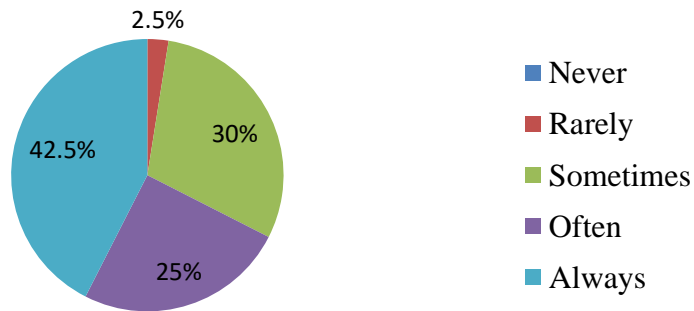
Figure (10) reveals that (42,5%) of participants replied by 'always' and (30%) of them answered 'sometimes'. Additionally, (25%) responded 'often'. However, (2,5%) replied 'rarely'. No one chose 'never'. Therefore, the use of Information Technology (IT) in studies is increasing.

Section Three: Online Learning

This section comprises of nine inquests about online learning.

Question 11: Have you ever engaged in online learning?

Figure 11: Online Learning Engagement

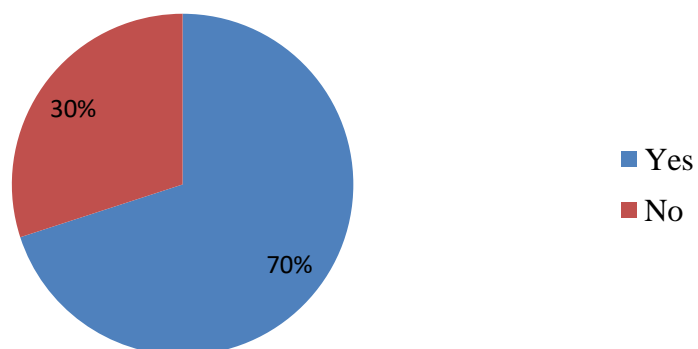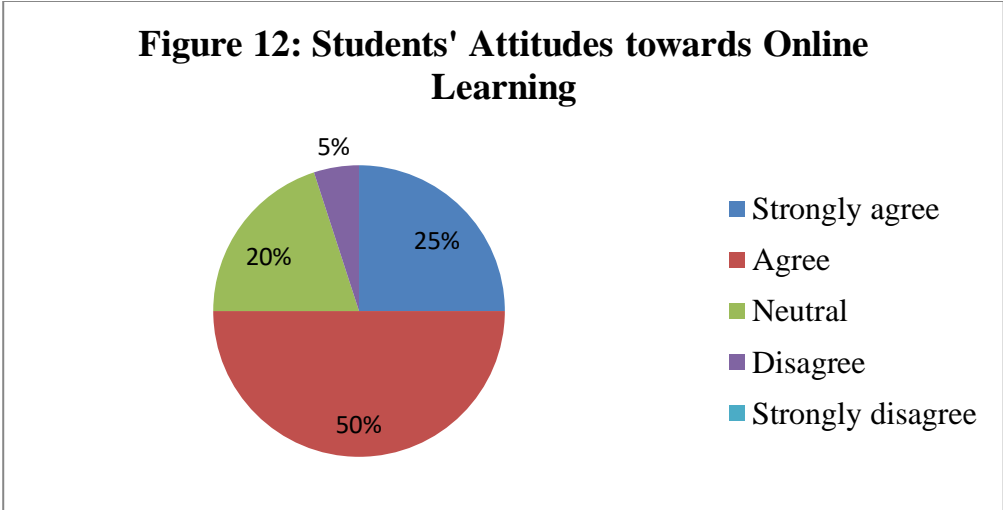Figure (11) displays that the dominant answer of students (70%) is 'Yes' while only some of students (30%) answered 'No'. That is to say, most of the students have an experience with online learning.

Question 12: Online learning facilitates the learning process.

Figure 12: Students' Attitudes towards Online Learning

It is obvious from Figure (12) that (50%) of the students agreed with the statement of 'online learning facilitates the learning process' and (25%) strongly agreed with that. Whereas, (20%) of the students were neutral and just (5%) disagreed. However, no one strongly disagreed. As a result, online learning facilitates the learning process.

Question 13: The access to internet is possible.

