From Traditional to Online Teaching and Learning: Major Reflections and Perceptions

BENMANSOUR Souheyla[*]
University of Oran 2 Mohmed Ben Ahmed, Algeria
benmansour.souhila@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT: *Online teaching and learning undertakings are no longer considered as a nice-to-have extramural support but feedback about the context, the mode, the time people learn, and the source they learn it from. Digitization of education permits teachers and students to gain access to accredited data beyond the classroom, in a variety of systems and procedures that aid in exploiting time and space together. Teachers around the globe are struggling to rise above the shortcomings of being physically absent when shifting to online virtual learning platforms. This paper tries to uncover the viability of exploring technologies of education for the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in the changing approach and perspective. The conclusions of this research are founded on replies to a questionnaire responded by a sample of undergraduate students of the English language department at Mohamed Ben Ahmed University of Algeria. Gen Z, the 'digital natives' reveal that they do not desire teachers to be replaced by computers as they require motivation, stimulation, and effective reinforcement. Virtual education is practicable, but its exploit is determined by the effective content structure, mulling over and anticipating this transition, and the flexible exploit of teaching/learning materials that can complement the exertions of the teachers. For virtual teaching and learning, not only do the schools and universities need to be well-appointed, but the learners too need to get to know the changing situation.*

KEYWORDS: Asynchronous Learning, Digitization, Online Learning Platforms, Teaching and Learning Tools, Virtual Education

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* Corresponding author

Introduction

With the colossal fame of the Internet and the advancement of network technologies distant teaching / learning, often referred to as online learning, has become an inevitable alteration. The fascinating use of electronic appliances such as mobiles and laptops paves the way for online teaching/learning to take place in a synchronous or asynchronous environment which is gaining enormous fame among teachers and students (Singh & Thurman, 2019). Technology advance has compelled the education system-reaching to explore online teaching/ learning mode. Schools, colleges and universities that were unwilling or only thinking about altering their traditional instructive approach are now eager to cope with the change brought by online teaching/learning mode (Dhawan, 2020). Technology is being very effectively exploited in the favour of teachers and learners by connecting with far-off areas of the world, and overcoming time and distance barriers. All the academic institutions around the world have generously offered online courses, varying from all school subjects to engineering to coaching to medicine, to name a few. Communication has in no way been so effortless; technology has become not simply the utensil of human improvement but also the basis of organization in the teaching and learning process (Sarica & Cavus, 2009).

The whole world is witnessing the revolution in technology but one cannot ignore the disbelief about the reaching of online language learning. English Foreign Language (EFL) students are from diverse backgrounds, have several reaching levels and have different learning styles, which affect their competence to learn and practice the foreign language. In the traditional classroom environment, the learners receive feedback from their teacher and provide the output of the language by being within walking distance of each other.

The effective use of technologies of education enables students to learn the language in a better way. But is it the only alternative in the present-day context? Does it always work in all situations and parameters? If not, what are the reasons behind a possible inadequacy? The objective of this research is to expose how online teaching and learning of language can be made viable and what limits the use of online teaching and learning modes to be a suitable alternative. English language teachers need to be responsive to the inclusive context to make students involved in the up- to- date situation and to amplify students' competencies to exploit the learned language (Brown, Lauder & Ashton, 2008).

Digitization has reshaped the structure of the whole educational scene, and nowadays we should see the viability of online language learning. Individuals have to be skilled in this interconnected society. In a digital world, it is of paramount importance, for Generation Z, to comprehend this interrelatedness and lead through boundaries to overcome disparities and operate in a combined way. Educational institutions need to ponder eliminating fences to access and connectivity, propping up professional expansion, speeding up E-learning novelties and, endorsing digital literacy to instigate ongoing learning.

Educators' responsibility should be redefined; it is about assisting learners' development as contributing members of society. The potent advance of technologies of education push the academic institutions around the world to drive and employ the set of existing technological devices to design content for distance learning for learners in all domains. Teachers and tutors around the world are investigating new options to do things in a different way and with better flexibility leading to prospective benefits in the availability for learning.

