

Abstract

While virtual learning has revolutionised language education, EFL students continue to encounter significant challenges in live online classrooms. This study examines these difficulties among Master 1 EFL students at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou (UMMTO), focusing on pedagogical, technical, cognitive, and external environmental barriers.

The research aims to achieve three key objectives. First, it identifies the pedagogical, technological, psychological, and interactional issues experienced by both students and instructors. Second, it investigates students' perceptions of academic and linguistic support in virtual learning environments. Third, it analyses teachers' perceptions of these challenges and their implications for learning outcomes in synchronous online classes.

The study is framed by two theoretical models: Levy (1997) Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) model, which guided the analysis of the role of technology in language teaching; and Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000) Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework, which provided insights into presence, interaction, and engagement in online learning.

A mixed-methods approach was employed to address students' and teachers' perceptions of online learning. Quantitative data from the closed-ended questionnaire items were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data from the open-ended items and semi-structured interviews with six university EFL teachers teaching online classes were examined through qualitative content analysis, in which recurring themes and patterns were identified and categorised.

The findings highlight several obstacles, including unstable internet connection, limited student interaction, low motivation, and difficulties in adapting to virtual learning. EFL teachers also reported constraints in maintaining student engagement. These issues significantly impact the effectiveness of synchronous online learning, underscoring the need for targeted solutions to improve EFL students' virtual learning experiences.

Key words: CALL, CoI framework, , EFL learning challenges, synchronous online classes , virtual learning

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to

My beloved parents. I am truly grateful for everything you have done for me, you have always inspired me to stay determined and do my best. This accomplishment is a reflection of your values and belief in me. May Allah bless you and protect you always.

To my sister Nadine, my confidante thank you for your love and support.

Sofia

I dedicate this humble work to

My beloved mother and father, for their unconditional love, sacrifices, prayers, and unwavering support .This achievement is yours as much as it is mine.

To my little me, who once dreamed fearlessly, today I open the path to fulfilling those dreams.

To my twin, Sara, my mirror and lifelong companion.

To all who, in one way or another, inspired, supported, and made this journey meaningful, I am deeply grateful.

Mina

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List of Abbreviations

AI Artificial Intelligence

CALL Computer-assisted Language Learning

COI Community of Inquiry

DVD Digital Versatile Disc

EFL English as a Foreign Language

E-learning Electronic Learning

HP Hypothesis

LMS Learning Management system

PDAs Personal Digital Assistants

QCA Qualitative Content Analysis

RQ research question

VCE Virtual Classroom Environments

VR Virtual Reality

General Introduction

General Introduction

• Statement of the Problem

Since the COVID-19 crisis, higher education across the globe has undergone an unprecedented transformation, notably through the accelerated adoption of online learning platforms. In Algeria, this shift prompted universities including Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou to implement digital solutions to maintain educational continuity. While these measures safeguarded access to learning, they also raised concerns regarding their effectiveness, particularly in disciplines where sustained interaction is pedagogically essential, such as advanced language studies. Within this context, the emergence of virtual classrooms presents new challenges for master's level English learners challenges that remain largely underexplored and prompt critical reflection on the quality and depth of their learning experience.

Existing research, such as Aouissi's (2024) study on faculty engagement and Dalla and Belhaoues' (2024) analysis of institutional barriers to digital education in Algerian universities, primarily addresses broad challenges including infrastructure limitations and administrative constraints. While these studies offer valuable insights into the national landscape of digital transformation, they adopt a macro-institutional perspective that overlooks discipline-specific pedagogical needs. In particular, they do not consider the specific demands of synchronous online learning within language departments, where real-time interaction plays a crucial role. More significantly, they fail to explore the lived experiences of advanced EFL students at institutions such as Mouloud Mammeri University, who are expected to refine complex linguistic competencies in an environment that may not fully support their academic engagement.

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First, studies such as Bellatrache (2020) and Benmansour (2021) identify general obstacles including low platform usage and internet instability but they do not explore in depth how these issues affect students' development of communicative and academic skills. Synchronous learning, especially in language-focused programmes, relies on real-time interaction, which is often disrupted by technological and pedagogical limitations. Second, existing literature, such as Sellam (2023), tends to adopt a faculty-centred approach, overlooking student perspectives particularly the cognitive demands of live language tasks and the psychological barriers that may hinder active participation. Third, research including Djaidja and Kadi (2023) and Bellatrache (2020) focuses primarily on undergraduate learners. This leaves a gap in understanding the distinct academic needs of master's students, who require tailored support to engage effectively with advanced English content. These needs often involve high-level proficiency tasks, such as dissertation defence preparation, research presentations, and the development of online academic discourse.

To better understand these challenges, studies such as Djaidja and Kadi (2023), who examine Algerian students' attitudes toward online learning, and Benmansour (2021), who explored the role of Zoom in EFL distance education, provide valuable insights into digital learning experiences. Although Benmansour's (2021) work highlights the advantages of online learning, it does not assess how synchronous virtual instruction influences advanced skill development, cognitive load, or academic discourse. Additionally, Sellam's (2023) study focuses on EFL faculty challenges at Badji Mokhtar University in Annaba, emphasising pedagogical obstacles such as adapting traditional teaching to digital platforms and maintaining student engagement. While this research contributes to understanding faculty experiences, it does not directly evaluate the impact of these challenges on student learning outcomes.

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Considering Algeria's 2004 LMD reforms, which emphasize advanced English proficiency, addressing these gaps is crucial. Investigating the challenges faced by Master's EFL students in virtual learning environments will help refine digital language education, enhance student engagement, and improve pedagogical approaches tailored to synchronous instruction.

• Aims and Significance of the Study

The overall aim of this study is to explore the challenges encountered by EFL Master 1 students in synchronous virtual classrooms at UMMTO. It will also examine how these challenges are perceived by both students and teachers, with particular attention to their views on the effectiveness of virtual learning.

The objectives of the present research are: firstly, to identify the pedagogical, technological, cognitive, psychological, and interactional difficulties students experience in live online classes. Secondly, to consider students' perceptions of how well virtual learning supports their language development and academic success. Thirdly, to analyse teachers' views on student challenges and their impact on learning outcomes in virtual environments.

This research is relevant to ongoing discussions within the Department of English at UMMTO. Teachers and students may find the findings helpful in addressing challenges related to language learning in virtual classrooms. For teachers, the results could support the development of more effective strategies and resources tailored to the needs of EFL learners. For students, the study includes practical suggestions aimed at improving their online learning experience and supporting their language development. Ultimately, the research contributes to broader efforts to make online education more responsive to the diverse needs of learners.

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• Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study is guided by the following research questions, which are asked in order to reach the previously mentioned objectives:

RQ1: What are the main difficulties Master 1 EFL students at UMMTO face in virtual classrooms?

RQ2: How do these students perceive the effectiveness of virtual learning ?

RQ3: What are university EFL teachers' perceptions about these difficulties?

In order to answer these questions, the following hypotheses are advanced:

H1: EFL Master 1 students at UMMTO face various challenges in synchronous virtual classrooms that may affect the quality of their learning experience.

H2: These students view live virtual classes as less effective than in-person teaching for improving their English skills and staying motivated in their studies.

H3: EFL instructors at UMMTO perceive that students struggle most with technical limitations and a lack of interaction in online classes.

• Methodology and Design of the Study

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges encountered by EFL Master 1 students at UMMTO in synchronous virtual classrooms. This combination enables the investigation of key difficulties through numerical data while also offering deeper insights into teaching and learning experiences via detailed responses. The use of both methods ensures that the study captures statistical patterns alongside qualitative insights, contributing to a more balanced and thorough analysis.

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Designed questionnaires are distributed to EFL Master 1 students to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire includes closed-ended and open-ended questions, allowing for statistical analysis of students' reported difficulties and their views on the effectiveness of synchronous online learning. Additionally, semi-structured interviews are conducted with EFL teachers delivering online Master-level courses to obtain qualitative data. This method was selected for its flexibility in exploring teachers' perspectives on students' challenges, as well as broader pedagogical and technological issues encountered in virtual classrooms.

Quantitative data are analysed using descriptive statistical methods, with results presented through tables, charts, and graphs to illustrate the frequency and percentage of student responses. These findings are interpreted to assess the extent of specific difficulties, such as technical or psychological barriers. Qualitative data are examined using qualitative content analysis (QCA), which involves systematically reviewing responses from both students and teachers. This process includes reading participants' answers, identifying key ideas, grouping similar responses, and organising them into categories to highlight the main challenges teachers observe in students' experiences within virtual classrooms.

The study is grounded in Levy's (1997) Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) Model, which examines the role of technology in enhancing language learning and addresses both the advantages and limitations of virtual learning environments. Although this framework was introduced in 1997, it remains highly relevant, having laid the foundation for understanding the integration of technology in language education. Building on this model, the study explores how technological factors contribute to the challenges faced by students in synchronous virtual classrooms, particularly in relation to language learning.

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In addition, the study draws on broader theoretical perspectives within digital education, including those that examine learner interaction with content, instructors, and peers in virtual environments. Such perspectives offer valuable insights into the learning process and the types of support students require in live online classes.

Furthermore, the study incorporates more recent frameworks, notably the Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model developed by Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000), which identifies three core elements essential to meaningful online learning: teaching presence, social presence, and cognitive presence. These dimensions are particularly relevant when investigating the interactional and psychological challenges encountered by EFL students in synchronous virtual classrooms.

- **Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation follows a traditional academic structure, comprising a general introduction, four main chapters, and a general conclusion. The introduction presents the research topic and includes the problem statement, aims and significance of the study, research questions and hypotheses, the methodology adopted, and an overview of the dissertation's organisation. Chapter One, Review of Literature, defines key concepts such as virtual classrooms and digital literacies, and examines relevant studies and theoretical perspectives related to the topic. Chapter Two, Research Design and Methodology, outlines the procedures for data collection and analysis, including sampling techniques, descriptive statistical methods, and qualitative content analysis (QCA), while also addressing ethical considerations and limitations. Chapter Three, Presentation of Findings, displays the results in a structured format, with quantitative data presented through tables and graphs, and qualitative findings organised by emerging themes supported by participant excerpts. Chapter Four, Discussion of the Findings, interprets the results, providing clear answers to the research questions and evaluating

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the hypotheses, while reflecting on the broader implications. The general conclusion summarises the key elements of the study, highlights its contributions and limitations, and offers recommendations for future research and educational practice. Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the study: participants were fully informed of the research aims, their participation was voluntary, anonymity and confidentiality were ensured, and they retained the right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Nonetheless, the study faced limitations, including a restricted sample size, potential response bias, and challenges related to internet connectivity and time constraints, which may have influenced data collection and participant engagement.

Chapter One

Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter presents the review of the literature related to our research study. The first section presents the conceptual framework, defining key concepts such as digital literacy, virtual classroom and language learning in online environments. Next it examines the challenges faced by EFL students in virtual settings and discusses the strategies used by teachers in virtual classrooms. The final part provides the theoretical framework and discusses its relevance to virtual education. By reviewing existing research, the chapter aims to identify gaps and provide a clearer understanding of the topic.

1.1 Key constructs and Definitions

This section explores key concepts such as digital literacy, virtual classrooms, and language learning in online environments, including the integration of virtual classrooms in language learning and provide a foundation for understanding the study's context.

1.1.1 Digital Literacies in the EFL Context

Digital literacy is now a fundamental requirement in education, particularly within virtual learning settings where students interact with digital tools routinely. While Gilster (1997) focuses on the technical side of digital literacy as “the ability to understand and use information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources when it is presented via computers” (p.1). This definition focuses primarily on technical abilities, like operating digital platforms and retrieving online content. However, Buckingham (2007) expands the concept to include critical and ideological engagement. This is particularly relevant in English as foreign Language (EFL) contexts, where learners must not only use digital tools, but also assess the

reliability of online language content (Amanda, 2022).

Within EFL education, digital literacy significantly affects student autonomy, engagement, and language development. Pertiwi and Siti (2022) show that EFL learners possessing strong digital literacy skills participate more actively, using online tools to enrich their learning. Alakrash et al. (2022) stress that digital platforms are vital for providing access to language resources, enabling students to collaborate, exchange ideas, and enhance their language proficiency. Furthermore, Amanda and Yosintha (2022) underscores the importance of critical digital literacy, asserting that EFL students must develop the capacity to verify sources, evaluate information reliability, and navigate digital content responsibly. As they explain, “The concept of critical digital literacy indicates a continuation of media, and digital literacy can be the primary reference in dealing with the information crisis in this technological era” (p. 163). Therefore, digital literacy must be recognized as an essential skill in EFL education. It ensures students are prepared to analyse information, communicate effectively, and learn efficiently in digital spaces. As virtual classrooms define modern education, integrating digital literacy into language programs empowers learners to participate meaningfully, think critically, and develop the core competencies needed for academic achievement.

1.1.2 Definition of Virtual Classroom

A virtual classroom is an online learning environment that facilitates synchronous and asynchronous interactions between instructors and students using digital platforms such as Moodle, zoom, Google classroom. According to Montoute (2013), virtual classrooms help overcome distance and time limitations, but their success depends heavily on good planning and preparation. However, planning is not enough as teachers are required to adapt their

instructional methods to suit virtual learning environments. The success of virtual classrooms is influenced by the teaching strategies, how well students adapt, and the quality of technology. According to Young et al. (2021), effective virtual classrooms rely on three important elements: Immediacy which refers to quick and engaging interactions; presence which fosters a sense of connection between teachers and students; and responsiveness which involves timely feedback and support. These elements do not happen automatically in online learning they require intentional effort. Virtual classrooms do offer advantages, like flexibility and wider access to education. However, they also come with challenges, including: feelings of isolation, mental fatigue from too much screen time, and unequal digital skills among learners

In EFL instruction, virtual classrooms play a crucial role in enhancing communication skills and offering language immersion opportunities. Alshumaimeri and Alhumud (2021) point out that EFL students benefit from live interactions and instant feedback, but technical difficulties and motivation problems can reduce engagement. Similarly, Benmansour's (2021) found that Algerian EFL students using Zoom recognized the value of online classes but faced challenges such as limited training, low motivation, and unstable internet access. These factors suggest that virtual classrooms are not merely digital versions of traditional teaching but complex environments shaped by technology, pedagogy, and learner readiness.

1.1.3 Definition of Online Language Learning

Online language learning refers to the process of acquiring a new language through digital platforms and internet-based tools, and scholars have defined it in various ways. According to the Oxford Dictionary, e-learning is described as a system of learning that uses electronic media typically over the internet. For instance, Godwin-Jones (2018), describes it as a major shift is occurring in the ways that second language (L2) development is taking place.

Increasingly, especially among young people, that process is occurring outside of institutional settings, predominantly through the use of online networks and media. This definition highlights how language learning is moving beyond traditional classrooms, with learners engaging in digital spaces to acquire and practice new languages, emphasizing the role of technology in fostering interaction and adaptability. Language on the Internet has been described by Blyth as a “genuine new medium” (as cited in Robert Godwin, 2018, p.1). Similarly, researchers like Stockwell (2013), in his work on mobile-assisted language learning, highlight how online platforms promote learner independence by offering diverse resources and opportunities for practice outside traditional classrooms.

Advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR) have further transformed online language learning, making it more immersive and interactive. As noted by Kukulska-Hulme and Viberg (2018) in their research, Collaboration in language learning can create opportunities for practicing language skills and building new knowledge and relationships inside and outside the classroom, as well as in settings where there are no classrooms but there may be other meeting spaces or joint activities. They explain that “Collaboration may be designed into a learning system or into a task by a skilful teacher” (p.210). In their study, “mobile collaboration comprises physical co-location as well as collaborators being separated in time and place”. (208). These innovations connect learners globally, allowing them to practice language in simulated environments that simulate real-life interactions.

In Algeria, online language learning has gained popularity, particularly among professionals and young learners seeking to advance their skills in French, English, and other foreign languages. The Algerian Ministry of Education has integrated digital tools into the national curriculum, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the adoption

of e-learning platforms. For example, a study by Gasmi, Ameer and Bendaoud, (2024) highlight “distance learning became an obligation to save lives all over the world. The study also identifies the challenges that hinder the growth of e-learning and assesses the readiness of computer science students to integrate e-learning into higher education” (p.51). They assert that E-learning in Algeria is revolutionizing education by increasing accessibility and flexibility in learning, enhancing infrastructure and providing better training for teachers could significantly boost its impact, Gupta points out, “We have moved from the industrial age to the networked age. We have moved from the agricultural and industrial revolutions to the information revolution” (Bhatia, 2011 as cited in Ameer, Gasmi and Bendaoud, 2024, p.52).

Online language learning plays a major role in improving the EFL students’ performance in relation to their learning. It transfers the face of the traditional classrooms and provides online classes which make learning more accessible. The traditional and the online classes differ in terms of location, time, teaching strategies and materials. In short, online language learning combines technology, self-study, and communication. It helps learn practice in dynamic and interactive ways. As technology continues to evolve, it is likely to become more immersive and personalized, further enhancing its effectiveness globally and locally.

1.1.4 Moodle as a Virtual Classroom Support Platform in Algerian Higher Education

In Algerian higher education, Moodle has emerged as a key platform for sustaining teaching and learning, particularly after the COVID-19 crisis. As an open-source Learning Management system (LMS). Moodle enables educators to develop engaging online courses through interactive features such as discussion forums, assignments, quizzes, and collaborative activities, thereby enhancing student participation and self-directed learning (CERIST, 2016, cited in Bin herzzallah, 2021).