Figure 13: The Possibility of Accessing to Internet
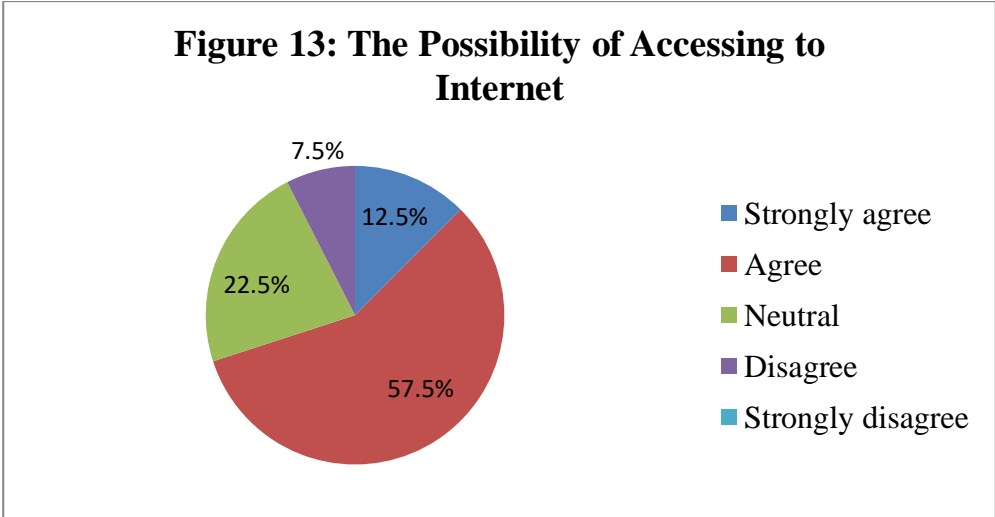
Figure (13) demonstrates that (57,5%) of the chosen second year students agreed that the access to internet is possible. Nevertheless, (22,5%) were neutral. Whereas, (12,5%) of students replied by 'strongly agree' and (7,5%) of them answered 'disagree'. Yet, no student chose 'strongly disagree'.

Question 14: Where is internet available for you?

Figure 14: Location of Internet Availability
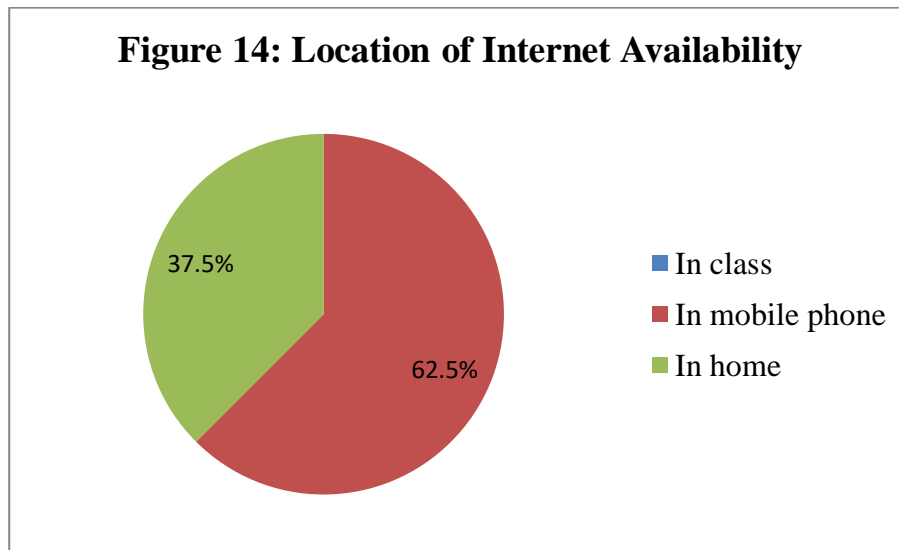
The results in Figure (14) indicate that the majority of students (65,5%) claimed that internet is available in their 'mobile phones'. However, (37,5%) stated that internet is available at in their 'home'. Consequently, the internet is not available in classes for students, but it is available for them in other places.

Question 15: How often is internet available?