Literature review
Online Learning: New Paradigm Shift in Today's Education

The structural design of a learning system entails an important task for e-learning to be implemented into an intricate scheme that is flexible, time -scalable, and enduring, albeit there are many miscellaneous devices and approaches. Presently, higher education in the Arab world goes through a major amendment, concerning improved accessibility (Benmansour, S. 2021).

Research conducted by Tichavsky, Hunt, Driscoll, & Jicha in 2015 spotlights students' perceptions and attitudes about online versus face-to-face approaches to teaching and learning. In their study, they

intended to expose the motives behind which students may or may not take on board online teaching mode; and whether these approvals were influenced by other students' outlooks of online learning or was it due to a concrete experience with online courses. The quantity of courses being uploaded online has witnessed a growing augmentation caused by the progress in technology that has made the integration of online courses trouble-free as well as money-making. Despite this development, students, however, reveal a preference for face-to face teaching and learning.

A study was presented by the researchers by reviewing existing literature and conducting a survey of undergraduate students who were enrolled in online courses as well as in traditional face-to-face classes. Consistent with the literature that was scrutinized, it was found that because the estimated institutions' enrollment was about to augment, lots of institutions offered online courses to fit student needs (Kaur and Bhatt, 2020). Online enrollment in courses was not limited by physical seats; it was a suitable option for on-campus students. Another rationale for embracing online education by academic institutes was the equilibrium between self-paced, self-directional and collaborative learning. It was also perceived that students' performances were improved in these online courses when the course content was planned and instructed in compliant with effective educational principles, and the students were thrilled by the teaching approaches adopted.

Challenges of Distant Education

One of the major challenges of online classes was the lack of effective communication that is assured in on-site classes. Computers at times could raise misapprehension for that reason researchers have underlined that the physical distance between the teacher and student in online teaching environments need not be compromise (Srivastava, 2020). This can also affect students' impetus and engagement in learning. A study on students enrolled in both online and on-site classes divulged that the inclination of students is based on three factors: (i) a need for face-to-face interaction with both the teacher and their peers; (ii) constant monitoring from the instructor for accomplishing a task and face-to-face interaction confirmed to be a colossal motivation and (iii) In face-to-face contact with the teacher, students had a feeling of a contentment in friendliness and considered online learning as uncomforting. A SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges) investigation on online teaching and learning has been conducted by David (2018) where she states that "These strengths of the online learning modes can rescue us from these hard times."

The e-learning approaches are not simply student-centred; they permit education specialists and teachers to adapt the teaching processes according to the demands of the learning experience. The teachers can be successful in upholding a human touch by making use of audio and videos together with lessons and providing instant feedback to the students (Lander, 2014). Technology supplies inventive and flexible options aiding people to be integrated and also work virtually with no need to be present physically. This results in loads of system changes in institutions as they implement innovative technology for interacting and working (Allen, and Seaman, 2013).

One of the utmost limitations of online learning is the shortage of communication between teachers and their learners. The majority of learners have diverse learning styles and strategies in consequence of which ineffective adaptation of learning material can make the learners frustrated. Online learning has paved the way for lots of opportunities where teachers can plan a variety of programs which may improve problem-solving abilities, critical thinking competencies, and flexibility among the students.

The Education Technology Startups are doing their best not only to revolutionize teaching and learning but also the process of evaluation, assessment, results, certification, degrees etc **(Melisa, 2020).** Online education also encounters many challenges varying from issues having to do with content, learners and instructors. It is completely challenging to create a learning material that not only contains the course content but also triggers captivation among the learners. For tutors, it is a challenge to shift from traditional pedagogy of instruction to online teaching. For the learners, it is a challenge to shift towards a mode of

learning without a face- to- face interaction. A successful and proficient educational system requires to be improved to convert education to online mode. Given that most of the students prefer on-site classes to online classes anyhow of whether they had been enrolled in an online course or not since they supposed that it lacked social interaction with their peers and more significantly with the teachers (Kang.etal,2015)