Abdelaziz and Tahri (2024) describe Moodle as a structured virtual learning environment where course materials are systematically organized and supplemented with multimedia resources and interactive exercises. Its adoption in Algerian universities has grown substantially, primarily due to the necessity of remote instruction during the pandemic. Similarly, at the University of Saïda, Terras (2024) found that many instructors lacked adequate preparation to explore Moodle's full functionality, often using it only for uploading documents rather than facilitating interaction. Nevertheless, Bouguebs and Boudersa (2023) highlight that despite Moodle's pedagogical capabilities, its potential remains underexploited. Many institutions use the platform merely as a digital storage space rather than utilising its full interactive capacity. These superficial limitations, and a disconnect between digital tools and classroom practices.

While Moodle is positioned as an innovative educational solution, its implementation in Algeria often lacks depth. The predominant reliance on basic file-sharing functions indicates a gap in effectively integrating its interactive elements. For Moodle to truly enhance virtual learning, a more strategic approach encompassing instructor training, institutional support, and pedagogical alignment is imperative.

1.1.5 Integration of Virtual Classroom in Language Learning

The integration of virtual classrooms into language learning has become increasingly important, especially with the rise of technology that plays an essential role in classroom language learning, not only boosting engagement and effectiveness, but also breaking the spatiotemporal boundaries and providing authentic and personalized learning experiences. As SERPİL UÇAR (2023) states, "The use of digital technologies in education has moved from being a choice to being a necessity in today's world of rapid evolution" (p.3). He states that the

use of virtual classrooms in language learning has significantly transformed modern education. Ravi P. Bhatia. (2011) states that e-learning provides an alternative means of learning which is becoming increasingly popular today. However, one has to be careful in applying technology in the classroom. Therefore, Ben Ruhinda (2012) argue that “The use of virtual classrooms has been proven to offer an alternative teaching and learning platform for students and teachers to engage on an academic level” (p.1). Furthermore, Goodfellow et al. (1996) point out that face to-face language learning at distance through video conferencing enables learners to replicate real-time communicative experiences, fostering oral proficiency Researchers clearly demonstrate that virtual classrooms are more than just a technological innovation, but also a powerful pedagogical tool, that makes language learning more immersive, engaging and effective.

According to Urbaite, G. (2024), “The integration of technology in language education has continued to evolve, with mobile apps, virtual classrooms, and online courses becoming increasingly popular. These tools provide learners with flexibility, enabling them to practice and improve their language skills anytime and anywhere. Moreover, technology has made language learning more accessible, breaking down geographical barriers and allowing individuals from diverse backgrounds to learn languages that were previously out of reach.” (p.3). Oluwaniyi, Afeni, and Lawal (2015) underscore the role of technology in bridging this gap, transforming language education by allowing learners to engage asynchronously or synchronously with instructors and peers. They state that:

E-learning is a general term used to refer to a form of learning in which the instructor and student are separated by space or time where the gap between the two is bridged through the use of online technologies. An e-learning system is a powerful integrated system that supports a number of activities performed by teachers and students during the e-learning process. A web-based asynchronous e-learning system allows educators to develop web based course notes, test and examination, to communicate with students and to monitor their progress. Students engage the system fort for learning, communication and collaboration. It is important to note that the effectiveness

of an e-learner's experience is greatly enhanced through student-centered design (p.2).

This method guarantees that students are actively involved with tailored, interactive, and easily accessible materials, promoting a greater comprehension and enthusiasm. By prioritizing flexibility and collaboration, student-centered design creates a more dynamic e-learning environment, empowering learners to take control of their education while strengthening their ability to retain and apply knowledge effectively.

The Algerian Ministry of Education introduced platforms like Dzair Academy and Talamize, which offer free online language courses tailored to Algerian learners at the primary and secondary education levels. These platforms incorporate local dialects and cultural contexts, making learning more relatable and engaging. As noted by Hoadjli and Mehiri (2025):

E-learning is a good means which can yield possibilities for university students to learn best when interactively engaged in their subject matter since it is easier through e-learning to access to knowledge and science. Moreover, using this modern instrument enables these university students to gain confidence, self-esteem, and renewed motivation. This is so because with this advanced tool, the pedagogy often shifts from a traditional teaching/learning approach, based on a teacher classroom, to a more learner-centered environment (p. 38).

That is to say, despite challenges such as limited internet access and digital literacy, these initiatives have significantly improved access to language learning resources, thereby supporting broader educational equity and inclusion in Algerian virtual classrooms.

1.2 Challenges and Strategies in Virtual Classrooms

This section reviews the challenges faced by EFL learners in virtual settings and discusses the strategies employed by teachers to address these challenges effectively.

1.2.1 Language Learning Difficulties in Virtual Classrooms

Virtual classrooms pose distinct challenges for language learners, encompassing cognitive, psychological, and technological barriers.

1.2.1.1 Cognitive and Psychological Challenges in Virtual Learning

Virtual learning environments present significant cognitive and psychological challenges, particularly for EFL learners, as they impact engagement, comprehension, and overall academic performance. Cognitive load is a key issue in digital learning, as explained by Mohamed Mekheimer (2023) " a learning environment, including online learning settings, should aim to develop an integrated learner personality so that one's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions of development can be attended to when designing e- learning" (p. 2). This highlights that virtual classrooms serve as more than just digital spaces; they function as dynamic environments where learners actively engage with language in authentic contexts. Yeh and Tsai (2022) emphasize that students often face difficulties related to attention, motivation, and cognitive overload when adapting to fully education. Similarly, Khalil et al (2020) reported that Students are dealing with learning challenges with limited non-verbal cues in an online learning environment. It becomes challenging for learners to keep learning and stay connected in a comfortable online learning environment (Muthuprasad et al., 2021). In Scull et al. (2020)'s engagement study of Australian university students, they found that students need more guidance on how to ask the right questions and seek help in an online learning environment. In taking distance education courses, major concerns such as time management, motivation, and language skills should be taken into account (Fidalgo et al., 2020). These challenges are often linked to the lack of face to face interaction, increased screen time and decreased students' motivation. Such conditions can hinder comprehension and

retention, making learning less effective.

Several cognitive challenges as attention difficulties, memory overload, and reduced processing efficiency can make it hard for students to learn well in both traditional and online classes. According to Chew and Cerbin (2021) students often face problems like having a negative attitude, not knowing how to check their own understanding, Emotional barriers such as fear or mistrust toward the teacher can negatively affect learner participation and communication in virtual classrooms. Table 1 from their study shows other common challenges, such as not having enough background knowledge, believing in wrong ideas, and using learning methods that do not work well. Students may also have trouble using what they learned in new situations, staying focused, or thinking they can multitask while learning. These challenges show that teaching should not only give information but also help students deal with the mental difficulties that affect how they learn. According to Zhao et al. (2015), online learning presents several challenges that can impact students' educational experience. Learners often face feelings of isolation and reduced interaction, making motivation and time management crucial for success. Additionally, while students may possess strong intellectual abilities, online learning can hinder the development of communication skills, affecting their ability to share knowledge effectively. Issues such as plagiarism, cheating, and improper user of digital resources are common concerns in virtual education. Socialization skills may also decline, and the traditional role of teachers as instructional leaders may be diminished. Furthermore, since online exams are typically overseen by computer systems, controlling dishonest behaviours like cheating continues to pose a significant challenge. Addressing these disadvantages is essential to enhancing the effectiveness of online learning spaces.

The interaction between cognitive and psychological challenges in education is particularly evident in the differing views of engagement held by instructors and students. As

noted in Communications in computer and information Science, students recognize personal limitations that hinder their learning, including issues with attention, ineffective time management, low motivation, a lack of confidence, and insufficient independent learning skills. The current study illustrates how the interaction of cognitive and psychological challenges manifests in students' self-assessment of their difficulties. Serdyukova and Serdyukov (2013) state, "Students point to their own flaws that affect their learning, such as attention issues, poor time management skills, low motivation, lack of confidence, and independent learning skills" (p.232). Addressing these challenges necessitates strategies that foster self-regulation, engagement, and effective learning habits to promote students' success.

In Algeria, virtual classrooms have highlighted unique cognitive and psychological difficulties for language learners. Psychologically, the virtual environment induces anxiety for many learners, particularly when required to perform language tasks on camera. A related study from Biskra University (Mohamed Laid DAMBRI, 2021) found that this anxiety disproportionately affects female students, who report higher levels of discomfort with video based participation. Additionally, many learners feel isolated from peers and instructors, adding to their psychological stress. Research from Algerian universities, Sebbah Loubna (2021) highlights the psychological difficulties students encounter in virtual learning, particularly screen fatigue and reduced concentration during extended sessions. A study involving 305 Algerian EFL students at the University of Algiers 2 found that 2, 72% preferred traditional classrooms over online learning, emphasizing the absence of non-verbal cues, eye contact, and teacher presence as significant obstacles to oral fluency and classroom engagement. These findings underscore the importance of interactional elements in effective language acquisition and student participation. These challenges highlight the need for targeted solutions to address both cognitive and psychological barriers in Algerian virtual classrooms.

1.2.1.2 Technological and Accessibility Challenges

The shift to digital learning in Algeria has exposed major technological and infrastructure problems that make it difficult to implement effectively, especially in English language education. Bin Herzallah (2021) points out systemic issues like unstable internet, expensive connections, and a lack of modern digital tools all of which weaken the quality of online teaching. These concerns are supported by Bellatrache and Alouti (2020), who surveyed Algerian university teachers and found that 60.72% considered poor internet speed the biggest challenge, while 53.57% noted the lack of necessary platforms like Moodle or Google classroom. Additionally, 42.85% mentioned the poor condition of available devices limiting access and participation.

These infrastructure problems are especially detrimental in language learning, where live interaction and digital tools are crucial. For example, Maaoui (2021) discovered that Moodle's technical issues at Biskra University led to low student involvement, particularly in speaking and listening courses that rely on multimedia. Similarly, Ferdjallah (2022) found that frequent technical problems during the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted teacher-student communication, often pushing educators to use pre-recorded lessons instead, reducing opportunities for feedback and discussion.

Beyond internet difficulties, unequal access to digital devices also excludes many students. They depend on low-performance smartphones or shared family computers that cannot handle high bandwidth programs like video calls or virtual language labs (Bellatrache and Alouti, 2020). This digital gap worsens existing economic inequalities and limits students' ability to engage fully in online learning. Additionally, weak digital skills among both students and teachers make these challenges worse. Many learners find it hard to use online platforms efficiently, while instructors often lack proper training in designing effective digital lessons. As

Benmansour (2021) explains, this double challenge continues to lower the quality of online English teaching in Algeria, making the move to digital education difficult both technically and pedagogically.

1.2.2 Strategies Used by Teachers to Overcome Virtual Learning Difficulties

In virtual classrooms, teachers employ various instructional strategies to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. These strategies are mainly categorised into synchronous and asynchronous approaches, each offering unique benefits in online education.

1.2.2.1 The Synchronous Strategy

Synchronous learning refers to real-time, instructor-led sessions where teachers and students interact simultaneously through digital platforms (Hrastinski, 2008). In EFL education, this mode of instruction has gained particular relevance for its ability to facilitate immediate feedback and interpersonal communication (Martin et al., 2012). As part of synchronous teaching strategies, several studies have highlighted the varied use of virtual classroom platforms by EFL instructors to enhance learner engagement and support language acquisition. McBrien et al. (2009), for instance, documented the application of Elluminate Live! (a web conferencing platform for education) in higher education, where instructors frequently employed PowerPoint presentations for structured content delivery, shared whiteboards for collaborative annotation, text chat for real-time Q&A, audio communication for verbal interaction, and breakout rooms to facilitate small-group discussions. These tools helped simulate in-person classroom dynamics and supported active language practise.

Similarly, Martin et al. (2012) examined the implementation of Wimba (a synchronous learning platform integrated into virtual learning environments), noting instructors' use of

application sharing for software or task demonstrations, live polling to assess learners' understanding, webcam feeds to establish social presence, and interactive whiteboards to visually support explanations. These features reflect a strategic effort by teachers to make online instruction more interactive and responsive to learner needs.

In more recent research conducted in Middle Eastern contexts, Abalkheel et al. (2021) investigated the use of Blackboard Collaborate, emphasising how instructors used file-sharing tools (PPTs/PDFs) for delivering input, private chat functions for personalised feedback, digital whiteboards for writing correction, and breakout rooms to promote collaboration among students. These practices demonstrate a continued focus on creating opportunities for interaction and customisation in online language learning.

Particularly noteworthy is the consistent reporting of text-based chat as a universally accessible feature, while video functions showed more contextual limitations (Abalkheel et al., 2021; Martin et al., 2012). This variation suggests the need for platform flexibility to accommodate diverse teaching environments and learning preferences. Future research directions might investigate optimal tool combinations for specific language skills development and the longitudinal effects of synchronous tool integration on language proficiency outcomes.

Overall, the literature reveals considerable variation in the adoption and implementation of these tools, shaped by factors such as instructors' technological proficiency, the level of institutional resources, infrastructure reliability, and the cultural acceptance of certain features. Despite these contextual differences, the effective use of synchronous strategies remains a key component in addressing the interactional and motivational challenges commonly faced by EFL learners in virtual classrooms.

1.2.2.2 The Asynchronous Strategy

Asynchronous e-learning is a type of online education where students and teachers do not interact in real time. Instead, they access materials, complete assignments, and communicate at different times based on their schedules (Hrastinski,2008). This flexible method is helpful for learners who need to balance studies with other responsibilities, as it allows them to think deeply about the content and manage their time freely. For English language learning, asynchronous e-learning helps students learn independently, explore resources on their own, and improve vocabulary (Hariadi and Simanjuntak, 2020). Many students find this method useful because it gives them more control over their learning. However, some face challenges, such as less direct teacher support and technical problems. Common Tools for asynchronous learning include Learning management systems (LMS) like Google Classroom, Moodle, Edmodo, and Quipped. Additional apps like WhatsApp, Google Translate, and U-Dictionary also help with independent study and communication (Hariadi and Simanjuntak, 2020). As Hrastinski (2008) notes, methods like emails, discussion forums, and blogs allow learners to think carefully about complex topics before responding.

1.3 Theoretical framework

This section outlines the theoretical foundation guiding the study, focusing on key concepts relevant to virtual language education, it also identifies gaps in existing research.

1.3.1 Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) refers to the use of technology to aid language learning experiences. Levy (1997) defines CALL as “the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning.” (p.1) This definition has

evolved significantly over time, progressed from basic drill-oriented software to advanced, AI-powered learning systems that promote multimodal communication and interaction.

Historically, CALL has transitioned from static, software-based tools to dynamic, networked environments. As noted by Levy (1997), the definition of CALL is more succinctly and broadly as a search for study of computer applications in language teaching and learning. CALL can be defined more concisely and extensively as the study of computer applications in language learning. It is not only considered as a basic canonical desktop and laptop computer devices but also includes the networks that connect them, peripheral devices associated with them, and various other technological advancements, these include PDAs (personal digital assistants), mp3 players, mobile phones, electronic whiteboards, and DVD players all of which contain some form of embedded computing technology (Levy and Hubbard, 2005).

CALL comprises a diverse set of technological tools like learning management system (LMS), language learning apps, virtual classrooms, and AI tutors. These materials are designed to engage in active learning by providing learners with access to authentic materials, interactive activities, and immediate feedback.

To analyse the pedagogical integration of technology in language education, the TPACK framework (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) offers a valuable lens. It emphasizes the intersection of technological tools, instructional methods, and subject matter expertise, helping educators design effective virtual learning experiences.

Additionally, Connectivism (Siemens, 2005) provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how learners build knowledge through digital networks. This perspective is particularly relevant to virtual EFL contexts, where access to information, peer interaction, and digital literacy play critical roles in learner engagement.

The use of CALL in virtual classrooms introduces multiple obstacles for EFL learners including:

- **Technological Limitations:** Learners might encounter unstable internet connections internet, unfamiliar software interfaces, and restricted access to digital devices, hindering their ability to participate in online learning activities (Stockwell, 2013).

- **Cognitive load and Information Processing:** virtual settings regularly involve students to manage multiple digital tools simultaneously, placing strain on cognitive abilities and negatively affect language maintenance (Mayer, 2009).

- **Reduced Interaction and Feedback:** compared to in person learning environment, online language learning can limit real-time interactions, which may hinder students' opportunities to practice speaking, receive immediate corrections, and engage in spontaneous conversation ((Hampel and Stickler, 2015).

- **Teacher Adaptation and Material Development:** Teachers may struggle to create and modify course materials that achieve an equivalent degree of engagement and effectiveness as those used in conventional classroom settings (Chapelle and Voss, 2016).

Despite these challenges, CALL remains an essential framework for understanding the role of technology in language learning and addressing the barriers associated with virtual education.

1.3.2 Community of Inquiry (CoI) Framework

The Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework is a theoretical model that explains how meaningful learning occurs in online and blended learning environment. It was developed by Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000), who provide a structured approach to understanding online learning experience, as it is based on the idea that effective online learning happens through the interaction of three interdependent presences that contribute to significant virtual learning:

Figure (1): The Community of Inquiry Theoretical Framework of Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2000)



The figure above illustrates the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework, which outlines online and blended learning experiences based on three interconnected presences:

- **Cognitive Presence:** This Represents the capacity of learner to construct meaning through reflection and discussion. It involves critical thinking and deep learning processes.