Figure 15: The Frequency of Internet Availability

The data appeared in Figure (15) shows that (47,5%) of the participants stated that the internet is 'always' available. While, (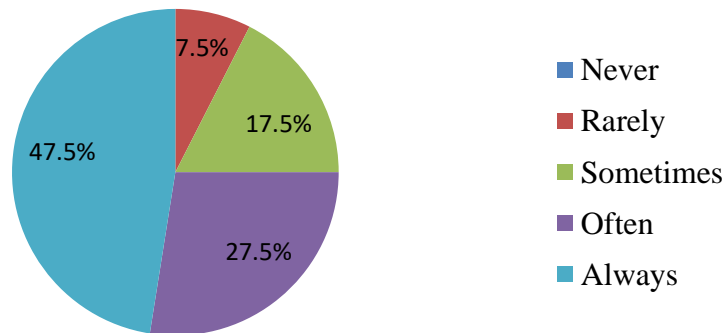27,5%) of them claimed that the internet is 'often' available. Nevertheless, (17,5%) selected the option 'sometimes' and few students (7,5%) selected 'rarely'. Moreover, the rate of the option 'never' is (0%). This means that the internet is always available for most students.

Question16: Online learning requires a high quality of internet.

Figure 16: Students' Attitudes towards the High Quality Requirements of the Internet for Online Learning
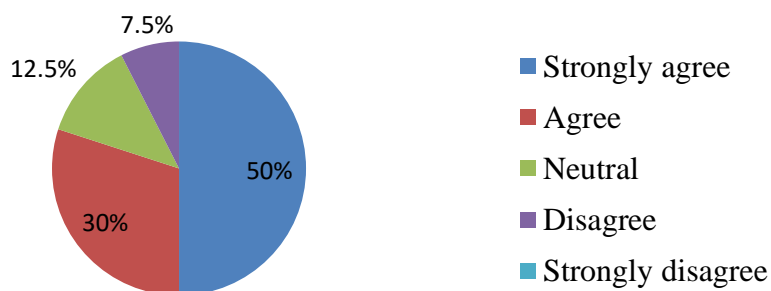
According to the given results in Figure (16), half of the students (50%) strongly agreed that online learning requires a high quality of internet and (30%) of them responded by 'agree'. While, (12,5%) were neutral and (7,5%) replied by 'disagree'. Meanwhile, no one

47

strongly disagreed (0%). This explains that online learning really requires a high quality of internet.

Question 17: Online English learning is more interesting than traditional one.

Figure 17: Students' Interest towards Online English Learning

- ■ Strongly agree
- ■ Agree
- ■ Neutral
- ■ Disagree
- ■ Strongly disagree

5%

17.5%

17.5%

17.5%

42.5%
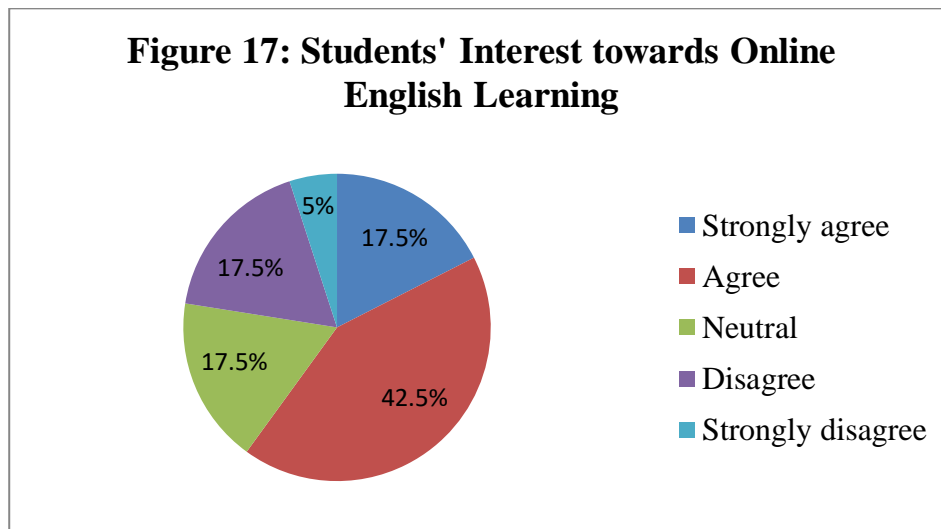
Concerning the results provided in Figure (17), (42,5%) of the learners agreed with this statement and (17,5%) of them strongly agreed. Moreover, (17,5%) were neutral and (17,5%) disagreed. Furthermore, (5%) strongly disagreed. In this case, most of the students find that online English learning is more interesting than traditional one.