Although most of the online courses adopt various methods to create an interactive online environment, students seemed to miss the physical aspect of human interaction. Electronic interaction, regardless of how frequent, might not fulfill that side of the students' wants for social interaction (Pittman, 2021). Another persuasion of the students involved is that in online classes they need to 'teach themselves', and without having the teacher in the class; it might not be possible for them to ask questions nor ask for further explanation from the teacher in person (Sttat, 2017). They considered themselves deprived self-motivators and counted on their tutors for it. Most of the students have an aversion to reading and hinge on verbal reminders to find out what is significant to read or learn. In online classes, the lack of such reminders from the teacher may let the students think that they need to read more of the assigned material. Getting the students to read is a continuous struggle (some of them may not have the abilities essential for self-regulated/self-directed learning), and the fundamental objective now is to help students upgrade skills to become self-regulated learners. E-learning or online learning is much more difficult than it may appear. Further investigations and investments are required for purchasing the devices and materials, providing maintenance for the materials, affording training for teachers and learners, and fostering the online learning content.

Research Design and Methodology

A quantitative approach was adopted in this study. Semi-structured questionnaires of EFL students are conducted. A cyclic procedure of data collection, interpretation, and analysis is underlined in this action research. Mishra, (2020) maintained that action research seeks to present convenient solutions to problems. It also propped experts and decision-makers, to be actively engaged in the study.

Instrumentation

Semi-structured questionnaires were intended to inspect EFL students' perceptions and attitudes about distant education in English language learning. In this study, open-ended questionnaires were appropriate to gather data and permit the informants to remain anonymous. Six questions with definite instructions, which could be responded in about less than ten minutes, were administered. It sought to decrease the time participants would require to complete them and therefore, minimize the return rate. The use of questionnaires enables respondents' answers to be free from any biases of the researcher. They are also considered effective and supply structured answers. In this study, the questionnaire brings to light students' activities in online class and their perceptions, and attitudes. An undergraduate class of thirty EFL students enrolled in the English language department, at Oran 2 university of Algeria, were selected to partake in the study. EFL students participating in the study were in their third year license studies and having written expression lectures. Participant students concur to participate in this study and disclose their perceptions, and attitudes towards online learning.

Data Presentation and Analysis

To cope with the digital world, Algerian universities and higher education institutions raise the challenge to employ technology and inspect an e-learning environment to be of advantage to the merits of technology. Although some of them show inclination to the traditional classroom environment, instructors are, somehow, impelled to handle the new situation to post lectures and even assess students via a system that provides opportunities to upload lectures. They can also complete their assignments, and be in contact with their students distantly. Though this ground-breaking approach appears to improve their self-autonomy, training students and evolving their competencies to learn virtually is not a sure bet, mostly for students

who are not skillful with technology. Table one disclose the students' inclination about the available learning platforms employed in online classes:

Table1. Learning platforms

Online platforms	%
Team platform	47%
Zoom platform	52%
moodle platform	49%
progress platform	46%
Instagram	20%
Facebook	25%
Google Meet	55%

Table one shows that participants were using Google Meet (55%) ; Zoom sessions (52%); Moodle platform(49%), Team platform(47%) and ,Progres platform(46%), correspondingly. Only 20% and 25% of informants affirmed using Instagram and Facebook. It seems that students are quite informed about the variety of learning platforms afforded and acknowledge the shift to online settings.

In the second question, the participants were grilled about the merits of studying in online classes. Table two gives a thorough reflection of the students' standpoints concerning the merits of distant education in the learning process.