- **Social Presence:** Refers to the learners' ability to project themselves as real and engaged participants in the learning community. It helps in establishing a supportive environment for collaboration.
- **Teaching Presence:** Encompasses instructional design, facilitation, and direction to support meaningful learning. It includes setting the climate, structuring content, and guiding discourse.

These presences are interdependent and collectively shape the quality of online learning. The medium of communication plays a role in facilitating dialogue and engagement within this context.

As mentioned earlier, Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000) effective online learning is based on a balance of three key components: social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence. They Stressed that "teaching presence plays a crucial role in structuring interactions and guiding learners toward deep engagement and critical inquiry" (p. 89). In other words, educators structure discussions and activities to ensure students take an active role in learning, rather than just receiving information.

When balanced effectively, these elements foster a dynamic and intellectually stimulating environment. Social presence facilitates students' sense of connection and ease within the virtual Classrooms, whereas cognitive presence encourages deep, analytical engagement regarding their studies. Teaching presence integrates these aspects by offering direction and organization. Together, they contribute to a compelling and successful online learning experience. However, when any of these fundamental presences are insufficient, students may struggle to achieve learning objectives, to achieve learning objectives, especially in language learning contexts where effective communication and active engagement are critical for skill development and meaningful knowledge acquisition.

Garrison and Anderson, and Archer (2000) point out that when these components are effectively integrated, students can participate in collaborative learning and cultivate perspectives, making the online classroom a space for insightful conversation and cooperation. This framework highlights the necessity of thoughtfully designing online courses to ensure the technology facilitates the learning experience instead of interrupting the educational process.

The CoI framework offers a valuable lens for analysing the challenges faced by EFL learners in virtual classrooms:

Cognitive Presence Issues: In the digital learning context, students are frequently required to participate in self-regulated learning, which can be particularly challenging for those who lack digital literacy skills or face difficulties with studying independently (Akyol and Garrison, 2011).

Social Presence Issues: Online students may experience a sense of social detachment because of the lack of in-person interactions, leading to reduced motivation and participation levels (Richardson, Maeda, and Swan, 2017). In the context of language acquisition, the absence of casual conversations and interactions with peers can negatively impact both oral fluency and confidence.

Teaching Presence Issues: The effectiveness of online language education is heavily influenced by the design of the instruction. Instructors who fail to provide structured guidance, timely feedback, or engaging learning activities may struggle to maintain student motivation and participation.

By applying the CoI framework, this study critically examines how virtual learning environments can be designed to support meaningful engagement and language acquisition.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined fundamental concepts relevant to this study. It began by defining digital literacy, virtual classroom, and online language learning to provide a clear background. The research then critically analysed the difficulties encountered by EFL students in virtual classrooms and discussed potential strategies to manage these complications. Lastly, it introduced the theoretical frameworks, focusing on the community of inquiry (CoI) model (Garrison, Anderson, and Archer, 2000), which explains how social, cognitive, and teaching presences contribute to effective online language learning. These discussions initiate the foundation for understanding language learning difficulties and improving virtual education.

Chapter two

Research Design and

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework employed in the study, organized into three principal components: (1) the research design, (2) data collection procedures comprising population description and research instruments and (3) data analysis strategies combining quantitative statistical techniques and qualitative content analysis.

2.1 Research Design

According to Morse and Niehaus (2009), using mixed methods can be helpful when a single method is not enough to answer a complex research question. It allows researchers to explore different levels or insights of a phenomenon and combine both qualitative and quantitative aspects. This study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research techniques to thoroughly examine language learning challenges in virtual classrooms. Quantitative and qualitative research methods each have inherent limitations, their combination offsets individual weaknesses and provides triangulated insights (Bryman, 2006). The quantitative part collects statistical data on student engagement, cognitive difficulties, and their views on virtual learning obstacles. Meanwhile, the qualitative part explores teachers' and students' personal experiences and coping strategies. By integrating both methods, the study ensures a balanced and reliable analysis of factors influencing language learning in digital environments. This approach aligns with the research goal of exploring language learning difficulties in virtual classrooms.

2.2 The Procedure of Data Collection

This section presents the population, the sampling techniques, and the tools used for data collection.

2.2.1 Sample of the Study

The current investigation took place at the Department of English at the University of Mouloud Mammeri of Tizi-ouzou during the academic year 2024-2025. The study's sample consisted of first-year Master's students, due to their transitional academic phase that requires the development of advanced language competencies while adapting to digital learning environments. Their ability to navigate these challenges provides valuable insight into how digital learning environments impact language acquisition at an advanced level.

2.2.1.1 Sampling Techniques

This study employed two distinct sampling techniques to ensure representative data collection: random sampling for student participants and purposive sampling for teacher participants.

2.2.1.1.1 Random Sampling

This study employed random sampling to select participants from the student population. A total of 150 Master 1 EFL students, both male and female, aged between 22 and 23, were randomly selected from five different specialisations within the Department of English. This method ensures that every student had an equal chance of being included, reducing selection bias and enhancing the representativeness of the sample. Additionally, the study guarantees complete anonymity for all participants, ensuring their responses remain confidential.

2.2.1.1.2 Purposive Sampling

For the teacher population, the study used purposive sampling, selecting six online EFL instructors based on their documented experience in delivering online instruction to EFL Master 1 students. This sampling technique was chosen deliberately to ensure that only teachers

with relevant expertise participated, providing valuable insights into the challenges and strategies of virtual teaching. Participants were assured that their input would remain confidential and unnamed in any reporting, respecting ethical considerations and privacy.

2.2.2 Data Collection Tools

This study aims to investigate the language learning challenges encountered by EFL Master's 1 students in virtual classrooms and to analyse how online teaching strategies influence their engagement and academic performance. To achieve these objectives, the research utilises two primary data collection tools: a questionnaire administered to students and semi-structured interviews conducted with their instructors.

2.2.2.1 EFL Students' Questionnaire

To obtain first-hand data from participants, this study employs a questionnaire as the primary research tool. Questionnaires are widely recognized as an effective method for gathering structured responses, enabling researchers to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data (Roopa and Rani, 2012). It ensures internal consistency, accommodates diverse response contingencies, and aligns with research objectives. The questionnaire has both multiple-choice and open questions to better understand students' experiences and problems in virtual classrooms. This design efficiently captures large-scale feedback while addressing the study's research questions and literature derived themes. The questionnaire comprised three thematic sections:

- **Virtual Classroom Experience:** Includes Five (5) items, exploring platform familiarity, accessibility challenges, and technical barriers
- **Language Learning Difficulties:** Includes Five (5) items, identifying cognitive,

psychological, and technology- related obstacles.

- **Engagement and Performance:** Includes six (6) items, evaluating motivation, participation patterns, and perceptions of pedagogical strategies.

2.2.2.1.1 Piloting

The questionnaire was piloted on April 5th, 2025, with three students from different specialities to evaluate its clarity and effectiveness. These participants were randomly selected to ensure neutrality and to reflect a range of academic backgrounds. This process allowed researchers to identify any ambiguities or areas for improvement. The students provided valuable feedback on question comprehension and overall structure, ensuring that necessary refinements were made before the full distribution. By incorporating these insights, the final version of the questionnaire was optimized for accurate data collection.

2.2.2.1.2 The Context of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed on April 3rd, 2025, ensuring that the questions aligned with research objectives. After a detailed review its effectiveness was confirmed, making it ready for distribution. It was officially disseminated face-to-face at the Department of English from April 8th to April 15th, 2025, engaging 150 EFL students in the data collection process. Students completed the questionnaire on-site, with each respondent taking approximately 5 to 10 minutes to answer. This structured timeframe allowed for comprehensive responses and meaningful insights.

2.2.2.2 EFL Teachers' Interview

The interview is the second tool that is used in this study to collect qualitative data. As Biggam (2011) states “Interviews are an appropriate means of collecting qualitative data, and

commonly used in case studies” (p. 281). It is an instrument of data collection used to gather information by asking a series of questions. It represents a dialogue with a set number of participants, facilitating personal and social interaction. The interviewer has the opportunity to clarify and explain the aim of the study and the interview process to the interviewees. The use of the interview is therefore suitable for the present research. Face- to-face semi-structured interviews are conducted with six teachers from the Department of English at UMMTO. The interviews were conducted in a quiet and comfortable setting to promote open discussion lasting approximately 15 to 20 minutes for each participant. It was conducted from April 22nd to April 28th ,2025. Each included open-ended questions exploring teachers' experiences with virtual learning. The interview format includes 12 open-ended questions, it focused on three key aspects:

1. **Teachers' adaptation to virtual teaching:** including their transition to online instruction and the adjustments they made
2. **Challenges in student engagement and performance:** focusing on challenges encountered in maintaining student participation and learning outcomes.
3. **Effective tools and strategies:** highlighting the most effective methods and technologies teachers find most useful in online instruction.

To ensure the rights of participants are respected, several ethical considerations were followed. Before each interview, participants were informed about the purpose of the study. Their names were not used, and all information was kept confidential. The interviews were recorded only with their consent and were scheduled based on the teachers' availability.

2.3 Procedures of Data Analysis

This section provides a comprehensive, detailed description of the main methods employed for data analysis. The research tools that are adopted allow to obtain both quantitative and qualitative research data. Thus, the data are analysed by using two main procedures of data analysis: the descriptive Statistical method and Qualitative Content Analysis.

2.3.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics serve as a fundamental tool for analysing and summarizing the quantitative data collected through the questionnaire's closed-ended items. This method enables the transformation of initial numerical data into clear and structured representations, making patterns are more comprehensible. To ensure accuracy and efficiency, a manual descriptive statistical method is conducted using calculator, without relying on statistical software such as SPSS. All calculations were performed carefully and double-checked. The analysis involved computing frequencies and percentages manually using a basic proportional rule, by multiplying the observed frequency by the total sample size 150 and dividing it by the total number of responses, this calculation ensures accurate representation of each category within the sample. The results were then organized into tables and visualized using pie charts to support a clear structured interpretation of the data.

2.3.2 Qualitative Content Analysis

The Qualitative Content Analysis is applied to analyse and interpret qualitative data including responses from the interview transcripts and open-ended questions in the questionnaire. As defined by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) this method as a research approach that enables the interpretation of textual content through a systematic classification process of

coding and identifying themes or patterns. It is used to practically transform the qualitative data that are in the form of large texts and passages into fewer content categories. In this technique, thematic coding is used to analyse the data, focusing on identifying key ideas and patterns. The practical steps begin with familiarization where the researcher reads the data several times to gain a deep understanding, this is followed by initial coding during which meaningful words, phrases, or sentences will be highlighted and given codes based on their content. Next, similar codes are grouped into broader categories to identify patterns. These groups lead to theme development where main themes are developed from the categories to represent key. After finalizing the themes, the process ends with the interpretation of ideas explaining how themes answer the research question.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a description and justification of the research design and methodology that is adopted in the present study. First, it has presented the research method, the context and the sample population, providing a clear framework for the investigation. The following sections detailed the research instruments and data analysis procedures, which adopted the questionnaire and the semi structured interview, highlighting their relevance to the study. A pilot study is conducted before full data collection to assess the clarity and effectiveness of the questionnaire, allowing for necessary refinements. Finally, the chapter has outlined the data analysis methods, including Descriptive Statistical method for quantitative data and the Qualitative Content Analysis for open-ended responses. These methodological choices ensure a comprehensive and systematic approach to investigating the research problem.

Chapter Three

Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings, and it is divided into two main sections. The first one outlines the results gathered from the EFL master students' questionnaires, presented in pie charts and tables. The second section details the responses collected from EFL university teachers' interviews.

3.1 EFL Students' Questionnaire Findings

This section is divided into three main parts following the design of the questionnaire.

3.1.1 Understanding Virtual Classroom Experience

This section explores participants' experiences with virtual classrooms, focusing on familiarity, challenges, and perceived effectiveness of online learning tools.

Q1: How familiar are you with the online learning platforms used in your courses?

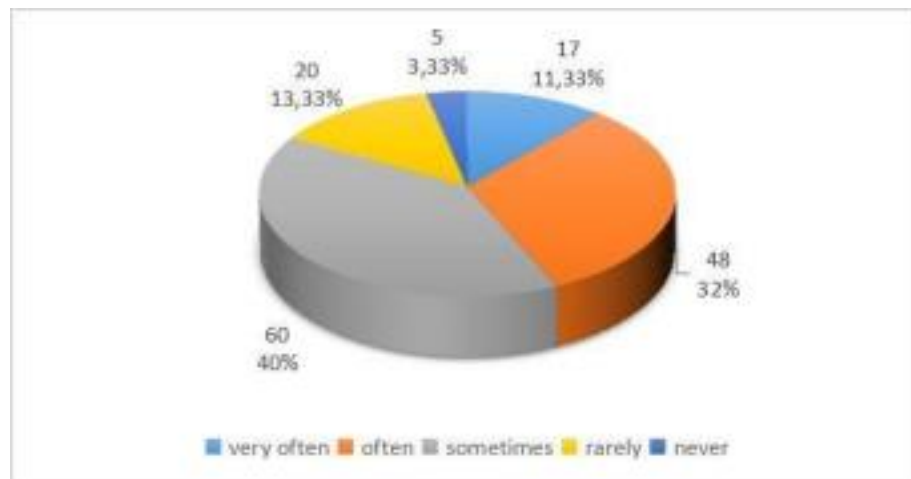
Table 1: *Students' familiarity with online learning platforms*

	Number of responses	%
Very familiar	25	16,66%
Somewhat familiar	57	38%
neutral	25	16,66%
Not very familiar	34	22,66%
Not familiar at all	9	6%
Total	150	100%

The table indicates that the largest proportion of students 38% describe themselves as somewhat familiar with online learning platforms, while 16,7% report being very familiar. Nevertheless, a significant proportion 22,7% are not very familiar, and 6% are not familiar at all. These results reveal that some may struggle to adapt to the digital tools used in their courses, underscoring the need for enhanced digital literacy training.

Q2: How often do you experience technical difficulties (e.g., internet connection issues, software problems) during virtual classes?

Diagram1: *Technical challenges in online learning*



The diagram reveals that technical difficulties are a common experience for students in online classes. A notable 40% of respondents encounter issues sometimes, while nearly one third 32% face them often encounter them. In contrast only a small fraction report minimal disruptions, with 13,33% occurring rarely and just 3,33% never experiencing problems.

Q3: Do you have access to the necessary devices (e.g., computer, laptop, tablet, smartphone) and a stable internet connection to participate effectively in virtual classes?

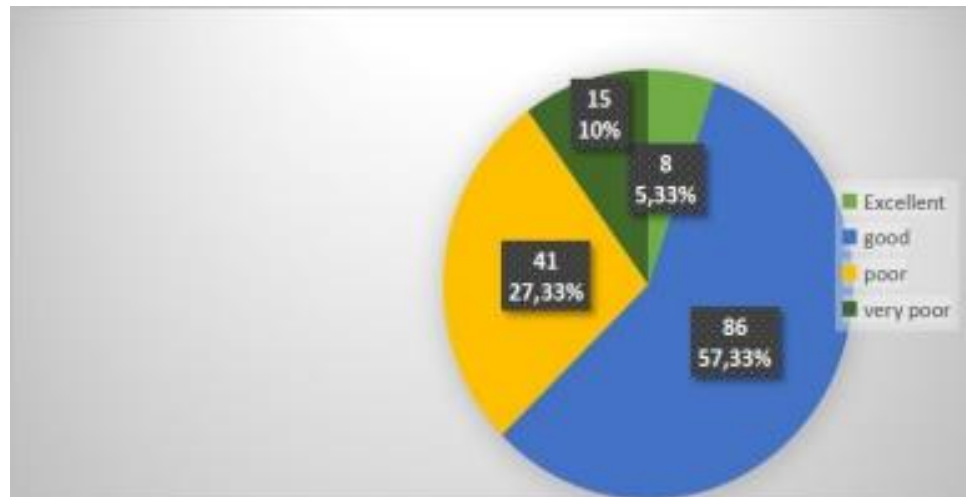
Table 2: *Device ownership and internet connectivity among Master's 1 EFL students*

	Number of responses	%
Yes, I have both a device and a stable internet connection.	45	30%
Yes, I have a device, but my internet connection is sometimes unstable	86	57,33%
No, I do not have access to a suitable device	10	6,66%
No, I do not have a stable internet connection.	9	6%
Total	150	100%

The table shows that nearly all students 96.66% have access to a device, as only 6.66% report not owning one. However, among those with a device, only 30% possess a stable internet connection, while 57.33% face connectivity issues. Additionally, 6% of students lack a reliable connection completely, regardless of their access to a device.

Q4: How would you rate the overall usability of the online learning platforms?

Diagram 2: *Students' satisfaction with online learning platforms.*



The diagram shows that only 5.33% of the users rated the platforms as "Excellent, » while 57.33% considered them as "Good." However, significant usability issues emerge, with 27.33% reporting "Poor" experiences and 10% describing them as "Very Poor." These results indicate that while most platforms meet basic requirements, nearly 40% of users face substantial difficulties, highlighting the urgent need for improvements in interface design and functionality to enhance the overall learning experience.

Q5: What are the main challenges you face when using online learning platforms?