Question18: You hope that educational system transforms from traditional classes into online classes.

Figure 18: Students' Opinions on Transformation of Traditional Classes into Online Classes

- Strongly agree — 30%
- Agree — 25%
- Neutral — 10%
- Disagree — 25%
- Strongly agree — 10%
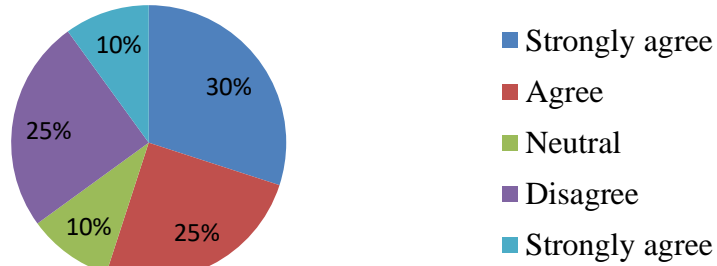
Concerning the eighteenth question in the third section, (30%) of the participants chose 'strongly agree', and (25%) of them selected 'agree'. Whereas, others (25%) disagreed and (10%) were neutral. Moreover, the rest (10%) replied with 'strongly disagree'. Hence, not all students hope that the educational system transforms from traditional classes into online classes.

Question 19: Online classes make you feel at ease.

Figure 19: Students' Feeling at Ease towards Online Classes

- Not at all — 20%
- A little bit — 32.5%
- Rather — 7.5%
- Quite — 22.5%
- Very much — 17.5%
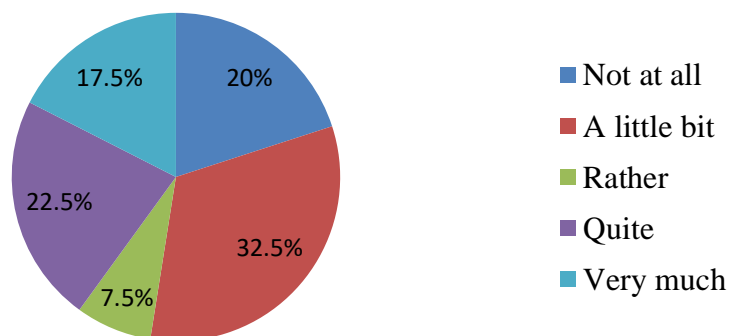
As it is shown in Figure (19). The minority of students (7,5%) responded by 'rather' and (17,5%) answered with 'very much'. However, (20%) replied by 'not at all' and (22,5%) chose 'quite'. Nevertheless, (32,5%) selected 'a little bit'.

Section Three: Moodle Platform

The section is composed of six (6) questions about Moodle platform.

Question 20: Do you enjoy using Moodle platform?

Figure 20: Students' Feeling about Moodle Platform
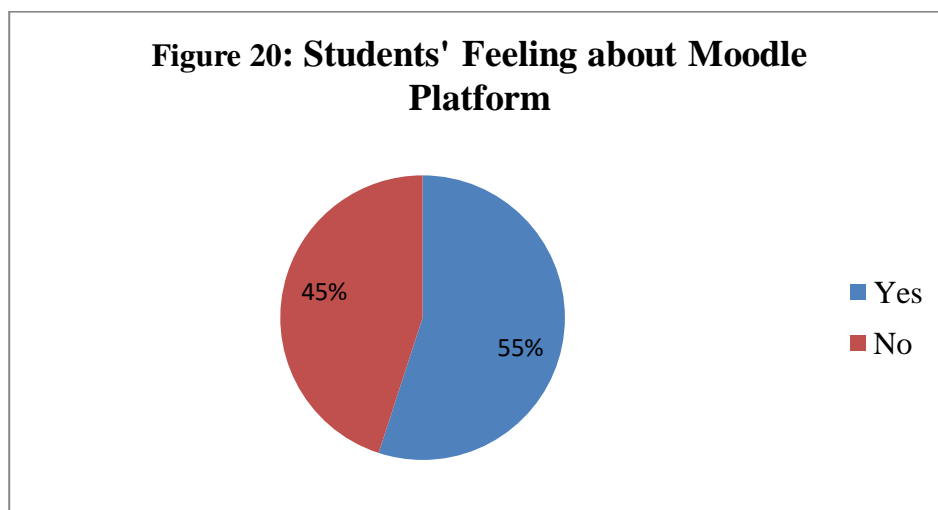
From Figure (20), it has been found that less than half of the participants (45%) answered by 'No' and more than half of them (55%) responded with 'Yes'. From these percentages, we conclude that the students enjoy using Moodle platform.