Table 2. Merits of e-learning

Advantages *of e-learning*	%
Boosting motivation.	59%
Supporting self-directed teaching and learning.	49%
Providing feedback.	52%
Enhancing interaction.	49%
Exploring digital network applications and platforms.	58%
Improving communication.	39%
Developing students' collaborative learning.	38%
Integrating practical Assessment tools.	37%
Giving assignments	41%
Relieving the burden of distance	57%

Table two divulges that students increase in value, in the online class, that it boosts their motivation (59%) and explores digital network applications and platforms. (58%). 57% of students stated that it relieves the

burden of distance. 49% added that the online class ssupports self-directed teaching/ learning and enhances interaction. 52% of students mentioned that online learning provides feedback.41% of students' answers encompass giving assignments. It seems that students are inspired about learning in online classes. Students were questioned about their attitudes about distant education. This is demonstrated in the following table.

Table3. Students' positive attitudes about distant education

Perceptions and Attitudes	%
The adaptability of digital learning tools	61%
The accessibility of learning/ teaching resources	58%
The self-sufficiency in teaching and learning	49%
The contentment to switch to online learning	50%
The effectiveness in supervising the class distantly	42%
The adeptness in giving lectures online	40%
The ease to employ digital devices	35%

Table three shows that students have, overall, positive attitude about Learning in online classes. More than half of students believe that adaptability of digital learning tools can support the process of Learning (61%) and hold out accessibility to different learning materials (58%). 49% of students stated that Learning in virtual classroom enhanced their self-sufficiency, as it promoted student-centered learning; only 35% of participants pointed out the aspect of ease to employ digital devices. Some psychological parameters, such as stress, fear, or being reluctant, may make students feel disinclined utilizing technology. The researcher designed the third question to examine the students' perceptions about what they most have an aversion to when learning in online class. This is pointed up in table 4bellow.

Table4. Students' negative attitudes about virtual learning.

Negative Perceptions	%
Overloaded content of the online class	58%
Lack of attentiveness during the live class	55%
Lack of interactivity	57%
Plagiarism	48%
Lack of discipline	25%
Lack of socialization in the virtual class	48%

Findings from table four reveal that most students reflect on learning remotely as intensive (59%). 57% of students maintain that the online class lacks interactivity. 55% of students perceive the challenging atmosphere of online classes as taxing and saddle them in such a worrying setting. They also underscore

the issue of plagiarism (48%). Since this approach is new and quite challenging, students can easily copy and paste things from the net. Informants also indicate the lack of discipline (25%). They maintain that some students use to act up during lectures. In the fourth question, students were asked about the perceived barriers and obstacles met in the online class. Table five illustrates the main limitations.

Table5.Challenges of online education

Challenges	%
Computer anxiety	60%
Lack of technology skills	67%
Lack of training	70%
No perception of benefits	73%
Resistance to change	73%
Insufficient time in GM class	56%
weak internet connection	68%

Findings from table five show that resistance to change and no perception of benefits (73%), lack of training (70%), lack of technology skills (67%), and computer anxiety (60%) were the major challenges encountered in online learning. There is a strong connection between parameters that may spoil the experience of online class. When students lack motivation and training to draw on a given technology, they would intentionally lack aptitude and get a sort of anxiety for technology and digital devices. As well, more than half of the students' answers reveal that technical breakdowns can badly affect the teaching-learning process. Lack of time in online classes is also viewed as a limitation of e-learning (56%). The informant students are invited in the last question to suggest some recommendations to enhance the experience of virtual learning.

Table6. Recommendations for enhancing virtual learning

Suggestions	%
Encouraging teachers to accept the change.	55%
Training teachers to conduct online lectures	61%
Ensuring effectual technical support.	52%
Facilitating the use of online platforms.	58 %
Providing more interactive undertakings	53%
Providing a good Internet connection	54%
Exploring the advantages of online education.	62%

Table six shows that informants believe that exploring the advantages of online education (62%), training teachers to conduct online lectures (61%), and facilitating access to educational platforms (58%), are extremely recommended to implementing online classes in EFL context. Students also believe that updating

knowledge (55%), decreasing the cognitive load (54%),and affording more interactive activities (53%) in ensuring an effective technical support mechanism (52%) as very significant for the effective use of technology in the teaching/ learning experience.