A significant number of participants have shared a wide range of challenges they encounter when using online learning platforms. To begin with, a notable proportion of reported *technical issues* as the most common challenge, these include problems like poor internet connection, unclear audio, playback error, non-functioning links, low image quality, and trouble accessing platforms or devices. Some also mentioned random interruptions, such as incoming calls or notifications, that distracted them from lessons. Second, another frequently mentioned challenge is *the lack of communication and interaction*. students feel disconnected because of limited teacher-student interaction, invisible screen sharing, and no chance to ask

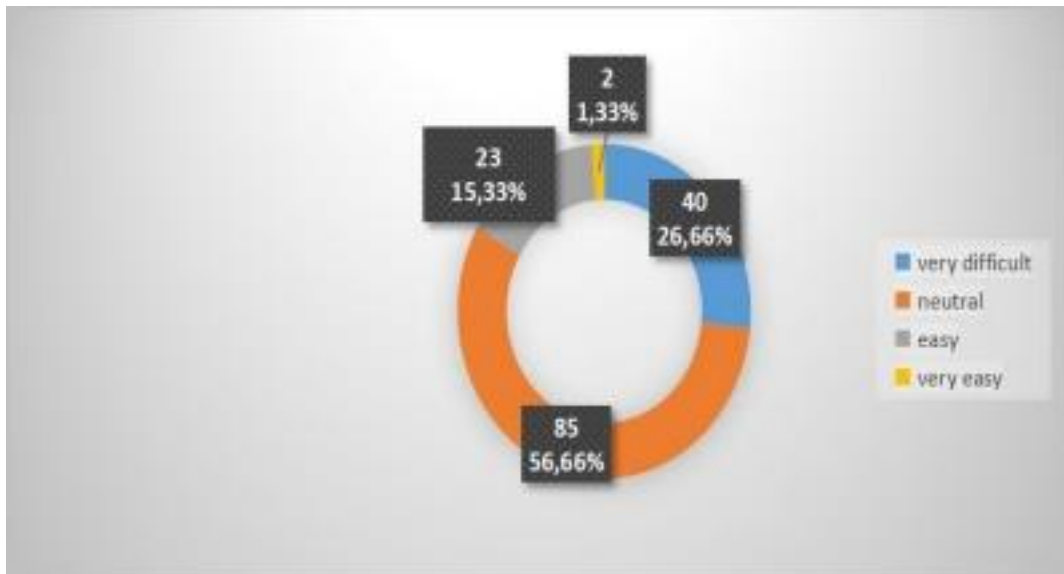
questions. Without face-to-face explanations, they struggled to understand the material. Third, “*external distractions*” were cited as major barriers that made learning difficult, these include noisy home settings, frequent interruptions, and the absence of a quiet space suitable for studying, these distractions negatively impacted their attention. Additionally, the lack of practical activities made online classes less engaging. Fourth, from a psychological perspective, many learners reported “*struggles with focus and motivation*”. In other words, many students feel unmotivated and bored; some even expressed anxiety, while others felt lost or disconnected during virtual sessions, all of which made it increasingly difficult to maintain focus." As one learner described: “I feel like I’m not really part of the class, and sometimes it’s hard to stay focused”. Fifth, students also reported “*behaviour and concentration issues*”. That is to say, limited interaction often resulted in irregular participation and a lack of discipline, while others found it difficult to stay focused and actively engaged. A few students expressed concerns about “*time management and planning*”. Many mentioned that online classes take more time and energy, especially in the absence of proper lesson plans or teacher feedback. Lastly some participants pointed out that online learning does not offer the same “*quality of explanation*” or attention as face-to-face learning settings, which negatively impacts their comprehension and performance.

3.1.2 Language Learning Difficulties among Students

This section focuses on identifying the specific challenges students face when learning language in online environments.

Q6: How difficult do you find it to concentrate during virtual language classes?

Diagram 3: Students’ difficulty in concentrating during virtual language classes



The diagram shows a clear divide in students' ability to concentrate during virtual language classes. While the majority 56.66% remain neutral, a significant portion 26.66% struggle greatly, contrasting with the small percentage of 16.66% who find it easy. This suggests that virtual language learning presents notable focus challenges for many students, emphasizing the need for tailored strategies to improve engagement and reduce distractions in online settings

Q7: Do you feel that virtual classes are as effective as face –to- face classes for language learning?

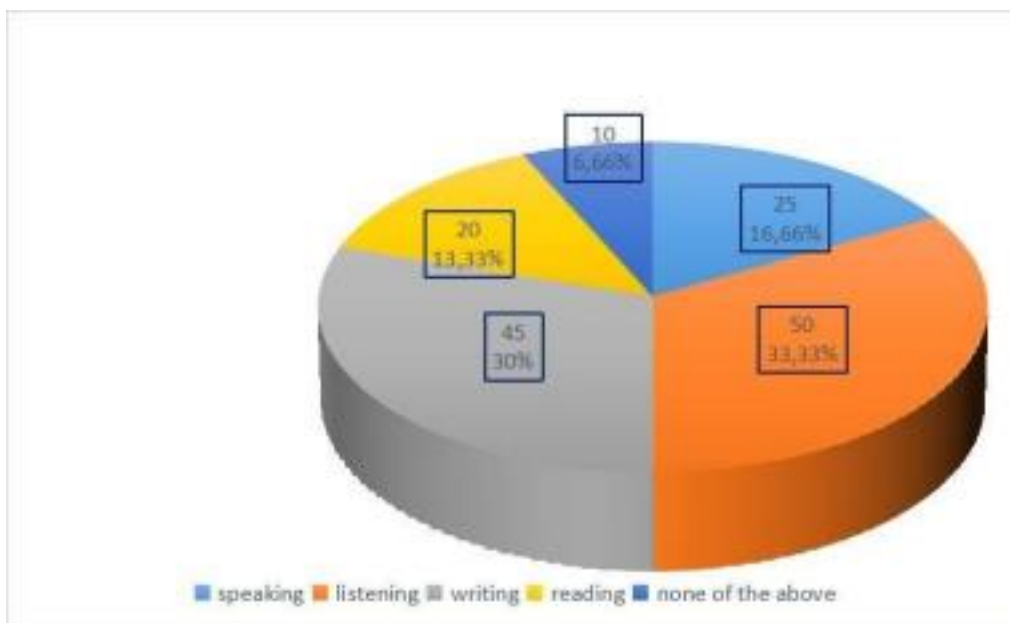
Table 3: *Perceived effectiveness of virtual vs. Face-to-face language classes.*

	Number of responses	%
Yes, more effective	7	4,66%
Yes, equally effective	20	13,33%
Neutral	27	18%
No, less effective	78	52%
No, much less effective	18	12%
Total	150	100%

The table demonstrates that 64% of respondents (52% rated virtual language classes as “less effective” and 12% as “much less effective”) believe virtual language classes are inferior to face-to-face learning. Only 18% of respondents (4.66% rated virtual classes as “more effective” and 13.33% as “equally effective”) view them as comparable or better, while 18% remain neutral. This data reveals a clear preference for traditional classroom settings, suggesting that while online learning offers flexibility, most learners still perceive it as less effective for language acquisition.

Q8: What specific language skills (e.g. speaking, listening, writing, reading) do you find most challenging to develop in a virtual classroom?

Diagram 4: *Most challenging language skills to develop in a virtual classroom.*



The diagram reveals that listening 33.33% and speaking 16.66% pose the greatest challenges in virtual language classrooms, likely due to the lack of real-time, immersive practice and technical limitations like audio quality. Writing 30% also presents significant difficulties, possibly because of reduced instructor feedback. In contrast, reading 13.33% appears more adaptable to online formats, while a small minority 6.66% report no challenges. These findings highlight the need for enhanced interactive tools.

Q9: How often do you feel anxious or stressed during virtual language classes?

Table 4: *Students stress frequency during virtual language courses.*

	Number of responses	%
Very often	26	17,33%
Often	25	16,66%
Sometimes	53	35,33%
Rarely	26	17,33%
Never	20	13,33%
Total	150	100%

The table reveals that 34% of students (17.33% reported “very often” and 16.66% “often”) experience frequent stress or anxiety during virtual language classes, while 35% face it occasionally. Notably, 30% (17.33% reported “rarely” and 13.33% “Never”) remain minimally affected. This polarization suggests that virtual learning environments impact students unevenly, with a significant majority (69% combined) encountering stress at least some of the time. These results highlight the urgency of implementing supportive measures such as flexible participation options, technical training, or mindfulness practices to address stressors and improve equity in online language education.

Q10: What strategies do you use to overcome language learning difficulties in virtual classrooms?

To deal with challenges in virtual language learning, students report a variety of strategies that help them stay focused, motivated, and engaged. First, one of the most common methods is “*creating a quiet and distraction free environment*” by turning off notifications, , staying away from noise, and preparing their learning space in advance. Second, many participants also mentioned following a “*daily routine*” to stay organized and manage their time effectively. Third, students “*use multimedia resources*” such as English movies, TV shows, or YouTube videos with subtitles, podcasts and songs. They listen to these materials and repeat phrases to acquire new words to boost vocabulary and improve their listening and speaking skills. Additionally, others practice speaking by reading aloud, interacting with friends, or participating in online discussions. To support comprehension during lessons, some learners rely on online dictionaries and translation tools.

In addition, a few students mention that they join “*English learning groups*” to build their confidence and improve communication. They also, review lessons after class regularly,

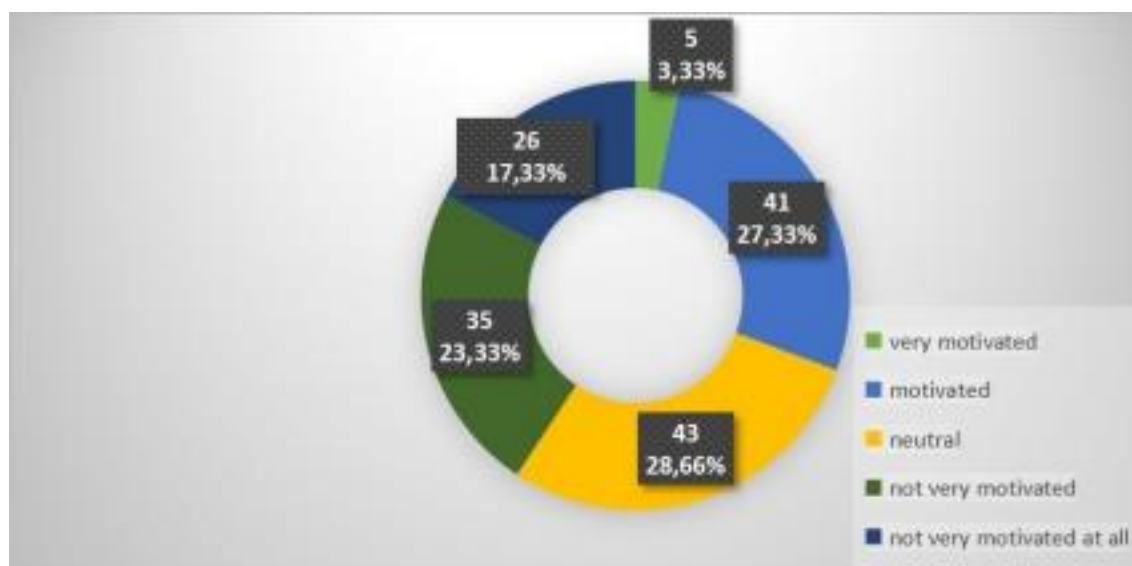
take notes during the lessons to stay organized and keep track of key points, and prepare for upcoming sessions. Some even record the lessons to revisit and clarify content. Finally, students stress the importance of staying motivated and confident by “*setting small personal goals*”, and trying to adopt a positive attitude when facing learning difficulties. Overall, these strategies reflect the learners’ efforts to adapt and improve their language learning experience despite the challenges of virtual education.

3.1.3 Students’Engagement and Academic performance

This section examines students’ motivation, participation, and interaction in online language courses, while also comparing their learning outcomes in virtual settings with those in traditional classroom environments.

Q11: How motivated are you to participate in virtual language classes?

Diagram 5: *Students motivation levels for participating in virtual language classes.*

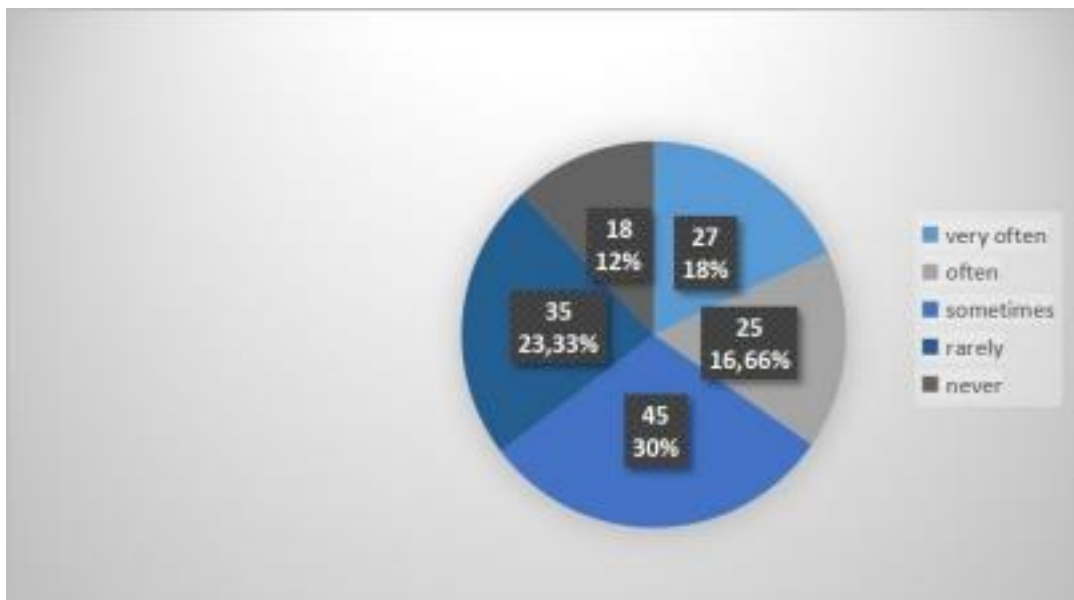


The diagram reveals varying levels of student motivation toward virtual language classes. While 27.33% feel motivated and 28.66% remain neutral, only a small fraction 3.33%

are highly motivated. Conversely, a considerable proportion expresses low motivation, with 23.33% being not very motivated and 17.33% entirely unmotivated. Overall, these findings indicate that a significant number of students lack strong enthusiasm for virtual language learning.

Q12: How often do you actively participate (e.g., asking questions, contributing to discussions) in virtual language classes?

Diagram 6: *Frequency of student participation in virtual language classes.*



The diagram highlights a polarization in student participation during virtual language classes. While a combined 34.66% of learners engage (18% very often and 16.66% often), the majority demonstrate limited involvement, with 30% participating sometimes, 23.33% rarely, and 12% never.

Q13: How do you perceive the level of interaction between students and teachers in virtual language classes?

Table 5: *Students' perception of teacher-student interaction level in virtual language classes.*

	Number of responses	%
Very interactive	10	6,66%
interactive	42	28%
neutral	65	43,33%
Not very interactive	28	18,66%
Not interactive at all	5	3,33%
Total	150	100 %

The table results on student-teacher interaction in virtual language classes reflect a mixed perception among students. While a combined 34.66% of participants rated the interaction as "interactive" 28% or "very interactive" 6.66% the largest group 43.33% remained neutral suggesting neither strong satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. Notably, a significant 21.99% expressed negative views ("not very interactive" at 18.66% and "not interactive at all "at 3.33%). This indicate that despite some positive feedback, a notable proportion of students found the interaction lacking, pointing to a need for more engaging and inclusive online teaching methods.

Q14. What teaching strategies or tools used by your instructors do you find most helpful for your learning?

This question seeks to understand perspectives on the teaching strategies and tools used by their educators. Firstly, students highlighted the relevance of instructors providing clear explanations of the course material and addressing essential concepts during lessons. In addition, they valued openings to engage in verbal expression such as delivering presentations,

or participating in discussions, which foster students' engagement and involve them in the learning process. In particular, discussion based learning was perceived as an effective strategy for facilitating interaction and cultivating critical thinking skills. Moreover, the use of online learning platforms, such as google classroom was considered useful for organizing course materials and ensuring effective communication. Another point raised by students was the benefit of simple lesson presentation using visual aids, recorded and clearly structured explanations which helped improve their understanding. They also pointed out that interactive activities and personalized feedback, particularly in speaking tasks, played crucial role in building their confidence and facilitating learning. Lastly students also cited repetition to ensure understanding, assigning homework to reinforce learning outcomes.

Q15: How would you rate your overall academic performance in virtual language classes compared to face-to-face classes?

Table 6: *Comparison of students' academic performance in virtual vs face-to-face language classes.*

	Number of responses	%
Much better	15	10%
better	38	25,33%
The same	70	46,66%
worse	25	16,66%
Much worse	2	1,33%
Total	150	100 %

The table reveals that the majority of students 46.66% perceive their academic performance in virtual language classes to be the same as in face-to-face classes. A considerable

25.33% of learners report improved performance in online settings, though only 10% perceive it as significantly better. On the other hand, 16.66% of learners report a decline in performance, while only 1.33% perceive it as significantly worse. Virtual delivery is viable for the majority, but targeted support for the struggling minority is critical to ensure equity.

Q16. What suggestions do you have for improving engagement and performance in virtual language classes?

This question is asked to determine the extent to which students believe engagement and performance can be improved in virtual language classes. To begin with, some students stressed “*the need for more interaction*” by asking questions, and turn on their cameras and microphones, and participate via chat to feel more engaged specially to support shy or hesitant learners. Others suggested “*using real life examples and personal experiences*” to make lessons more meaningful. In addition, peer collaboration through group work, collaborative projects and power point presentations are highly encouraged. To make the learning atmosphere more enjoyable and social, some suggested “*the integration of language games*” to boost motivation. Furthermore, they underlined the importance of having passionate teachers who speak clearly and slowly, and who allow students the freedom to ask questions. Lastly, they recommended creating a positive learning setting that encourages active participation among students and avoiding late class hours. Overall, these suggestions represent students’ needs for a more participatory, helpful, and effective virtual learning experience, highlighting key areas that, if addressed, could significantly enhance the quality of online language education.