Question 21: Does the use of this e-learning platform create difficulties in accessing information for your study?

Figure 21: Exploring Whether the Use of Moodle Creates Difficulties in Accessing Information for Studies or not
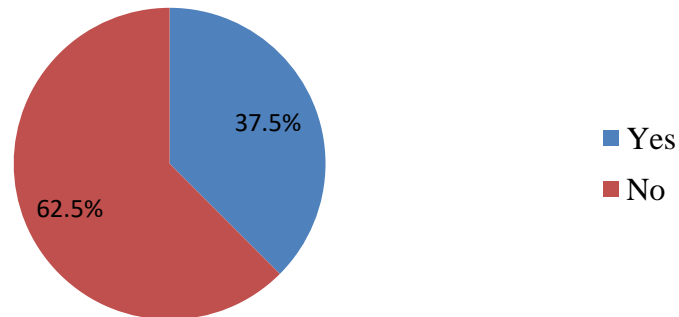
Figure (21) reveals that (62,5%) answered by 'No' and (37,5%) replied with 'Yes'. These results show that most of second year students, when they use this e-learning platform, do not face difficulties in accessing information for their study.

Question 22: What aspects of Moodle platform structure motivate you in the learning process?

Figure 22: Students' Choice between Moodle Platform Aspects
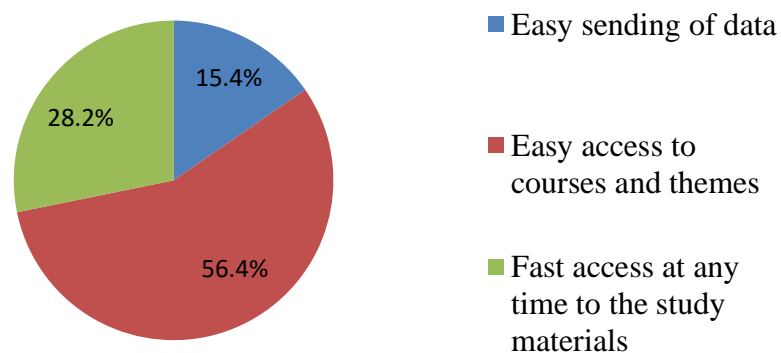
In Figure (22), students (56,4%) stated that 'easy access to courses and themes' is the main aspect of Moodle platform structure that motivates them in the learning process, while others (28,2%) responded by 'fast access at any time to the study materials'. Meanwhile,

51

(15,4%) of the students replied with 'easy sending of data'. Therefore, it is noticed that most of the students agreed that easy access to courses and themes is the main aspect of Moodle platform that motivates them in their learning process.

Question 23: Do you feel that Moodle platform satisfies your learning needs?

Figure 23: Students' Feeling about Moodle Platform Satisfaction of Learning Needs

42.5%

57.5%

■ Yes
■ No
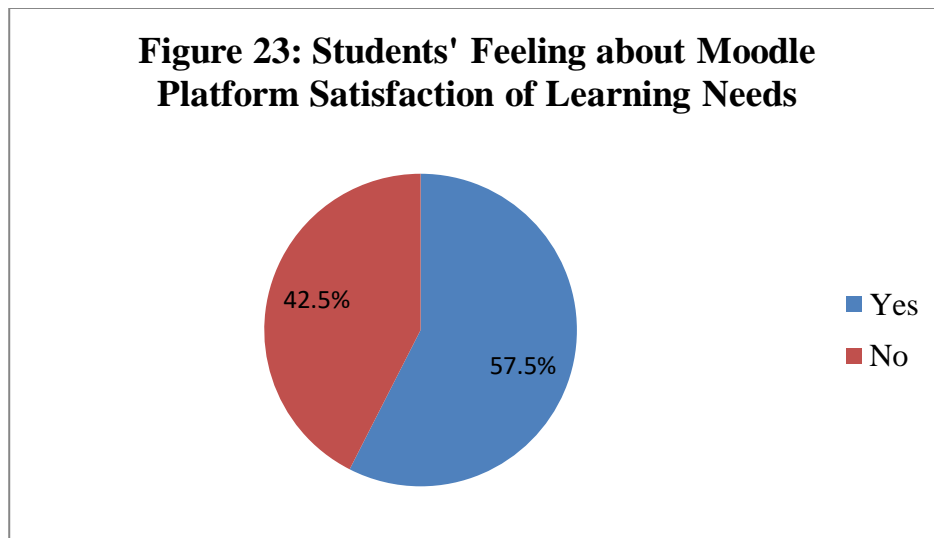
Figure (23) reveals that (57,5%) of the learners responded by 'Yes' and (42,5%) of them answered by 'No'. These results show that Moodle satisfies learners' learning needs.

