

Online Teaching During Covid-19 Pandemic the Case of EFL Students at the University of Oran

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Abstract:

In light of the outbreak of Covid19 pandemic, many higher education institutions have adopted online learning globally as an alternative learning format instead of face-to-face learning .However, the sudden transition from the conventional learning mode to the extreme online one without strategic planning.

Therefore, the present study aimed at investigating students attitudes towards online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic period to construct this research a case study was conducted at the university of Oran2, where Master 1students of English were selected as the sample population; the findings of the study reveal that the students attitudes towards e-learning was negative and this due to many obstacles encountered by the students during their online learning .

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic; e-learning ; Attitude ; Learning .

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic of the Covid19 infection has declared on 11th March 2020 by the World Health Organization , and it has become a detrimental public health challenge globally (World Health Organization, 2020). Meriam-Webster dictionary(2020) defines a pandemic as “ an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the population.”

As a result of the spread of this virus, the Algerian government issued a policy of closing universities and replacing the teaching and learning process by using an online system .The teaching staff and the students find themselves in an exceptional situation because they were

not fully ready for such a transition from traditional classroom (in person education) to a complete virtual education .

In this regard, different attitudes were noticed toward this implementation from supporters to oppositionists particularly among students at the university level . Hence , the current study attempts to investigate the attitude of Master 1 students of English toward e-learning at the university of Oran2 . Therefore the present study intends to address the following research questions :

- 1- What is the attitude of University English students toward e-learning during the pandemic ?
- 2- What is the main factor that influences students' attitudes toward online learning at the university of Oran2?

What is Covid 19 ?

Corona virus disease (Covid19) is an infectious disease caused by SARS-COV-2 Virus .It was identified in Wuhan , China, in December 2019 .The World Health Organization has declared coronavirus (SARS-Cov62) a global pandemic as shown in figure 1.

The number of those showing symptoms of Covid-19 increases daily around the world.

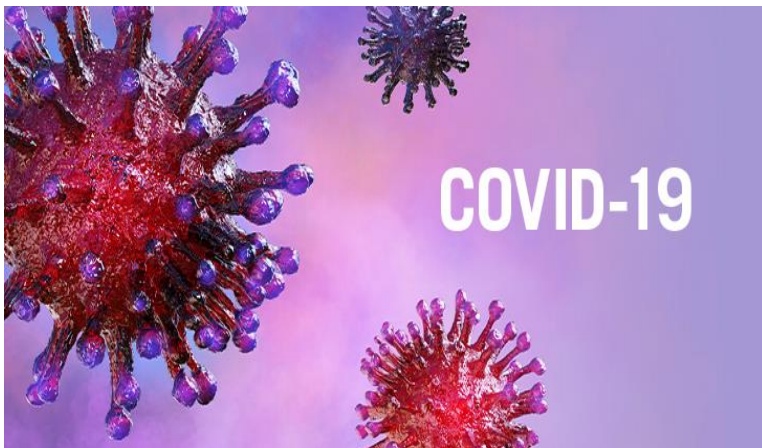


Figure 1 Corona Virus (www.healthdirect.gov.au)

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The most common symptoms of Covid-19 are: fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhoea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. It has been noticed that some people become infected but do not develop any symptoms and do not feel unwell. According to the World Health Organization, 80% of people recover from the disease without needing special treatment and around 1 out of 6 people who gets Covid-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness.

It is important to have an idea about the way people can catch Covid-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with Covid-19 coughs or exhales. When these droplets land on objects or surfaces, they can be touched by a person's eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch it if they breathe in droplets from a person with Covid-19 who coughs or exhales, this is why it is important to stay one meter away from a person who is sick.

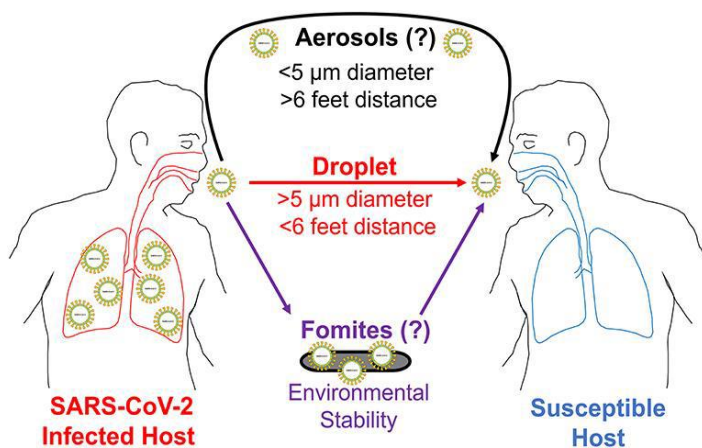


Figure2 transmission of Covid 19 (Galbadage, Peterson & Gunasekera, 2020)

Definition of Attitude

The term attitude is quite common and popular in English language, probably everyone has a notion of its meaning. Attitude is an interdisciplinary concept, not just psychologists but also sociologists, political scientists and anthropologists all study attitudes.

Attitudes are important in their own right, regardless of their relation to a person's behaviour. Your attitudes toward various individuals, institutions reflect the way you perceive the world around you.

E-learning in Algeria

Covid 19 pandemic forced the world in general and Algeria in specific to shift to electronic teaching and learning option, various definitions of the term "e-learning" can be found. The term "e-learning" covers the use of computers and technology as a vehicle for knowledge exchange with the teaching and learning process. According to Rosenberg (2001), e-learning refers to " the use of internet technologies to deliver a broad array of solutions that enhance knowledge and performance" .