3.2 Presentation of the Results of the Interview

The second data collection tool used in the research is the interview. The results of this part are obtained from the structured interview conducted with six teachers teaching online classes for master 1 level at the department of English. It aims at gathering more in-depth information about the topic of investigation. The results are interpreted using the Qualitative Content Analysis.

Q1: What subject do you teach?

This question aims to gather some background information about the interviewees and to identify their subjects that they are teaching online classrooms. The participants reported teaching a variety of modules. These include ELT, communication, British and American literature, didactic subtexts, cognitive psychology, sociology of education, e-learning, translation, ethics and deontology, French and digital literacies.

Q2: What do you think about teaching your subjects in virtual classrooms?

Teachers' answers reveal many aspects related to their attitudes towards online teaching. First, in term of "*Perceived Effectiveness of Online Teaching*", this refers to the mixed attitudes that were reported regarding the effectiveness of online instruction. Certain educators viewed online teaching less effective compared to in-person teaching, mainly because of challenges such as reduced student focus and lack of visual cues for comprehension. To illustrate, a teacher reports that "In real classrooms, students are more focused, and the teacher can see if they understand or not." Others acknowledged that over time, online teaching can become comparable to in-person instruction. For example, a teacher states that "Over time,

I began to feel that online teaching is quite similar to in-person instruction.” Second, “*Subject-Specific Challenges and Preferences*” which implies that teachers’ experiences vary depending on the nature of the subject. Teaching ELT to Master 1 students was described as challenging, mainly due to students’ preference for literature. For instance, a teacher complains: “It is really hard to teach ELT for literature (LAID) Master students because it’s not their favourite subject.” Moreover, teaching Communication was perceived as more interactive and engaging. For example, a teacher explains that: “I find communication more interactive and engaging, which I enjoy more.”

Third, “*Adaptation and Skill Development*” meaning that several teachers noted personal growth and increased confidence with time. In other words, initial struggles were overcome, and teachers adapted to online tools and methods. To illustrate, a teacher states: “It was challenging at first, but I am now able to conduct tests without struggles.” Another teacher added: “It is an interesting and new experience. It allows both students and teachers to adapt to different learning environments.” Fourth, “*Advantages of Virtual Classrooms*” where teachers identified benefits of online platforms, such as flexibility and access to digital resources (e.g. “It offers flexibility and accessibility to digital resources.”); and functional tools for teaching and sharing materials (e.g. “I can share links, websites, videos, articles, and handouts.”). Finally, “*Limitations and Drawbacks*” where several challenges were consistently mentioned, such as limited student engagement, technical issues, lack of face-to-face interaction. To illustrate, a teacher complains that: “It poses difficulties such as limited student engagement, technical issues, and the lack of face-to-face interaction.”

Q3. Have you ever received any training on how to teach online?

This question is asked for to determine whether the teachers have received any kind of

training for using the online platform. The teachers' responses reveal a range of experiences. First, "*Recent Training*" refers to teachers who received support shortly before starting online teaching. Some were trained by experienced colleagues, while others benefited from department-organized sessions. For example, one teacher shared, "I was trained last year by colleagues who had themselves undergone training as part of their confirmation process." Another teacher noted, "The head of the department organized two training days focused on online teaching and learning." These experiences helped them feel more prepared and confident.

In contrast, "*Limited or Old Training*" describes teachers who had some form of training, but it was either outdated or too short. One teacher explained, "I received training five years ago, but it was limited to just one session." Another added, "I had a pedagogical training in my inaugural year as an assistant. Therefore, I acquired the basics of both online and hybrid teaching prior to starting virtual teaching." Although they had some knowledge, they felt it was not enough for the demands of current online platforms. Finally, "*No Training*" includes teachers who received no support at all. One teacher openly admitted, "I never received any training in online teaching; I had to figure out on my own." These differences demonstrate that educators had inequality of opportunities to adapt to online teaching, which may have affected their performance and establish psychological safety within online learning environment.

Q4. How important do you think training is for using virtual classrooms effectively? why?

Teachers' answers reveal many shared views about the importance of training for using online classrooms. First, "*The Necessity of Training*" shows that all participants believe training is essential before teaching online. One teacher explained that the university platform is not

easy to use, saying, “We are supposed to work on the platform of the university, but the students struggle with it, so we work with Google Meet.” She added that training is “very important” and even said, “It’s a must.” Another teacher also emphasized, “Everything needs training. It’s the key to using anything and learning new technologies.” Second, *“Mastering Online Tools reflects”* teachers’ opinions about the need for technical skills. One participant argued that training helps in mastering platform features such as uploading lessons, creating discussions, scheduling classes, and sending assignments. Another teacher insisted that novice teachers especially need proper training to get used to new digital tools. Finally, *“Improving Digital Literacy and Teaching Quality”* highlights how some teachers see training as a way to grow professionally. As one teacher explained, “An adequate training for using virtual classrooms plays a crucial role in highlighting digital literacy and explaining how to manage online tools.” He added that it also “helps teachers reflect on and continuously improve their virtual teaching methods.”

Q5. Based on your experience, is accessing and using virtual classrooms easy or challenging?

This question is asked to know how teachers perceive the process of accessing and using virtual classroom; whether they find it easy or face any challenges. Teachers' responses highlight varied experiences regarding the question asked. While many described the process as easy, others pointed to specific challenges. To begin with, ‘*Ease of Access and Use*’ reflects that many teachers found the platforms easy to use. One teacher explained, “There is no difficulty with the platform, but sometimes we struggle with students who forget to turn off their microphones,” pointing out that technical issues come more from the classroom setting than the platform itself. Another added that it was very easy for him, especially since his students preferred Google Meet. Second, *“Initial Difficulties and Self- Learning”* shows that

some teachers did not find it easy in the beginning. For example, one shared that she had to use YouTube tutorials to understand how the platform works. Another teacher also noted that it takes time to get used to new platforms and that difficulties are part of the process.

Despite growing familiarity, challenges persist. *“Challenges Despite Familiarity”* highlights that even teachers who became comfortable with virtual classrooms still face obstacles. One mentioned that technical problems, poor internet, and students’ limited digital skills reduce interaction. Finally, *“Limits of Online Interaction”* was mentioned by a teacher who said: “Accessing virtual classrooms is very easy; however, online teaching can be challenging due to the inability to see my students,” which made her constantly ask if the lesson was understood. This shows that although many teachers have become comfortable with virtual tools, various challenges still affect the quality of online teaching.

Q6. What kind of teaching materials do you use in virtual classrooms? could you give some examples?

This question is part of our interview to identify the main teaching materials that the teachers use to teach relying on online classroom. Educators rely on different types of materials to deliver their lessons effectively. First, *“Presentation-Based Materials”* were widely mentioned. Several teachers reported using PowerPoint presentations to deliver content. One teacher explained that she usually shares her screen during the session but often sends the slides to students directly due to connection issues. Another participant stated: “To structure lectures, we need presentation tools like PowerPoint, multimedia content, videos and audio, worksheets using Word or PDF formats, and various platforms including Zoom, Google Meet, and Moodle.” Second, *“Textual and Guided Learning Resources”* were commonly used, especially by teachers of Didactics. One of them said he sends texts to students and guides them through

reading by asking questions and providing feedback. Another teacher added that she sends lecture notes with highlighted points to catch students' attention and helps them explore new concepts. Third, "*Mixed and Interactive Content*" was also preferred by some participants. One teacher shared that she combines personal handouts, worksheets, and academic sources like books and articles to prepare her lessons. Lastly, one participant explained how she starts with a PowerPoint presentation, then uses real examples to explain ideas. She illustrated this by referring to a session on digital collaboration, where she demonstrated tools like Google Classroom, Google Meet, and Google Docs by sharing her screen.

Q7: How would you describe your students' performance in virtual classrooms? Can you share any observations?

This question aims to understand teachers' perspectives on student performance and engagement in virtual classrooms. Teachers' responses highlight several key factors influencing student participation and engagement in online learning settings. First, "*Variability in Student Engagement and Participation*" underscores the inconsistent levels of involvement noted by educators. Many teachers reported generally low interaction and limited engagement during virtual sessions. Technical challenges, such as poor internet connectivity and unsuitable study environments, were commonly identified as barriers. For instance, one teacher mentioned that "only a few students participate," linking this issue to "technical difficulties, unstable connections, and unfavourable learning conditions." Second, "*Differences among Student Groups and Subjects*" emerged as a significant trend. Teachers described Master Language and Communication students as highly motivated, organized, and engaged often using interactive tools like Google Meet's "raise hand" feature. Conversely, Master Literature students demonstrated minimal participation, seldom responding to questions, which was associated with a "lack of enthusiasm for the subject." One educator provided a sharp contrast, stating that

online class involvement and performance were “significantly weaker” compared to in-person instruction.

In addition, “*Limited Student Engagement and Passive Attitudes*” reflects how, despite some students making an effort such as submitting comments or occasionally asking questions most remained passive, often replying with “no questions” or “it’s clear,” suggesting superficial rather than meaningful engagement. Fourth, “*Influence of Personal Preferences and Privacy Concerns*” was highlighted by several teachers. Some students chose to keep their cameras off for privacy reasons but still participated when called upon. Additionally, differences were observed between academic levels: last year’s Master students were productive and engaged, while this year’s Bachelor student showed higher absenteeism and only sought assistance when facing difficulties, sometimes voicing dissatisfaction with the course material. Finally, “*Quality of Student Contributions*” was also a point of concern. One instructor noted that even when students participated, their responses often lacked precision and enthusiasm, diminishing the overall learning experience.

Q8: In what ways does the virtual classroom help or make it harder for you to explain lessons and interact with students?

This question explored how the virtual classroom affects teaching effectiveness and student interaction. Teachers’ responses highlight multiple dimensions of how virtual classrooms influence teaching effectiveness and student engagement. First, “*Benefits of digital tools and Flexibility*” emerged as a key advantages identified by educators. Many teachers appreciated the convenience and flexibility of online platforms, which enable the seamless integration of diverse resources such as videos, hyperlinks, and real-time content sharing to assist students requiring additional support. For example, one instructor highlighted how

«online platforms make it easier to incorporate varied multimedia tools," underscoring the advantages of this adaptability while also emphasizing the "need for proper training for both teachers and students." Another educator agreed, noting that virtual classrooms offer access to «a broader selection of materials" and allow immediate resource sharing, ultimately enriching the learning experience. Many teachers expressed frustration over the lack of immediate feedback during lessons. One described the experience as "speaking without knowing if students are even listening," while another compared it to "teaching ghosts" due to the absence of visible reactions particularly from quieter students making it difficult to adapt instruction effectively.

Moreover, "*Technical Disruptions and Their Effect on Instruction*" were commonly reported issues. Internet outages and power cuts frequently interrupted lessons, creating major obstacles. Nevertheless, some teachers demonstrated adaptability by employing backup measures, such as secondary internet connections or portable power banks, underscoring the need for contingency plans to ensure uninterrupted teaching. Finally, "*Low Student Participation and Declining Motivation*" was a persistent concern, particularly among Bachelor students. Some learners claimed to understand the material but remained passive, seldom asking questions or engaging in discussions. This lack of involvement compounded by prolonged screen time, was observed to diminish motivation and hinder meaningful interaction in the virtual classroom.

Q9: How do you encourage your students to participate in online classes?

This question asked how teachers get students to participate more in online classes. Teachers shared different ways they keep students engaged, since online learning makes it harder for natural discussions to happen. First, "*Strategic Questioning Techniques*" proved to

be a commonly used method. Educators implemented both direct and open-ended questioning styles to promote involvement. As one instructor noted, "I address students by name to ensure individual participation," highlighting a personalized engagement strategy. Others preferred broader, thought-provoking questions to foster whole-class discussion and collaborative learning. Second, "*Intentional Use of Humour and Personal Narratives*" served as an effective attention-restoring tool during low-engagement periods. A teacher described employing "brief, relevant anecdotes or light-hearted comments" to create a welcoming atmosphere that re-engages distracted learners, demonstrating the value of interpersonal connection in digital spaces.

Furthermore, "*Multimodal Participation Options*" reflected educators' responsiveness to varied learning preferences. By enabling responses through text chat, verbal contributions, or nonverbal reactions, instructors catered to different comfort levels with public speaking. One educator stressed how "offering multiple response channels helps build an inclusive virtual classroom where all students feel comfortable participating." Fourth, "*Flexible Participation Frameworks*" revealed contextual adaptations in teaching approaches. While lecture sessions didn't mandate interaction unlike tutorial formats, one teacher maintained engagement by «regularly inviting questions at natural transition points," preserving some level of dialogue even in more formal instructional settings. Finally, "*Active Learning Interventions*" emerged as another engagement strategy. Some instructors incorporated short applied exercises or concept summarization tasks during sessions. These techniques served dual purposes: reinforcing content mastery while providing structured opportunities for students to contribute actively to the learning process.

Q10: What are the main challenges that EFL students face in virtual classrooms?

This interview question identifies the key challenges university educators face in virtual teaching. Teachers' responses highlight a range of technical and pedagogical challenges that complicate virtual instruction in higher education. First, "*Infrastructure and Connectivity Issues*" were among the most pressing concerns. Unstable electricity and internet access were repeatedly mentioned as major obstacles. One instructor clearly stated, "Without electricity, there's no internet teaching stops completely," illustrating how power outages in certain regions can bring entire lessons to a halt. Second, "*Limited Student Access to Adequate Technology*" was another frequently mentioned challenge. Several teachers pointed out that many students rely solely on mobile phones, which limits their ability to complete tasks that require standard software. One participant noted, "Many students only have phones, not computers," emphasizing the growing digital divide and its impact on academic performance.

Furthermore, educators reported significant '*Classroom Management Challenges*' which were a major concern for teachers. Many mentioned students arriving late or leaving early, which made lessons harder to run and kept students from staying engaged. In addition, others described chaotic sound environments: "Most keep cameras off and mics on, drowning discussions in noise," making it nearly impossible for instructors to read non-verbal cues or gauge student comprehension. Fourth, "*Lack of Student Motivation and Course Perception*" adds another layer to the problem. One teacher observed, "Students skip class or tune out, not grasping the course's value," linking disengagement not only to external factors but also to internal attitudes and motivation levels.

Q11: What are the main challenges that EFL students face in virtual classrooms?

This question tried to identify the specific struggles by EFL students in online learning settings. Teachers identified multiple barriers affecting EFL students in virtual classrooms, spanning technical, environmental, cognitive, and instructional domains. First, “*challenges related to learning environments*” emerged as a prominent concern. Many students lack access to quiet, private study spaces, significantly compromising their ability to concentrate and participate. As one instructor noted, "constant background noise disrupts students' focus and hinders their communication during sessions." Second, "*Technological Barriers and Digital Competency Gaps*" presented substantial obstacles. Educators reported students struggling with fundamental platform operations, including system access, material retrieval, and digital interaction. This digital literacy deficit particularly affects learners with minimal prior experience in online education. Compounding these issues, "Connectivity Limitations" persist as a critical challenge. Multiple teachers emphasized how unstable internet access interrupts instruction, with one stating that "some students face complete exclusion due to platform inaccessibility."

Beyond technical concerns, teachers also highlighted cognitive and motivational challenges specific to EFL learners. “*Language-Specific Cognitive Challenges*” were seen as especially tough for EFL learners. The online setting makes listening and understanding harder by removing visual cues and limiting chances to ask quick questions. One teacher said, "students struggle much more with listening online," while another mentioned, "pronunciation and grammar mistakes often get missed in digital classes," lowering the quality of learning. Fourth, “*Mutual Adaptation Difficulties*” showed that both teachers and students face similar challenges in adjusting. Many respondents pointed out that students and teachers must both

learn how to handle online teaching, meaning they are adapting together. Finally, "*Engagement and Motivational Deficits*" were recognized as persistent issues. Instructors identified limited student motivation as a key concern, with one proposing that "structured peer collaboration and interactive group work" could potentially boost participation and foster supportive learning dynamics.

Q12: How would you describe your experience teaching English online? Would you say it is effective, difficult, engaging, or challenging? why?

This question aimed to explore educators' personal experiences with teaching English in virtual classrooms. Teachers shared varied and meaningful experiences about teaching English online, revealing both benefits and challenges of virtual instruction. First, «*Effectiveness Depending on Student Profiles*» stood out clearly. One teacher explained their experience was "both effective and demanding" with highly engaged Master 1 Language communication students, but less successful with less participatory Master 1 LAID students who struggled academically. This difference shows how student motivation and field of study affect online learning outcomes. Second, "*Conditional Success of Online Teaching*" was another important finding. An educator maintained that online lessons can work as well as in-person classes when there's good internet, eager students, and trained teachers. They stressed these factors aren't always available but remain essential for good results.