Discussion

Online teaching/learning environment offers students the opportunity to study at their own pace and expediency i.e. whenever and wherever they want without being limited by the listed meeting time for the lectures. Asynchronous online classes provide more flexibility for students to pick the times when they are effectively involved in learning (Daymont, Blau, & Campbell 2011). As a result of job or travel agenda, or distance from campus, it may be unworkable for some students to attend a traditional classroom course. They might be have challenging requirements on their restricted time, i.e. have job commitments, which entail less time spent on campus (Wdowik 2014).

It is worth mentioning that the participation of students rises in the online environment, and they are involved in richer learning experiences and extend their academic competencies (Dhawan, 2020). Asynchronous online instruction provided via the learning platforms may include many varieties, moving from Web pages and mailing assignments, to uploading lectures and handling course management systems such as Blackboard or Interactive Whiteboard. Students can communicate and work together in real-time or online by posting to notification boards or forums. This matches the demands of students who favour face-to-face as well as virtual classes. Blended courses integrate the best run-through of in-class teaching and online teaching/learning. Students' outcomes as well as their abilities to retain information are also enhanced. Experts and education specialists have observed that owing to the adoption of a blended learning approach the student population augments the withdrawal percentage reduces and it is cost-effective. Although, there is an upbeat perspective being provided on online teaching / learning, there are some difficulties that must be highlighted. If not well comprehended, estimated and considered, these advantages can become redoubtable obstacles (Fedynich 2013).

Online learning platforms can be the evidence for an effectual learning tool; the students and teachers contributing to an online course need to have a certain level of computer literacy. It's an evident fact. Teachers disapprove of the difficulty of conducting lessons and using the Internet by adapting to the details of delivering classes through a screen and a microphone via virtual platforms (Kaur & Bhatt 2020). Sloppiness on the part of instructors and students in becoming computer literate is a major barrier to implementing online / teaching learning.

Conclusion

Technology has compelled the entire world to tamper with the approach of teaching and learning. Learning a language without a teacher being physically present is no more a challenge. As online education gains great popularity among pedagogical curriculums, the consideration of the potencies compared to the limitations is truly significant to get ready to deal with the challenges of teaching and learning in this atmosphere. There has been loads of evidence that teachers are effectively teaming up with each other and at a community level. There are incomparable opportunities for collaboration, inspired resolutions, and readiness to learn from others and explore new devices.

The current research has revealed that the language learning process should come about in an active and self-motivated environment; technology promotes interaction between teachers and learners; it affords understandable input and output; aids learners to broaden thinking skills; moulds learning and teaching to be more student-centred; enhances learners' self-sufficiency supports them become more confident, and raises learners' incentive to successfully learn a foreign language. With the mainstream organizations reporting online education as significant to their abiding policy, it is at present more crucial than ever that we reflect on means to support students to be successful in online teaching modes. Online courses put forward extra challenges for teachers in communicating a social presence wherein students consider

themselves as "real" people, further than the facilitation of the course. As well, online courses may be particularly challenging for students who lack the e-competencies for self-monitored learning. If online courses carry on to be an element of the long-term strategic groundwork for academic institutes, we have to reflect on how to instruct students on the competencies they will require becoming self-monitored learners. The supreme objective is to construct learning environments wherein students are successful.

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Author's biography

Dr. Benmansour Souheyla is a senior lecturer at the University of Mohammed Ben Ahmed Oran 2, Algeria. She obtained a magister in English language studies from the University of Tlemcen, Algeria. In 2019, she obtained a doctorate in science (English language studies) entitled: 'Integrating ICT in Algerian EFL Context: Spotlight of Teachers' Perceptions and Outlooks .In July 2021, she got the University accreditation from the University of Mohammed Ben Ahmed - Oran 2. Professionally, her main areas of interest comprise ESP and langauge studies, psychology of education, and teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). Her latest publications entitled :
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