Question 24: I would like to take all the lessons given in the online environment via Moodle.

Figure 24: Students' Opinion about Taking all the Lessons via Moodle

47.5%

52.5%

■ Yes
■ No
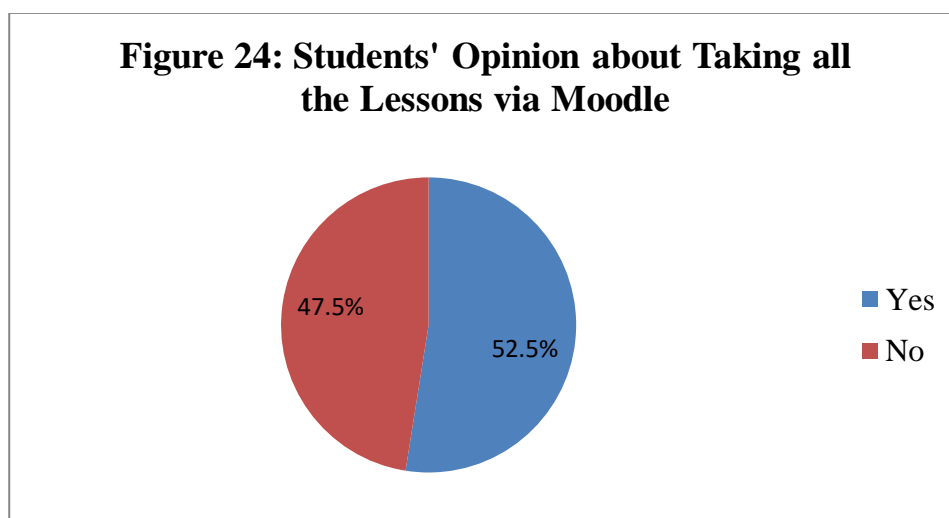
In Figure (24), the participants (52,5%) said 'Yes' and the rest (47,5%) said 'No'. Hence, Moodle can be considered as a convenient online learning platform rather than other platforms.

Question 25: The use of Moodle is effective.

Figure 25: The Effectiveness of Using Moodle
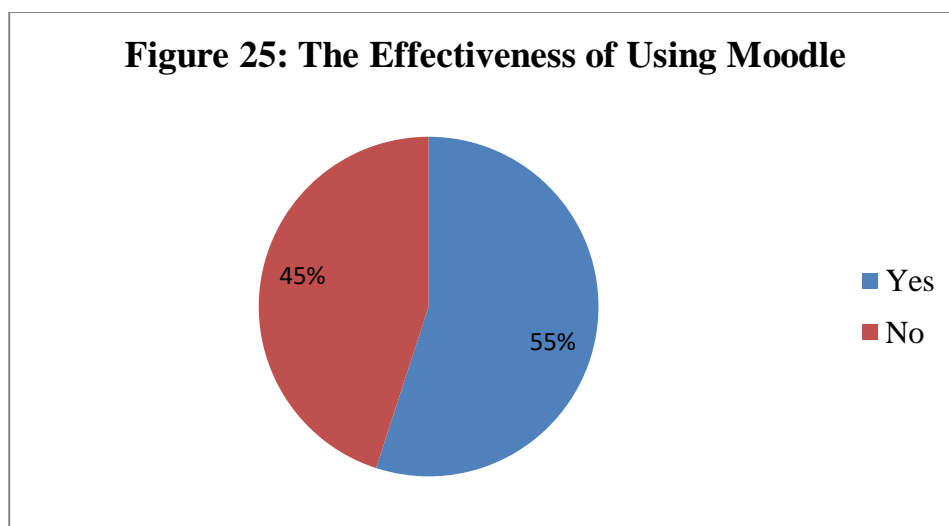
The results in Figure (25) present that (55%) of the students replied that the use of Moodle is effective. Whereas, less than half of them (45%) answered that the use of Moodle is not effective. Thus, in students' opinions, the use of Moodle is effective.