In addition, teachers reflected on the evolving nature of online education., "*Adaptation and Realism in Online Education*" came through in one teacher's view that online teaching is "neither easy nor perfect, but ultimately a worthwhile risk." While noting some subjects don't suit online delivery, they recognized the need to adjust to changing educational practices

worldwide. Fourth, "*Advantages of Digital Tools*" were valued by instructors. One appreciated how features like screen sharing and recording brought flexibility and helped develop new technical abilities, despite initial difficulties when starting online teaching. Finally, "*Engagement Barriers and Lack of Visual Feedback*" presented ongoing difficulties. A teacher saw online teaching's creative possibilities but missed seeing students' faces and reactions, making it harder to understand if students were following along or needed help.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings obtained from both the student questionnaire and the teacher interviews. It was divided into two main sections: the first analysed student responses using tables and diagrams, while the second explored educators' perspectives through qualitative data. The results indicated that students faced technical difficulties, low motivation, and limited interaction in virtual classrooms. Teachers, in turn, reported inconsistent student engagement, insufficient training, and digital constraints. These findings provide a foundation for the next chapter, which will discuss and interpret the results in depth.

Chapter Four

Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings which discusses findings from M1 EFL students' questionnaires and interviews conducted with EFL teachers. It is divided into four sections. The first section analyses the challenges students face in virtual learning classrooms. The second section explores students' perceptions of the efficacy of online education. The third section investigates instructors' perspectives on the obstacles encountered in virtual teaching. Finally, the fourth section compares and contrasts students' and teachers' viewpoints to identify areas of alignment and divergence. Throughout the chapter, findings are interpreted through the lens of the study's theoretical frameworks, specifically the CALL and COI models, and research questions, with empirical data systematically linked to existing literature to propose actionable pedagogical implications.

4.1 EFL Students' Difficulties in Virtual Classrooms

This section outlines the primary challenges experienced by EFL master one students at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi ousou in virtual learning contexts, drawing on questionnaire data and the interpretation of the findings. The discussion is framed within four core areas: technical difficulties, pedagogical barriers, psychological barriers, sociocultural constraints and environmental issues.

4.1.1 Technical Difficulties

Master's students in UMMTO's EFL program encounter major technical difficulties in virtual classrooms, largely due to Algeria's unstable digital infrastructure, especially in rural regions. Survey results indicate that 57.33% of student's experience frequent internet disruptions, while 6% have no access at all (table 2). These issues are worsened

by the use of insufficient devices, particularly smartphones, which are often their sole means of participation.

4.1.1.1 Access Issues

The findings indicate that many students rely primarily on mobile phones rather than computers, which restricts their capacity to engage with postgraduate-level academic tasks. One instructor notes, “Many students rely solely on phones, not computers.” These devices frequently malfunction and are not designed for sustained academic use. This issue is particularly evident in regions with limited resources, where limitations in infrastructure and access continue to pose significant barriers. Dallaa and Belhaoues (2024) confirm that Algerian universities face ongoing challenges in both technological provision and digital preparedness.

4.1.1.2 Platform Limitations

Teachers report that students struggle to use the university’s official platform, prompting a shift to simpler alternatives such as Google Meet. As one teacher explains, “We’re expected to use the university’s platform, but students find it difficult, so we switch to Google Meet.” While more accessible, these tools lack key pedagogical features such as breakout rooms and progress tracking. Bouguebs and Boudersa (2023) observe that platforms like Moodle are often used passively, serving mainly as content repositories rather than interactive learning environments.

Additionally, the platforms themselves are often subpar as 37.33% of the EFL students rate them as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ (see diagram 2 p39), citing broken links, audio glitches, and low-quality videos. These findings align with Bellatrache and Alouti’s (2020) research on Algeria’s persistent e-learning obstacles. Moreover, the impact is more severe for postgraduate students, who depend on advanced collaborative tools for dissertation writing, presentations,

and group projects features absent in basic platforms. These findings also highlight the relevance of the Digital Literacy framework, which, although not adopted as a primary theoretical framework in this study, was introduced in the literature review. Given the technical difficulties and digital inequalities observed, this model offers valuable insights into the role of digital skills in shaping learners' participation and engagement in virtual classrooms.

4.1.1.3 Digital Skills

A further barrier is the lack of digital skills among students, which affects their ability to navigate online platforms and participate effectively in virtual learning. This challenge is particularly pronounced in under-resourced areas, where digital training is inconsistent. Dallaa and Belhaoues (2024) note that both students and educators often lack the necessary digital literacy, which undermines the effectiveness of online education and limits meaningful engagement.

4.1.2 Pedagogical and Learning Challenges

Master's one students in the EFL program face many teaching and learning problems in online classes, not just technical issues. A major challenge is staying focused and motivated.

As already highlighted in the questionnaire findings, 26 percent of the students taking part in this study faces troubles paying attention during virtual lessons (See diagram 3, page 41), often because of noise or phone alerts. A lack of motivation, noted by more than 40% of respondents, suggests deeper challenges in sustaining engagement online (see diagram 5 page 45), considering online classes "boring" or "disconnected". These results align with Bellatrache and Alouti's (2020) findings, which revealed that Algerian students often lose motivation in online settings due to the lack of interactive tools that sustain their engagement. This problem is common across Algeria. Aouisssi's (2024) research at Ghardaïa University

shows that many university teachers use the same methods as in-person classes for online teaching, without changing them to fit digital tools, which often results in reduced student engagement and limited pedagogical effectiveness in virtual settings. This shows that Algeria's move to online education focused more on technology than teaching methods. Interaction and feedback, which are very important for language learning, are also weaker online. The data indicate that 34.66% of the EFL students rarely engage in communication with their teachers (see table 5 page 47), highlighting a key challenge in virtual learning environments. Such limited interaction weakens the student-teacher relationship, a critical factor in providing academic guidance, feedback, and emotional support. This gap may negatively impact student motivation, sense of belonging, and overall learning outcomes, raising questions about the efficacy of the current online teaching strategies in Supporting cognitive and social presence. Over half of the students 52% think online learning is worse than in-person classes, especially because there are fewer speaking and listening activities (see table 3 page 42). This supports Dallaa and Belhaoues's (2024) point that Algerian online classes miss tools like group work or breakoutrooms. Building on this, Aouissi (2024) adds that teachers often are not trained to teach online well, making instruction harder.

Many EFL students struggle with, maintaining concentration and motivation in virtual environments, particularly in online classes, which some find ineffective for language learning. Listening is also reported as the most challenging skill, technical issues like bad sound or internet cuts make this worse, this matches Susilowati's (2020) global study, where EFL students struggled with understanding spoken language online due to poor technology and not using multimodal resources.

These findings match well with CALL approaches, where successful digital language learning depends on interaction, student independence, and hands-on activities. The lack of adapted teaching methods, insufficient interaction, and passive lesson formats contradict CALL's core values, which aim to create dynamic, student-centered digital learning environments. Without integrating CALL-based strategies, the pedagogical quality of online EFL courses remains limited.

4.1.3 Affective and Psychological Barriers

Many EFL Master 1 students at UMMTO struggle with emotional difficulties in online classes, such as anxiety, stress, and low confidence. These problems often arise from the lack of direct pedagogical interaction and teacher support. According to the survey, 34% of the EFL students felt nervous during virtual lessons, indicating that online learning can create discomfort and anxiety. (see table 4 page 43). EFL teachers have noticed that students usually keep their microphones off and cameras disabled, making them feel disconnected. And making communication harder. Even when asked a direct question, many students chose not to speak and instead write short replies in the chat. This may suggest that students experience anxiety related to error-making and being negatively evaluated. These findings match the study of Ichir and Bedad (2024), which found that students avoid participating because they are concerned about being socially rejected or judged by others. For example, during one of their observed classes, a student muted his microphone and replied with just a few words in the chat box when the teacher called on him. This shows how uncomfortable students feel about speaking, even online. This observation is supported by teachers' remarks during interviews, who noted that many students consistently kept their cameras off. While they did not specify the reasons, this behaviour could stem from privacy concerns like fear of unauthorized recording or screenshots which might heighten anxiety and discourage active participation.

This pattern creates a damaging cycle: as anxiety grows, participation drops, leading to greater isolation and loss of motivation over time. Some students try to cope by studying with peers or using extra materials like podcasts, but these efforts cannot replace the support missing in formal online classes.

4.1.4 Sociocultural and Environmental Constraints

Beyond technical, pedagogical and psychological challenges, many Master 1 EFL students report that their home environment is not conducive to effective online learning. Questionnaire responses reveal constant external distractions, such as background noise, frequent interruptions, and a general lack of private study space. As one student explained: “There is no quiet place in my house to attend classes”. These everyday disruptions negatively affect concentration and contribute to unequal learning conditions based on students’ home environments. This aligns with Amiri and El Karfa (2021), who emphasize that inadequate study environments and socio-cultural influences significantly impact EFL students’ academic success. However, Souiah and Hadji (2023) offer a contrasting view, suggesting that some students have managed to adapt positively to online learning despite environmental limitations. Their study highlights how certain learners leverage social interactions and digital tools to enhance their autonomy and engagement. This suggests that while external constraints can be challenging, students with strong digital self-discipline may find ways to overcome these barriers. The EFL teachers confirmed these issues during interviews, many of them reported that their students often joined classes from inappropriate locations such as shared living spaces or public places, which negatively impacted their participation. To illustrate one teacher remarked: “Many students don’t have a personal space; noise, family, and power cuts prevent them from following normally”. Although external to the course structure, these conditions directly influence students’ consistency and quality of engagement in virtual classrooms.

Another commonly reported issue is the constant stream of notifications students receive during class, especially when using smartphones. Some admitted struggling to disconnect from social media or to resist digital distractions. This points to a cognitive and attentional overload that is intensified by unstructured home environments and a lack of digital self-discipline. Overall, the results of this section confirm the first hypothesis which is EFL master one students face significant pedagogical and interactional challenges in synchronous virtual classrooms that negatively affect their learning experience. They also highlight the relevance of CALL theory: when core principles like interaction and autonomy are missing, EFL students struggle to engage and learn effectively in virtual classrooms.

4.2 EFL Students' Perceptions of Virtual Learning Effectiveness

This section explores EFL master one students' views on how effective virtual learning is. Their responses show mixed perceptions, with some highlighting its flexibility, while others point to reduced interaction and lower learning quality.

4.2.1 Students' Perceptions of the Advantages of Online Classes

Although switching to online learning was difficult, some EFL Master 1 students recognized its benefits. The survey results indicate that a portion of EFL students achieved enhanced performance in virtual learning environments compared to traditional classrooms, with some demonstrating notable academic progress. This indicates that online learning can help some students achieve better results, certainly because of its flexibility, self-paced structure, or easier access to digital materials. The EFL students found the recorded lectures, the well-organized materials (e.g., on Google Classroom, email), and the ability to review content helpful. These tools allowed them to manage their time and learn independently, which is important for language learning. Similar findings were reported by Berrarbi and Amrane (2023), who noted that students in blended learning environments benefited from controlling

their study pace and reviewing materials when needed. Some students also used digital resources like YouTube videos, podcasts, to improve vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening skills. Kirkwood and Price (2013) support this idea by stressing that technology-enhanced learning fosters student autonomy and engagement. Their study argues that digital platforms and multimedia tools help learners actively participate in their education, develop independent learning strategies, and reinforce knowledge through repeated exposure to authentic materials. These perceived benefits are in line with the CALL framework, which supports the integration of authentic digital resources and self-paced learning tools. EFL students at UMMTO who engaged with YouTube, podcasts, and recorded lectures practiced CALL principles, developing language skills independently through multimedia exposure and repetition. This shows the potential of CALL when learners are self-motivated and equipped with appropriate digital habits.

4.2.2 Students' Perceptions of Challenges and Limitations in Virtual Learning

Although virtual classrooms provided some learners with flexibility, the majority of EFL Master 1 students viewed online education as a less effective alternative to face-to-face instruction. As reported in (see Table 3 page 42), that most respondents regard virtual language classes as comparatively less effective for language learning. than traditional in-person settings. The evaluative perception is not only related to technical constraints but also stems from core pedagogical limitations that directly affect language development. In addition to earlier challenges, many students reported a lack of immediate engagement with instructors. Only 34.66% described their online classes positively. Over 21.99% felt there was little or no interaction (see Table 5 page 47). This suggests that virtual classes often lacked responsiveness and personal connection, which are important for language learning. Diagram 4 (page 43) shows that speaking and listening were the most difficult skills to improve online. 16.66% struggled with speaking, and 33.33% with listening. These difficulties may be linked to

students' digital literacy. Learners with better technical skills may use online tools more effectively and participate more actively. Others may lack access to quiet spaces or reliable internet, which affects concentration and progress. Some students may experience anxiety about speaking in front of others. They prefer typing short answers in the chat. This limits oral practice and reduces fluency. In contrast, students with strong academic goals or self-discipline may engage more and benefit from online learning. These differences help explain why some learners succeed while others face difficulties. These figures reflect a broader issue: digital platforms often do not replicate the spontaneous, real-time exchanges needed to strengthen pronunciation, fluency, and active listening. However, not all research agrees. While El-Sayed (2022) argues that virtual language labs boost listening comprehension through interactive, real-world tasks making learning more engaging our findings show that students still struggle with listening in online environments This may be due to differences in instructional design, learner engagement, or the absence of structured listening activities. These factors appear to limit the effectiveness of online platforms in developing listening skills. This gap suggests a critical issue: digital tools can help, but their success hinges on how they are implemented, how accessible they are, and whether they truly foster interaction in real classroom settings. Some even reported feeling disengaged or "stuck," unable to measure improvement or receive meaningful support. This aligns with Berrarbi and Amrane (2023), who argue that in Algerian blended and online environments, the absence of regular oral tasks and feedback loops often leads students to regress or plateau in language development.

In sum, while the shift to virtual learning allowed continuity during the COVID-19, the pedagogical quality of that learning remains a central concern. The EFL Students' perceptions suggest that virtual instruction, as currently implemented, falls short in offering the interpersonal interaction and communicative practice that are foundational to successful EFL education. This concern is echoed in the findings of Alshumaimeri and Alhumud (2021), who

observed that EFL learners perceived virtual classrooms as ineffective in developing communication skills particularly speaking due to reduced opportunities for interaction and delayed feedback. Unless addressed through more interactive, student-centered digital approaches, these limitations risk widening the gap between linguistic goals and educational outcomes.

4.2.3 Student Perceptions of Online Language Learning

While most Master 1 EFL students were dissatisfied with virtual learning, the data also show mixed and sometimes conflicting attitudes. Some students taking part in the present study adapted well to online classes, benefiting from the flexibility and digital resources. Others, however, struggled with motivation, participation, and skill development. For example, (see Table 6 page 48) provide 46.66% of the EFL students' their academic performance in virtual language classes was "the same" as in face-to-face learning. Additionally, 25.33% indicated noticeable improvements, with some significant progress meaning nearly three-quarters did not see a drop in grades. This may reflect the success of students with strong self-discipline, time-management skills, and digital adaptability. Many of these learners developed self-regulated learning strategies, such as studying in distraction-free spaces, using multimedia tools, and re-watching recorded lectures. Such self-regulated habits suggest that online learning can work well for certain individual particularly those who are self-motivated and tech-savvy (those who are proficient using digital tools, platforms, and technology for learning). However, a large number of the students showed low engagement and resistance to online learning. According to (see Diagram 5 page 45), only 3.33% of student reported high motivation, whereas 40.66%, indicated low motivation. Similarly, 35.33% participated only occasionally, and 12% stated they never joined discussions (See Diagram 6, page 46). Students showing low motivation and limited participation appear to rely heavily on structured classroom environments, immediate

feedback, and teacher-led instruction elements often weakened in virtual settings. Notably, some studies suggest a more positive perception of virtual learning. Dayag (2018) argues that virtual learning environments provide students with engaging tools that improve language acquisition, contrasting with the difficulties observed in this study. However, Dayag's research was conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, in a structured institutional setting with Omani EFL students using blended platforms. In contrast, Djaidja and Kadi (2023) examined Algerian EFL students during the pandemic, where online learning was often adopted out of necessity. Their findings show that some students preferred online learning for its flexibility and accessibility. These differences in context, student profile, and platform type particularly between real-time and asynchronous formats may help explain the apparent contradiction in outcome. These differing perspectives indicate that the success of digital learning depends not only on technological availability but also on individual readiness and institutional implementation. While some students thrive in independent settings, others struggle without structured support and direct guidance, reinforcing the need for adaptable learning models.

These contrasting experiences can be better understood through the lens of the CALL and COI frameworks, which emphasize learner autonomy, digital tool use, and collaborative learning. Students who succeeded showed strong self-regulation and adapted well to digital platforms. In contrast, those who struggled lacked motivation and needed more structured support. This suggests that developing digital competencies within a CALL/COI-based approach is essential to bridging these gaps and supporting all learners effectively.

4.2.4 Influence of Teacher Presence on Student Engagement in Virtual Settings

Master EFL students' views on virtual learning effectiveness were closely tied to how well teachers communicated and supported them. Many highlighted that clear explanations, visual aids, feedback on speaking tasks, and opportunities for participation were key factors in

enhancing their learning experience. These teaching approaches led to increased motivation and confidence. For instance, EFL students noted that the chance to discuss topics and receive personalized feedback contributed to making lessons more engaging. However, teacher presence differed significantly between courses. Some instructors effectively used platforms like Google Classroom to structure lessons and encourage interaction, while others adopted fewer dynamic methods, reducing student involvement. Learners reported feeling more engaged in classes where teachers offered various technological resources, included sharing PowerPoint presentation. This corresponds to the EFL student's feedback, where many requested greater teacher involvements, more interaction, and extra encouragement for quieter students (less vocal learners). Teachers' interviews revealed deliberate efforts to maintain engagement through strategies like asking questions, calling on students directly, and incorporating informal discussions to sustain attention. Educators also stressed adapting materials such as using PowerPoints, videos, and real-world examples to make online lessons clearer and more stimulating. These adjustments enhanced teacher presence and partially compensated for the limitations of virtual learning. These results support findings by Benmansour (2021) who highlights that what really keeps students motivated and satisfied comes down to three teacher factors: being visible on screen, communicating clearly, and responding quickly. While technology has its limits, instructors make all the difference by creating real connections and providing consistent structure in virtual classrooms. This reinforces the importance of teacher presence and digital competence as key determinants of virtual learning success, as explained by the Call framework.