It is based on three criteria :

- E-learning is networked, which makes it capable of instant updating, distribution and sharing of instruction or information .
- It is delivered to the end-user via a computer using standard internet technology.
- It focuses on the broadcast view of learning solutions that go beyond the traditional paradigms of training .

According to Pallof and Pratt (2007) a great variety of distant learning forms have emerged including : « fully online courses, hybrid or blended courses that consist of face to face sessions along with online delivery, and technology-enhanced courses consisting of integrating technology component into face to face

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traditional courses.” (**Pallof and Pratt 2007: 74**)

Mac Donald et Al 2009: 39).

Negash and Wilcox (2008) have outspread the classification of e-learning into six types :

- E-learning with presence, and without e-communication (face to face) .
- E-learning without presence and e-communication.
- E-learning without presence, and with e-communication: “asynchronous” .
- E-learning with virtual presence, and with e-communication : “ synchronous”.
- E-learning with occasional presence and with e-communication :” blended learning / hybrid asynchronous”.
- E-learning with presence , and e-communication : “blended/hybrid synchronous”.

Due to the Covid 19 epidemic lockdown, which has flipped the balance and imposed the Algerian universities to continue teaching process from home and include e-learning models not only ICTs.

Students at the university of Oran interact with their teachers via video chats in Google classroom, or zoom to finish the last year curriculums. Then, at the beginning of the new university year , the administration tries to use another model of e-learning which is hybrid/ blended learning by making a fusion between non-traditional classes (electronic) and traditional classes (physical presence) .

The university has faced many difficulties because of a set of problems that appear , that can be summarized as follows:

- Poor internet connection, people find many difficulties to

have access to some sites, in addition to that some places in Algeria do not have any internet connection.

- Some students do not have a computer.
- All Algerian universities do not have appropriate and adequate telecommunications infrastructure also the lack of specialists to boost the university sites.
- Students lack of interest in e-learning.
- Some teachers find many difficulties to use this new type of teaching because their lack of information and experience.

Methodology

For the sake of identifying students' attitudes towards online learning with the Covid19 pandemic in Algeria, the present study relied on a quantitative method, the data was collected from university students of Oran2.

The study sample comprised 50 Master 1 students of English, the participants were from the same university (Oran 2), they were chosen randomly. This research was conducted during the academic year 2020- 2021.

The questionnaire addressed to the participants was published online to Master 1 English students for 3 weeks .

Results and Discussion

The results for the study were collected from 50 students from Oran University 2. The findings from the questionnaire showed that 60% of the participants were females while 40% were males, but gender inequality was not considered in this research.

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Table 1. Gender of the Participants

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	18	36%
Female	32	64%
Total :		100 %

The following section of the questionnaire that was addressed to the participants, to find out their attitude towards online learning .

Table 2: The Students' Opinion about E-learning

	Number	Percentage
I am for e-learning	15	30%
I am against e-learning	35	70%
Total		100%

In table 2 the results shows that 70% of the participants were against e-learning and 30% of them were for it

According to the results obtained from table 2 , the majority of the participants 70% are against online teaching in Algeria whereas 30% are for it .

Table 3: Students' Attitudes Towards e-learning

	Agree	Percentage	Disagree	Percentage	Total
E-learning is important during the pandemic period	40	80%	10	20%	100%
I have enjoyed this online learning experience	20	40%	30	60%	100%
E-learning can replace traditional classrooms after the pandemic	05	10%	45	90%	100%
E-learning can be an addition to traditional classrooms	47	94%	03	06%	100%

According to the results indicated in Table 3 , 80% of Master 1 students of English at the university of Oran consider e-learning important during the period of Covid 19 pandemic whereas only 20%

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consider it not important during this period this means that students were aware about the importance of online learning during the pandemic period even if they were not satisfied .

The following question was asked if they enjoyed this online learning experience . Thus , it was found that the majority of the students 60% did not enjoy this online learning experience due to many reasons and this explain why 90% of the students reject the idea that e-learning can replace the traditional classrooms after the pandemic on the other hand 94% of them agree on the idea that e-learning can be an addition to traditional classrooms .

The following part of the questionnaire addressed to Master 1 students of English at the university of Oran 2 try to find out the factors that influence the attitude of students towards e-learning during the pandemic period , students were asked several questions about the different aspects of e-learning : the tools used and the quality of internet connection .

Table 3. Kinds of Devices used by the Students to Study Online

Kind of Devices used by the students	Number	Percentage	
smartphone	30	60%	
Laptop	15	30%	
Tablets	05	10%	
		Total	100%

To know which kind of devices used by the students to study during the pandemic period. Thus the results indicated in , it was found that 60% of them used their smartphones to study whereas 40% of them used other tools like (laptops and tablets) .

The following question tries to find out which type of connection did the students use to learn during the pandemic period when they were at home .

Table 4. Types of Connection used by the Students to Study Online

Type of connection used	Number	Percentage	
ADSL	15	30%	
Cell phones networks	35	70%	
		Total	100%

According to the results showed in table 4, the majority of the students 70% of them used cell phones networks, whereas 30% of them used Asymmetrical Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL) .

The last question that is asked to the students is an open question to state the difficulties that the students face during their online studies it is clear that the majority of them face many difficulties like poor internet accessibility; constant feeling of isolation by the lack of in person interaction and difficulties to have access to the lectures via Moodle.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate students opinions and attitudes towards e-learning via the Moodle platform among Master 1 students of English at the university of Oran 2 , from the above discussion and results the majority of the students encountered several problem and difficulties to study online which pushed them to have a negative attitude towards it, including slow internet connection , lack of instruction because this was something new for them, the home environment which was not prepared for online learning all these problems create in them a feeling of demotivation towaed e-learning .

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