3.7 Findings and Discussion

The interpretation and the analysis of students' questionnaire indicate several significant points which are summarized in the following lines.

Second year LMD students provided that they always use educational technology in their learning as well as they enjoy using it in their studies. Also, they believe that its use is important in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Moreover, from their points of view, they see that online learning facilitates the learning process. Furthermore, they wish

educational system transforms from traditional classes into online classes. As well as, they claimed that they enjoy using Moodle and they see it as an effective online learning platform.

Conclusion

The third chapter dealt with the research methodology and design. It presents the results of the collected data and the interpretation of the findings. It clarified the research method, the population, and the chosen sample. Moreover, it covered the validity and the reliability of the research and explained the used instrument then it described its results. Lastly, it exhibited the discussion of the findings that based on the results of the students' questionnaire. It was concluded that students enjoy using educational technology and they prefer online learning more than traditional learning. Moreover, they enjoy using Moodle and they argued that Moodle is an effective online learning platform.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The present research attempted to explore EFL students' attitudes towards online learning platforms and to evaluate the effectiveness of using Moodle. In order to reach the main objectives, the researchers introduced two research questions. The first question was about the impact of online learning platforms on EFL students' learning. The second question was about EFL students' attitudes towards the use of Moodle at the university of Ouargla. These questions led the researchers to formulate the following hypotheses:

1. We assume that online learning platforms can enhance the students' learning.
2. We hypothesize that students have positive attitudes towards the use of Moodle in learning EFL.

The study started with two chapters concerning the theoretical background and one chapter for field work. To review, the first chapter tackled some elements in the field of educational technology. It began by giving an idea about integration of technology in education. Then, it clarified the basics of educational technology. Moreover, it explained the use of technology in teaching and learning EFL. Also, it elaborated the difference between traditional and modern education.

The second chapter dealt with online learning. It discussed its definition and its advantages and disadvantages. Also, it tackled the concept of learning management system (LMS) and its timeline. After that, it concluded with Moodle platform by providing the readers with its definition, its history and by mentioning its main features.

In the third chapter which is about students' questionnaire, the researchers tried to prove the research hypotheses in order to answer the research questions. They relied on a questionnaire as the most suitable instrument for collecting data about the participants'

attitudes towards educational technology, online learning and Moodle platform. The results of the collected data showed positive attitudes of the participants concerning the use of educational technology, online learning and Moodle platform. Moreover, the students see Moodle as an effective and enjoyable online learning platform.

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Appendix

Appendix: Students' Questionnaire

Exploring EFL Students' Attitudes towards Online Learning Platforms

Dear students, this questionnaire is a part of a master dissertation that aims at exploring EFL students' attitudes towards online learning platforms. You are kindly requested to complete this questionnaire by tapping on the chosen choice.

Section One: Profile Information
1. What is your gender?
Male☐   Female☐
2. How old are you?
18 to 24☐   25 to 30☐   31 and older☐

Section Two: Educational Technology
3. Do you use IT (information technology) for learning?
      Yes☐   No☐
4. Do you enjoy using information technology during your learning process?
      Yes☐   No☐
5. What do you think of the utility of information technology in learning English?
  Important☐   Not important☐   Time consuming☐   Waste of time ☐
6. Is the English Department where you study   equipped with enough technological materials?
      Yes☐   No☐
7. Do you think that the use of information technology enhances your English learning?
   Never ☐   A little ☐   A lot ☐
8.   The use of information technology makes you:
      Motivated☐   Less motivated☐
9. Which one do you prefer?
      Traditional education ☐   Educational technology ☐
10. How often do you use information technology in your studies?
      Never☐   Rarely☐   Sometimes☐   Often ☐   Always ☐

Section Three: Online Learning
11. Have you ever engaged in online learning?
      Yes☐   No☐
12. Online learning facilitates the learning process:
      Strongly agree☐   Agree☐   Neutral☐   Disagree☐   Strongly disagree
☐
13. The access to internet is possible.