Overall, these results confirm the second hypothesis, which states that students view live virtual classes as less effective than in-person teaching for improving their English skills and staying motivated in their studies. As most students taking part in the study viewed virtual

classes as less effective than in-person learning for improving their English and staying motivated.

4.3 Teachers' Perspectives on EFL Students' Online Learning Difficulties

In the interview, we have asked university EFL teachers to share their views on the main challenges their students face during online learning. Their responses showed a range of obstacles both technical and pedagogical that affect the quality of virtual education. The teachers highlighted frequent issues including limited engagement, poor internet access, low digital literacy, and reduced opportunities for language practice. These observations contribute to a better comprehension of the barriers impacting online EFL education from the teachers' perspective. As one participant teacher explains, "students' challenges are teachers' challenges". These difficulties align with previous research, including Erarslan (2021), who noted that online learning challenges often contribute to passive learning behaviour in virtual language classrooms.

4.3.1 Teachers' Observations of Students' Challenges

One of the most frequently mentioned issues was the lack of student engagement. The participant teachers reported that many students attend online classes without actively participating, often disengaging by turning their camera and microphones. As one teacher noted that he is not able to tell whether students were listening or even present. He states that "I speak but I do not have any idea if they are even present". Poor attendance and late arrivals were also common, with students sometimes leaving early without notice. These observations align with Gillett-Swan (2017), who stressed that online learners often struggle with self-discipline and time management, which can affect their academic success, without a set schedule or direct supervision, students must manage their own study habits and deadlines. Another pressing

concern was the limited opportunity for oral language practice. Teachers explained that students were hesitant to speak up during online sessions, reducing chances for authentic language use. In the absence of physical classroom settings. Opportunities for spontaneous speaking activities and peer interaction become rare, making it difficult to develop learners' communicative competence. Many participants pointed out that the online platforms do not allow students to ask and answer questions freely, unlike face-to-face settings where the teacher's physical presence fosters clarification and active participation. They observed that numerous students depend significantly on the teacher's immediate support and guidance, which is frequently lacking in virtual settings. Another issue concerns the fact that many students rely on mobile phones to access virtual classrooms, which often results in difficulties opening lecture materials and completing assigned activities due to software or compatibility issues.

4.3.2 Technological and Instructional Challenges for Teachers

The present study also explores whether virtual classrooms are easy or challenging for teachers to use. The goal was to gather insights into their practical experiences with online teaching environments. The responses revealed a range of perspectives. Many teachers stated that they found the platforms easy to access and navigate. For example, one participant mentioned, "There is no difficulty with the platform, but sometimes we struggle with students who forget to turn off their microphones"? Indicating that the issues arise more from the classroom dynamics than the tools themselves. One of the main problems teachers face is the frequent loss of electricity. Even if they have a good internet connection, power cuts in the areas where they live make it very hard for them to deliver their lessons online. Others, however, noted that the initial transition was not quite challenging at first. Some educators needed to teach themselves how to use the platforms, regularly depending on online guides and a process of trial and error. Despite eventually becoming more comfortable, these teachers continue to encounter persistent issues, including poor internet connectivity and students' lack of digital

skills, which limit interaction and participation. Additionally, some teachers emphasized that even with technical ease, the online environment poses difficulties in communication and classroom management. One teacher remarked that, “Accessing virtual classrooms is very easy; however, online teaching can be challenging due to the inability to see my students”, which made her frequently ask whether the lesson was understood. This highlights the complex reality: while virtual platforms may not be inherently difficult to use, the teaching experience itself remains demanding due to limited interaction, connectivity problems, and reduced student engagement. Many instructors struggled with digital tools, particularly at the beginning of the transition. As one teacher shared, “I had to teach myself how to use the platform.” Furthermore, the platforms available such as Moodle, and Google Meet had limited interactive features. Instead of fostering engagement, they were mostly used for sharing materials or sending voice notes, which reduced opportunities for real-time interaction. Dhull and Arora (2017) highlight that such limitations can lead to feelings of isolation and lower student motivation. Although assessment was not the primary focus of the interview, some teachers briefly addressed how they assess students in the context of online learning. assessment remains a major concern. Students often find online exams stressful, and some worry about fair grading and academic honesty. Hijazi and AlNatour (2021) emphasize that digital learning can make evaluation unreliable, leading to passive learning habits. One teacher explained that they use PowerPoint presentations as part of the assessment process, asking students to present their work virtually. However, others stated that most assessments were conducted in face-to-face sessions rather than online. This shift to in-class assessments suggests that many teachers still rely on traditional, controlled environments to evaluate students fairly, due to concerns about internet instability, academic dishonesty, and the limitations of online platforms.

4.3.3 Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Readiness and Motivation

Teachers noticed clear differences in students' readiness and motivation in online classrooms. Some students were motivated and ready to learn as they attend regularly, participate in discussions, and use the online tools well. For example, Master 1 Language and Communication students were described as organized, active, and often used features like the "raise hand" button in Google Meet to speak. However, many students were less motivated and not ready for online learning. These students often skipped classes or joined late, and when they attend, they rarely engage with others. Another teacher explained that Master Literature students often stay silent, give short answers like "no questions," and do not seem interested in the lessons. In some cases, students only asked questions when they were completely lost. Teachers also found that students with weak digital skills had more difficulties. They do not know how to use the platforms well and often rely too much on the teacher. This shows that motivation, readiness, responsibility, and digital literacy all play a big role in how students perform in online education. The EFL teachers taking part in this investigation, proposed several solutions to improve virtual teaching and learning using different strategies and being well-prepared. Many of them try to make their lessons more interactive to overcome the lack of face-to-face contact. A common method is asking questions regularly to keep students involved. One teacher said, "I call on students individually," which shows a personalized way to ensure participation. Other prefer using open-ended questions to make everyone feel included. Certain educators also tell brief stories or jokes when students become distracted, fostering a more relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. To support different student needs, teachers provide several options for participation, including utilizing the chat feature, activating the microphone, or reacting with emoji's. One instructor explained that even in large lecture classes, they take breaks to encourage students to ask questions or summarize key points. These small tasks help check understanding and keep students active during the session. However,

teachers also stressed that proper training is necessary to make these strategies work well. One teacher said, “Training is a must», emphasizing that without it, using digital tools can be confusing. The teachers believe that training helps them master online platforms, improve digital skills, and create better learning experiences for students. It also allows them to adapt and grow professionally in a changing teaching environment. Another educator emphasized that complete mastery of platform options such as posting courses, creating spaces for discussion, and using highlights to attract student attention is essential for a smooth online learning experience. Training not only improves digital skills but also allows teachers to design engaging lessons, support students effectively, and grow professionally in the evolving educational landscape.

To sum up, both the students’ questionnaire and the teachers’ interview serve to clarify the main limitations and problems faced in online learning. The findings highlight various obstacles such as weak internet connection, limited student engagement, lack of motivation, low participation, and unfamiliarity with digital tools. These issues negatively affect the teaching and learning process, making it more difficult for teachers to manage lessons and for students to stay focused and involved. These results allow us to answer the research questions of the investigation. They partly confirm the third hypothesis, which states that EFL instructors at UMMTO believe students struggle most with technical limitations and lack of interaction in online classes, which lowers their performance. However, teachers' feedback and observations also highlights additional factors, including psychological, technical, mental, instructional and pedagogical, giving a deeper understanding of the difficulties experienced in virtual classrooms.

4.4 Teachers’ and Students’ views on Virtual Classroom Challenges

In both the questionnaires and the interviews, specific questions were advanced in order

to investigate the main difficulties encountered by students and teachers during virtual classrooms, aiming to compare and contrast their perspectives and understand how these challenges affect online language learning. The findings show that both students and teachers share similar views on some problems. First, both students and teachers identified technical problems as a major obstacle. Students reported frequent issues such as poor internet connection, audio problems, and limited access to devices like laptops, smartphones or tablets which are essential for online learning. Meanwhile, teachers emphasized the instability of electricity and the lack of proper equipment among learners. Second, both sides agreed on the lack of interaction as a serious limitation. Students expressed feeling disconnected and unable to ask questions freely, they justify their answer by stating that this form of interaction lacks the organization which influences their interaction with the teachers in a negative way. The lack of the Internet connection is considered also an obstacle which can affect the students' interaction. This means that some students prefer to have the teachers in front of them in order to interact and answer their questions while teachers complained about students' passivity, muted microphones, and turned-off cameras, which made interaction and classroom management difficult. These points of agreement reflect the technological barriers and reduced interaction identified in the CALL framework (Levy, 1997; Hampel and Stickler, 2015), illustrating how limited access to technology and poor connectivity can hinder participation and reduce the effectiveness of language learning. Furthermore, the lack of social presence, as outlined in the Community of Inquiry (COI) framework, negatively affects students' motivation and sense of belonging. While students attributed their challenges to external factors such as noise, technical issues, and limited support, teachers emphasized low motivation and lack of seriousness. This contrast reveals differing perceptions of responsibility and engagement. Student responses also confirmed psychological difficulties, including anxiety, poor concentration, and disconnection. These findings reflect variations in how cognitive and

teaching presence are experienced. Both groups acknowledge technical and interactional barriers, but their interpretations highlight the need to strengthen the social and pedagogical aspects of online learning, as emphasized by the COI and CALL frameworks.

To sum up, the findings from both the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interviews confirm that virtual classrooms present many challenges that affect online language teaching and learning in the context of the department of English at UMMTO, Algerian. Students reported difficulties such as poor internet connection, lack of concentration, distractions at home, limited interaction, and feelings of anxiety or stress during online classes. Teachers also mentioned technical problems, students' lack of participation, and the difficulty of keeping learners engaged. Both students and teachers agreed that the lack of communication and interaction made learning less effective. These findings clearly show that virtual learning environments are not equally effective for everyone. They reduce student engagement and limit opportunities for active learning. The lack of social presence, teacher guidance, and active participation all contribute to a weaker learning experience.

To conclude, the research findings confirm that online language learning is affected by a combination of technological, psychological, pedagogical, and external factors. These challenges reduce the quality of learning and teaching. The results discussed in this section allow us to answer the first research question of the investigation. This partially confirms the first hypothesis which states that: EFL Master 1 students at UMMTO face various challenges in synchronous virtual classrooms that may affect the quality of their learning experience.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided a discussion and interpretation of the results of the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interviews conducted at the Department of English at UMMTO. The findings of the investigation have been discussed by relying on the theoretical

frameworks of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and the Community of Inquiry (COI), the interpreted results have allowed us to answer the research questions and confirm or disconfirm the hypotheses that were introduced in the General Introduction. Finally, the implementation of online language learning has led to some limitations which can reduce its effectiveness. The experience of both teachers and students can be negatively affected by these drawbacks, including decreased motivation, technical difficulties, and limited interaction. These limitations should be overcome and solved in an effective way to ensure a more successful and engaging virtual learning environment that meets the demands of 21st C modern education.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This study investigated the challenges encountered by Master One EFL students in online learning environments at the Department of English, UMMTO. It aimed to identify the difficulties experienced by both students and teachers and to gain insight into their perceptions of the virtual classroom. The research was framed by two theoretical models: Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and the Community of Inquiry (CoI), which provided a conceptual basis for examining the technological, pedagogical, and social dimensions of online education. The hypotheses introduced in the general introduction were used to guide the inquiry and interpret the findings.

This study relied on both quantitative and qualitative data, collected through student questionnaires and teacher interviews, in order to gain a broader understanding of the challenges faced in online EFL classrooms. The student sample consisted of 150 individuals from various specialisations, while six teachers involved in online instruction provided qualitative insights. Combining questionnaire results with interview responses allowed for a broader understanding of the issues faced in virtual classrooms. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, and qualitative data were interpreted through qualitative content analysis. This combination of methods helped highlight both general patterns and individual experiences, offering a more balanced view of the online learning context.

The findings revealed a wide range of difficulties affecting students' engagement and academic performance. Technological issues such as poor internet connectivity, platform instability, and limited access to devices were frequently reported. Psychological barriers, including stress, low motivation, and feelings of isolation, further hindered students' ability to concentrate and participate actively. Pedagogical constraints were also evident, with students expressing difficulties in interacting with teachers, developing language skills, and maintaining focus during virtual sessions. Environmental factors, such as the absence of quiet study spaces,

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compounded these challenges and contributed to a generally negative perception of online learning.

Teachers similarly faced significant obstacles. Although they acknowledged the flexibility and digital resources afforded by virtual platforms, they reported low levels of student engagement, limited interaction, and persistent technical disruptions. The need for professional development and training in digital pedagogy was strongly emphasised, as many instructors struggled to adapt their teaching strategies to the online format. These findings are consistent with the CALL and CoI frameworks, confirming that gaps in technological integration and social presence significantly impact the effectiveness of online language education.

Despite the predominance of negative experiences, some students reported positive aspects of virtual learning, such as convenience and flexibility. These variations suggest that individual factors such as digital literacy, self-regulation, and access to reliable technology play a crucial role in shaping learners' experiences. This highlights the importance of adopting a differentiated approach to online education, one that considers the diverse needs and circumstances of students.

The implications of this study are relevant for both pedagogical practice and institutional policy. To enhance the quality of online learning, universities should implement structured training programmes for both students and teachers, focusing on the effective use of digital tools and interactive teaching strategies. Activities such as quizzes, group discussions, and collaborative projects can foster engagement and reduce feelings of isolation. Moreover, improving infrastructure—particularly internet access and device availability—is essential to ensure equitable participation. Emotional support mechanisms, including mentoring and stress-management initiatives, should also be integrated into virtual learning environments. A blended

General Conclusion

approach, combining live and recorded sessions, may offer greater flexibility and accommodate different learning preferences.

There are a few limitations that may affect the scope of the findings. The limited number of participating teachers and the relatively short duration of data collection constrain the generalisability of the results. Moreover, the study focused exclusively on language learning within virtual classrooms, without extending its scope to other academic disciplines or institutional contexts. Time constraints also restricted the depth of analysis and prevented a more detailed examination of variables such as students' socioeconomic background, prior digital experience, and individual learning profiles.

Future research should aim to overcome these limitations by using stronger research designs and focusing on specific groups. For example, a quasi-experimental method could be used to measure how digital training programmes affect student motivation and learning. Researchers could also design and test online training courses for EFL teachers in Algerian universities, helping them improve their use of digital tools and interactive teaching methods. Studies might focus on first-year students, who often struggle the most with online learning, to see how blended learning (a mix of online and face-to-face teaching) supports their progress. In addition, long-term studies could follow students over time to understand how their digital skills and independence develop. Research across different universities and regions would also help identify how local conditions affect online education in Algeria.

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Appendices

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1/ Students' Questionnaire

Introduction

Dear students,

We are Master's 2 students conducting a research study titled "Exploring Language Learning Difficulties in Virtual Classrooms." This questionnaire aims to gather your perceptions and experiences regarding language learning in virtual classrooms.

Your input is invaluable to our research. We kindly ask you to tick the most appropriate options or provide additional comments where needed. Rest assured, your responses will remain confidential and will be used solely for academic purposes.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation. Your contribution is greatly appreciated

Questionnaire

Section 1: Virtual Classroom Experience

1. How familiar are you with the online learning platforms used in your courses?
 - Very familiar
 - Somewhat familiar
 - Neutral
 - Not very familiar
 - Not familiar at all

2. How often do you experience technical difficulties (e.g., internet connection issues, software problems) during virtual classes?
 - Very often
 - Often
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never

3. Do you have access to the necessary devices (e.g., computer, laptop, tablet, smartphone) and a stable internet connection to participate effectively in virtual classes?
 - Yes, I have both a device and a stable internet connection.
 - Yes, I have a device, but my internet connection is sometimes unstable.

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- No, I do not have access to a suitable device.
- No, I do not have a stable internet connection.

4. How would you rate the overall usability of the online learning platforms?

- Excellent
- Good
- Neutral
- Poor
- Very poor

5. What are the main challenges you face when using online learning platforms?

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Section 2: Language Learning Difficulties

6. How difficult do you find it to concentrate during virtual language classes?

- Very difficult
- Difficult
- Neutral
- Easy
- Very easy

7. Do you feel that virtual classes are as effective as face-to-face classes for language learning?

- Yes, more effective
- Yes, equally effective
- Neutral

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- No, less effective
- No, much less effective

8. What specific language skills (e.g., speaking, listening, writing, reading) do you find most challenging to develop in a virtual classroom?

- Speaking
- Listening
- Writing
- Reading
- None of the above

9. How often do you feel anxious or stressed during virtual language classes?

- Very often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

10. What strategies do you use to overcome language learning difficulties in virtual classrooms?

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Section 3: Engagement and Performance

11. How motivated are you to participate in virtual language classes?

- Very motivated
- Motivated

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- Neutral
- Not very motivated
- Not motivated at all

12. How often do you actively participate (e.g., asking questions, contributing to discussions) in virtual language classes?

- Very often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

13. How do you perceive the level of interaction between students and teachers in virtual language classes?

- Very interactive
- Interactive

- Neutral
- Not very interactive
- Not interactive at all

14. What teaching strategies or tools used by your instructors do you find most helpful for your learning?

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15. How would you rate your overall academic performance in virtual language classes compared to face-to-face classes?

- Much better

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- Better
- The same
- Worse
- Much worse

16. What suggestions do you have for improving engagement and performance in virtual language classes?

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Appendices

2/ Teachers' interview

Introduction

This interview is part of our research on exploring language learning difficulties in virtual classrooms for EFL Master One students at UMMTO. Your answers will be helpful to carry out our research, they will be confidential and used only for academic purposes.

Thank you for your collaboration.

1. What subject do you teach?
2. What do you think about teaching your subject in a virtual classroom?
3. Have you ever received any training on how to teach online?
4. How important do you think training is for using virtual classrooms effectively? why?
5. Based on your experience, is accessing and using virtual classrooms easy or challenging?
6. What kind of teaching materials do you use in virtual classrooms? could you give some examples?
7. How would you describe your students' performance in virtual classrooms? can you share any observations?
8. In what ways does the virtual classroom help or make it harder for you to explain lessons and interact with students?
9. How do you encourage your students to participate in online classes?
10. What are the main problems you have faced while teaching in a virtual classroom?
11. What are the main challenges that EFL students face in virtual classrooms?
12. How would you describe your experience teaching English online? Would you say it's effective, difficult, engaging, or challenging? why?

3/ The Transcriptions of the Interviews

Interview 1

Question 1 :

What subject do you teach?

I teach three modules: translation, ethics and deontology and French

Question 2 :

What do you think about teaching your subject in a virtual classroom?

For me, teaching in a virtual classroom has two sides of the same coin. On one hand, it aims, like in face-to-face teaching, to achieve effective learning outcomes; it offers flexibility and accessibility for digital resources. On the other hand, it poses difficulties such as limited students' engagement, technical issues, and the lack of face-to-face interaction.

Question 3 :

Have you ever received any training on how to teach online?

Not yet,

Question 4 :

How important do you think training is for using virtual classrooms effectively? why?

I think an adequate training for using virtual classrooms plays a crucial role in highlighting digital literacy and explaining how to manage online tools. Besides, an effective training helps teachers reflect on and continuously improve their virtual teaching methods.

Question 5 :

Based on your experience, is accessing and using virtual classrooms easy or challenging?

Using a virtual classroom becomes easy with practice; however, it has several challenges like: technical issues, not all students have an easy access to internet; also, lack of skills can reduce interaction.

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Question 6 :

What kind of teaching materials do you use in virtual classrooms? Could you give some examples?

To structure lectures, we need to: some presentation tools like: power point, multimedia content like: video/ audio, word and pdf worksheet, we also need to different platforms like: zoom, google meet, Moodle...

Question 7 :

How would you describe your students' performance in virtual classrooms? can you share any observations?

As I said above, students in virtual classroom lack of interaction, they don't participate actively in discussions and they don't show enthusiasm, even when they participate, they don't communicate clearly their ideas.

Question 8 :

In what ways does the virtual classroom help or make it harder for you to explain lessons and interact with students?

Several factors can make the virtual classroom harder, we can mention: passive students who don't interact with the teacher's questions, long screen time could lead the students to lose motivation.

Question 9 :

How do you encourage your students to participate in online classes?

The teacher can overcome these challenges by asking students to summarize what they have learned, or give them tasks...

Question 10 :

What are the main problems you have faced while teaching in a virtual classroom?

Internet issues, classroom management (some students join the classroom late and leave early), limited interaction...

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Question 11 :

What are the main challenges that EFL students face in virtual classrooms?

They can face difficulties in listening and comprehension; also, the teacher can't catch every pronunciation or grammar mistake because of oral tasks.

Question 12 :

How would you describe your experience teaching English online? Would you say it's effective, difficult, engaging, or challenging? why?

Teaching online is both effective and challenging. It offers flexibility and creative methods. On the other hand, it is harder to keep students active and motivated because of lack of visual communication.

Interview 2

Question 1 :

What subject do you teach?

Last year, I taught Media studies. This year, I am teaching Digital Literacies.

Question 2 :

What do you think about teaching your subject in a virtual classroom?

I appreciated the experience as both Moodle and Google Meet offer teachers beneficial features for educators. I can share links, websites, videos, articles, and handouts. I can even share the screen with my students to explain or give examples.

Question 3 :

Have you ever received any training on how to teach online?

I had a pedagogical training in my inaugural year as an assistant. Therefore, I acquired the basics of both online and hybrid teaching prior to starting virtual teaching.

Question 4 :

How important do you think training is for using virtual classrooms effectively? why?

I consider the training to be substantial:

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It allows the teacher to create a lesson plan, identify the objective, and prepare his lesson.

It helps the teacher in identifying different available options in virtual classrooms, including the use of PowerPoint and websites, sharing Word/ Pdf documents, sharing videos or websites, and assessing their understanding.

It can enable teachers in managing their online classroom regarding teaching, participation and discussion.

Question 5 :

Based on your experience, is accessing and using virtual classrooms easy or challenging?

Accessing virtual classrooms is very easy; however, online teaching can be challenging due to the inability to see my students. Consequently, I have to ask them numerous times if the ideas are clear.

Question 6 :

What kind of teaching materials do you use in virtual classrooms? could you give some examples?

I often start with my PowerPoint presentation to explain the concepts and ideas. Subsequently, I move to the examples. For instance, we had a lesson entitled Digital collaboration, during which I showed my students the process of online collaboration. I shared my screen to show the use Google Classroom, Google Meet and Google Docs.

Question 7 :

How would you describe your students' performance in virtual classrooms? can you share any observations?

Last year, my MA students were engaged learners who actively participated and exchanged ideas. This year, the majority of my BA students are absent; however, the few present attempt to listen. They ask questions solely when they do not understand. (Note: most expressed dissatisfaction with the section, as they do not attend their classes)

Question 8 :

In what ways do does the virtual classroom help or make it harder for you to explain lessons and interact with students?

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The lectures in virtual classrooms seem easy to explain. The issue with BA students is their limited interaction with the teacher. They may ask two questions per session, asserting that everything is clear.

Question 9 :

How do you encourage your students to participate in online classes?

I typically ask them a few questions regarding the lecture or ask them to provide examples where suitable.

Question 10 :

What are the main problems you have faced while teaching in a virtual classroom?

The majority of the students are absent due to their lack of understanding of the significance of the content.

Question 11 :

What are the main challenges that EFL students face in virtual classrooms?

They may grapple with the lack of internet connection, the new content, or access to the platform.

Question 12 :

How would you describe your experience teaching English online? Would you say it's effective, difficult, engaging, or challenging? why?

The experience was positive, as I have different options in my virtual classrooms such as sharing the screen and recording the lecture. It was also challenging since I learnt new concepts, terms, websites, and digital tools.

Interview 3

Question 1 :

What subject do you teach?

Linguistics L1, E-learning M1 & M2, Critical Applied Linguistics

Question 2 :

What do you think about teaching your subject in a virtual classroom?

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It is an interesting and new experience. It allows both students and teachers to get familiar with and adapt to different learning environments.

Question 3 :

Have you ever received any training on how to teach online?

Yes, five years ago, but it was only one session

Question 4 :

How important do you think training is for using virtual classrooms effectively? why?

It is imperative for the novice teachers to receive appropriate training because they get the chance to be introduced to new technological tools.

Question 5 :

Based on your experience, is accessing and using virtual classrooms easy or challenging?

It can be challenging at first, but any first experience with a learning platform can feel weird and uncomfortable. Overcoming the challenges and difficulties is part of the process of learning and growing.

Question 6 :

What kind of teaching materials do you use in virtual classrooms? could you give some examples?

I use my personal handouts, worksheets and PowerPoint presentations. I use academic books and articles to plan my lessons.

Question 7 :

How would you describe your students' performance in virtual classrooms? can you share any observations?

My students value privacy and don't like to use their cameras, but when I ask questions I feel that most of them are very engaged.

Question 8 :

In what ways do does the virtual classroom help or make it harder for you to explain lessons and interact with students?

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I don't get to see their faces so I don't know whether they positively or negatively interact with the content, especially with the shy students. It's like teaching ghosts.

Question 9 :

How do you encourage your students to participate in online classes?

By asking questions. I encourage them to use the chatbox, the microphone, or even emojis. Any tool that makes them feel comfortable.

Question 10 :

What are the main problems you have faced while teaching in a virtual classroom?

No all students have easy access to the internet.

Most of the students use their phone since they don't own a personal computer, so when I give them an activity to do, they struggle with using Words, PowerPoint or any other software.

Question 11 :

What are the main challenges that EFL students face in virtual classrooms?

I already answered this question in (10), and the reason why I did so is because the students' challenges are the teachers' challenges.

Question 12 :

How would you describe your experience teaching English online? Would you say it's effective, difficult, engaging, or challenging? why?

It is not easy, nor is it perfect, but it is a risk that's worth taking. I don't think we should teach all the subjects online. That wouldn't be productive, but I believe we need to keep up this the changes the educational system is witnessing worldwide.

Interview 4

Question 1 :

What subject do you teach?

I teach ELT and communication

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Question 2 :

What do you think about teaching your subject in a virtual classroom?

Honestly, I prefer teaching Communication to Master One students in Language and Communication because they are very interactive. It is really hard to teach ELT for Literature (LID) Master students because it's not their favorite subject. I find Communication more interactive and engaging, which I enjoy more.

Question 3 :

Have you ever received any training on how to teach online?

No I do not

Question 4 :

How important do you think training is for using virtual classrooms effectively? why?

I think for both teachers and students. Because sometimes the platform is not that easy to be used. We are supposed to work on the platform of the university but the students struggle with it. So we work with Google Meet. So training is very important. It is must

Question 5 :

Based on your experience, is accessing and using virtual classrooms easy or challenging?

For me it is easy but sometimes we struggle with the students who forget for example to turn off their mic or something like that so there is a technical disturbance. Sometimes if the connection is very bad, the interaction is interrupted and so on, these are difficulties.

Question 6 :

What kind of teaching materials do you use in virtual classrooms? could you give some examples?

I usually use PowerPoint presentations that I send, sometimes I share my screen but I prefer to send it to the students because as I said sometimes the connection is bad like with the students and so on so they cannot see the screen. So I usually send the PowerPoint.

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Question 7 :

How would you describe your students' performance in virtual classrooms? can you share any observations?

Actually it depends on the students like Master language and communication students they are very great they interact they ask questions they are motivated and they are very organized they use even raise the hand in google meet and so on they don't ask randomly but concerning Master LAID students for module ELT as I said before I think it because they focus on literature for this case they are not interested, sometimes I don't even get answers when I ask them so lack of interactivity. It is lack of enthusiasm for the subject.

Question 8 :

In what ways does the virtual classroom help or make it harder for you to explain lessons and interact with students?

Like virtual classroom you can use more materials , you can use more links for example if the students struggle with something you can check on google meet at the same time , or you can send them a video or share your screen for that video and so on ,so it is how I can say it makes the teaching process easier if it is , but I insist on the training to make the students familiar with that platform and the teachers too.

Question 9 :

How do you encourage your students to participate in online classes?

I always ask them questions. Sometimes, when I see there is no interaction, I say like anecdotes or something like that. Just to try to attract their attention.

Question 10 :

What are the main problems you have faced while teaching in a virtual classroom?

Internet problems, students don't turn on their camera and it's a big problem, the mic, they turn it on ,they should turn it off, but they don't. So there is only an interaction. So you cannot know if the student is really there or not, there is no eye contact. You cannot see if the students are really interested, if they are bored, if they understood or not, and so on.

Question 11 :

What are the main challenges that EFL students face in virtual classrooms?

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Sometimes they do not have their own space, their own quiet space to work and so on. So you can hear a lot of noise in the background. So maybe the noise, maybe software problems, they are not very familiar with the platform. They do not know how to interact. Sometimes they do not even know how to have access to that classroom.

Question 12 :

How would you describe your experience teaching English online? Would you say it's effective, difficult, engaging, or challenging ? why ?

In our department it is effective and challenging in the same time it depends on the group it's like effective as I said with master students language and communication it was very effective like there was a lot of interaction but with master LID I don't think it was that effective and I even see that during their exams.

Interview 5

Question 1 :

What subject do you teach?

I teach several subjects. My primary subject is literature. I teach British literature for master's students, British and American literature and didactics of texts I also teach ethics and deontology.

Question 2 :

What do you think about teaching your subject in a virtual classroom?

I was reluctant in the beginning, but since we were obliged to follow it, I discovered its utility.

So now I do not have any problems. It's like in-person teaching.

Question 3 :

Have you ever received any training on how to teach online?

Yes, we were trained last year by our colleagues who were trained because they are new teachers and in order to be confirmed in their posts, they had to undergo this training and then they trained us.

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Question 4 :

How important do you think training is for using virtual classrooms effectively? why?

I think it is important because when you are a novice at something, you need to be trained to discover what is new and how to do it and so on. I learned from the training.

Question 5 :

Based on your experience, is accessing and using virtual classrooms easy or challenging?

For me, it's easy because I'm used to it. In our department, we use the e-learning platform along with Google Meet. I mainly use Google Meet to upload my course materials, as students tend to prefer it for virtual classes. So, I rely on Google Meet for most of my online teaching activities.

Question 6 :

What kind of teaching materials do you use in virtual classrooms? could you give some examples?

Yes, in didactics, I need to use teaching materials mainly texts since it's a tutorial-based course. I usually send the students the text in advance, so they have time to read it before the next session. Then, during class, we read and analyze it together. After that, I assign them homework based on the texts we studied.

Question 7 :

How would you describe your students' performance in virtual classrooms? can you share any observations?

there is problem here there are only few who participate but some have challenges sometimes it's the technology sometimes it's the connection sometimes also it's the location where they are.

Question 8 :

In what ways do does the virtual classroom help or make it harder for you to explain lessons and interact with students?

What makes it difficult is the lack of interaction sometimes I speak, but I don't even know if they're actually there in the classroom.

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Question 9 :

How do you encourage your students to participate in online classes?

I address students by name to ensure individual participation.

Question 10 :

What are the main problems you have faced while teaching in a virtual classroom?

Loss of internet connection and the electricity cuts off often and without electricity, there's no internet teaching stops completely.

Question 11 :

What are the main challenges that EFL students face in virtual classrooms?

I think will be same as my challenges.

Question 12 :

How would you describe your experience teaching English online? Would you say it's effective, difficult, engaging, or challenging? why?

I wouldn't give a definitive answer to this question. For me, online teaching is quite similar to in-person teaching I teach one theoretical course It's not focused on language, but for didactics, I use text to teach how to design and use materials because we train students to become English teachers.

Interview 6

Question 1 :

What subject do you teach?

I teach cognitive psychology and sociology of education, online using Google meet and UMMTO e-learning Platform.

Question 2 :

What do you think about teaching your subject in a virtual classroom?

Teaching these 2 courses online is not the same as teaching them in a traditional way. Teaching online has many advantages and disadvantages for the advantages I can mention the time and online tools and materials that can be shared directly with the student like using pictures and

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orienting students to online resources like videos or websites ... etc. For the disadvantage, I can mention the problem of the internet because some students can find difficulties (those who live in very isolated regions) internet is very expensive in Algeria and some students have not the means and they do not talk about it (Poverty).

Question 3 :

Have you ever received any training on how to teach online?

Yes, we have . All teachers have received training before the online course. The head of the department has organised 2 training days on online learning and teaching

Question 4 :

How important do you think training is for using virtual classrooms effectively? why?

Training is important to have a complete mastery of the options available on the platform as how to post courses online, create spaces for discussions, schedule a courseect.

Question 5 :

Based on your experience, is accessing and using virtual classrooms easy or challenging?

It was not easy at the beginning but justified many videos online on how to use the option we needed For our virtual classes.

Question 6 :

What kind of teaching materials do you use in virtual classrooms? could you give some examples?

For the Teaching materials, I use the course (the lesson) and I use highlighters to attract the attention of the students (in addition to pictures, orientations to websites, videos giving them concepts to explore online).

Question 7 :

How would you describe your students' performance in virtual classrooms? can you share any observations?

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Compared to traditional teaching students do not participate or their performance is very poor they are oriented to use all the options at their level like sending comments asks questions as in the normal classes but the majority stay silent and they prefer to say “ no questions “ “ its clear”’.

Question 8 :

In what ways do does the virtual classroom help or make it harder for you to explain lessons and interact with students?

I have no difficulaty to explain my courses online we have sometimes internet breakdowns due to internet itself or electicity but we need to be patient with these technical issues i managed to find solutions like having a second operator for the internet problem having a powerbank creating one virtual space for all courses (to not send links each time) we need find solutions instead of focusing on problems.

Question 9 :

How do you encourage your students to participate in online classes?

We invite students to ask questions at diffrent stages of the courses since i teach courses (not td sessions) we do not oblige them to participate

Question 10 :

What are the main problems you have faced while teaching in a virtual classroom?

Electricity / internet breakdowns (in some rare occasions) sometimes some students try to talk or ask questions so the platform attracts the noise which is outside.

Question 11 :

What are the main challenges that EFL students face in virtual classrooms?

They need to be motivated / find solutions like works in groups sharing courses.

Question 12 :

How would you describe your experience teaching English online? Would you say it’s effective, difficult, engaging, or challenging? why?

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Teaching online can be more effective as other normal courses with the motivation of the students , good internet connection speed that should be available for all students , more training for teachers