Strongly agree☐   Agree☐   Neutral☐   Disagree☐   Strongly disagree ☐

14. Where is internet available for you?

    In class☐   In mobile phone☐   In home☐

15. How often is internet available?

    Never☐   Rarely☐   Sometimes☐   Often ☐   Always☐

16. Online learning requires a high quality of internet.

    Strongly agree☐   Agree☐   Neutral☐   Disagree☐   Strongly disagree ☐

17. Online English learning is more interesting than traditional one.

    Strongly agree☐   Agree☐   Neutral☐   Disagree☐   Strongly disagree ☐

18. You hope that education system transforms from traditional classes into online classes.

    Strongly agree☐   Agree☐   Neutral☐   Disagree☐   Strongly disagree ☐

19. Online classes make you feel at ease.

    Not at all ☐   a little bit ☐   rather ☐   quite ☐   very much☐

Section Four: Moodle Platform

20. Do you enjoy using MOODLE platform ?

    Yes☐   No☐

21. Does the use of this e-learning platform create difficulties in accessing information for your study?

    Yes☐   No☐

22. What aspects of MOODLE platform structure motivate you in the learning process?

    Easy sending of data ☐   Easy access to courses and themes ☐

   Fast access at any time to the study materials☐

23. Do you feel that MOODLE platform satisfies your learning needs?

    Yes☐   No☐

24. I would like to take all the lessons given in the online environment via Moodle?

    Yes☐   No☐

25. The use of Moodle is effective.

    Yes☐   No☐

Résumé

La présente étude vise à fournir des données afin d'améliorer l'utilisation des plateformes d'apprentissage en ligne dans l'apprentissage de l'anglais comme langue étrangère (EFL). De plus, il vise à évaluer l'efficacité de l'utilisation de la plateforme Moodle et à motiver les apprenants à utiliser cette plateforme d'apprentissage en ligne. L'échantillon sur lequel nous nous appuyons est composé de (100) étudiants et étudiantes. Pourtant, seuls (40) étudiants ont participé. Pour la collecte des données, nous avons conçu un questionnaire qui contient vingt-cinq (25) questions et quatre (4) sections. Ces sections comprennent une échelle de Likert et des questions Oui/Non. Le questionnaire s'adresse aux étudiants de deuxième année de licence au Département des Lettres et Langue Anglaise de l'Université Kasdi Merbah Ouargla-Algérie pour connaître leurs attitudes envers les plateformes d'apprentissage en ligne spécialement Moodle dans l'apprentissage de l'anglais comme langue étrangère (EFL). Les résultats de l'étude ont révélé que l'attitude de la plupart des étudiants d'anglais comme langue étrangère (EFL) à l'égard de l'utilisation de la plate-forme Moodle était positive. De plus, ils aiment utiliser la plateforme Moodle pour apprendre l'anglais comme langue étrangère.

Mots-clés: apprentissage en ligne, plateforme Moodle, apprentissage de l'anglais comme langue étrangère (EFL), étudiants d'anglais comme langue étrangère (EFL), technologie éducative.

الملخص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى توفير البيانات من أجل تعزيز استخدام منصات التعلم عبر الإنترنت في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. علاوة على ذلك، تهدف إلى تقييم فعالية استخدام منصة موودل وتحفيز المتعلمين على استخدام هذه المنصة. تتكون العينة التي تم الاعتماد عليها في هذه الدراسة من (100) طالب وطالبة. بينما شارك (40)طالبا فقط من هذه العينة. لجمع البيانات، قمنا بتصميم استبيان يحتوي على خمسة وعشرين (25) سؤالاً وأربعة (4) أقسام. تتكون هذه الأقسام من مقياس الإعجاب وأسئلة نعم / لا. تم توجيه الاستبيان لطلاب السنة الثانية في قسم الآداب واللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة قاصدي مرباح ورقلة-الجزائر من أجل التعرف على مواقفهم تجاه منصات التعلم عبر الإنترنت وخاصة منصة موودل في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL). كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن مواقف طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية كانت إيجابية تجاه استخدام منصة موودل. كما بينت أيضا أنهم يستمتعون باستخدام هذه المنصة في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعلم عبر الإنترنت، منصة موودل، تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، التكنولوجيا التعليمية.