

Hybrid learning during the Pandemic: The case of Tlemcen university EFL learners

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Abstract

Education throughout the world has recently witnessed a dramatic shift from traditional teaching to what is commonly now known as online education. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, Algerian universities have been pushed towards a type of teaching that blends in-person and online learning known as hybrid teaching or learning. The main aim of this research is to explore the effectiveness of teaching through Moodle platform and then through the MS TEAMS application. This study extends through two periods. The results have shown that students did not benefit from Moodle lectures and admit they either did not log on to download their lectures or could not understand their content when they did. For the study of the second period, the researcher could decipher a kind of acquaintance to hybrid teaching on the side of some teachers and resistance from others, but nearly a generally negative attitude of learners towards synchronous online learning was uncovered.

Keywords: Asynchronous learning; Covid-19; Hybrid Learning; Moodle Platform; MS TEAMS Application; Synchronous Learning.

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1. Introduction

Zhang (2008) defines hybrid learning as a type of teaching and learning which focuses on maximizing students' learning in both traditional and digital learning contexts. It can also be referred to as 'blended learning. Rizal (2017, pp.177-191) points out that hybrid learning is a way of instruction that blends multiple models, such as face-to-face contact and distance education, using the available technological resources. However, Klimova and Kacetl (2015) present a myriad of instructional modalities used in hybrid learning, including in-person, web-based learning, and self-paced learning. It also involves different ways of media delivery through classroom sessions, web-based courses, video sharing, and Power Points.

Hybrid learning consists of the integration of two teaching modes which are in-person and online learning. In-person learning refers to any way of educational interaction which takes place in a face-to-face classroom setting. In-person classroom involves teacher-student interaction or peer-peer interaction. While Online Learning is a type of learning which has recently known progressive growth with the advent of internet access and the availability of computers at home and in school settings (Stickle & Hauck, 2006). Powel et al. (2004) point out that "Online learning has the potential to revolutionize education and removes many of the physical constraints of traditional learning" (p.6). Furthermore, Shiu & Lenhart (2004) mention that there is also a use of instant online platforms; that teacher can use in their classes, such as Zoom, Microsoft TEAMS, Google Classroom, and Google Meet. These platforms enable teachers to both share their course materials with students and to interact with them from a distance either synchronously or asynchronously (Masalimova et al., 2021; Uzunboylu et al., 2022).

Peacock et al. (2012) speak about the characteristics of Online Synchronous Learning (OSL) and clarify that "An OSL consists of hardware and software components which support auditory, visual, and textual channels of communication through Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP)". In addition to this, Web conferencing, webinars, webcasting, and virtual classrooms are terms also used to describe online synchronous learning settings. An OSL is therefore supposed to render teaching and learning easier through the immediate use and sharing of documents, worksheets, slideshows, pictures, and video recordings. Besides, Peacock et al. (2012) define OSL to be a web-based computer-mediated communication (CMC) application that allows learners and teachers to instantly meet and interact virtually.

Online Asynchronous Learning (OAL) mode, however, is done through a set of interactive communication platforms that enable students to communicate with their teachers and collaborate with their classmates outside the classroom. Kunin et al. (2014, pp.856-866) mention that the asynchronous style can include taped lectures, and documents that may be used by learners at their pace. Students could also send questions to their lecturers and consequently receive feedback from them.

1.1. Conceptual Background

People's lives around the world have lately been impacted by the appearance of a virus scientifically labeled under the appellation of Covid-19 and which has spread like a bushfire throughout the globe and caused millions of affected people. Up to date (01/11/2022), worldometers.info reports 311,276,406 cases among which 260,831,633 recovered cases and 5,514,049 deaths. The rapid contamination that characterizes the virus led governments to think about ways how to minimize its spread meanwhile finding a vaccine that will completely eradicate it. In the first place, complete lockdowns around the world had been imposed on populations, which led to closing schools and universities then as days went on and the first contamination waves started to weaken, a partial lockdown was adopted and learners started to go back to their classrooms.

Thus, as part of the safety measures protocol, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has during the first lockdown opted for total online teaching to close up the second semester of

the year 2019/2020. During this period, teachers at the university of Tlemcen, the department of English, were provided with an online platform called Moodle where they were asked to insert their lectures' handouts as distant teaching support to their learners staying at home. The whole operation was carried out by the head of the department who was the only one having access to the platform and was allowed to upload the documents and classify them in the platform according to the different levels Licence1, Licence2, Licence3, and Master1, henceforth, (L1, L2, L3, M1) and the different subjects respective to each level. Students and teachers alike could only visit the platform to see and download the lectures and the activities put there.

However, during the second period of the lockdown alleviation, universities were allowed to re-open their doors to learners to rejoin their classroom seats. Yet, because of the huge numbers of adult learners attending courses at universities and because of their multi-origins since coming from different regions in Algeria and some universities in different countries, a strict sanitary protocol was adopted to welcome them for the 2020/2021 university year. Students were only allowed to access university buildings in waves. The first wave which extended from 12/15/2020 to 07/01/2021 included L1 and L2 students. The second wave took place from 01/09/2021 to 01/28/2021 and involved L1 and M2 level students, while the last wave included L1, L3, and M1 students and was held from 01/30/2021 to 02/18/2021. During this period, L1 students had to sit for continuous on-site learning as they used to come twice a week for nine successive weeks. It is to note that L2, L3, M1, and M2 students had to come thrice a week for three successive weeks to attend their lectures onsite. Yet, the waves of students who were not concerned with continuous on-site learning were invited to attend synchronous online lectures through the Microsoft TEAMS application. Consequently, teachers were asked to carry on and complete their teaching with their respective groups of students from a distance. Thus, both teachers and students found themselves in front of a *fait accompli* never confronted before which is a hybrid teaching/learning situation.

As the pandemic persists, sanitary regulations have been maintained by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to protect students, teachers, and administrative staff's lives. Thus, the actual academic year 2021/2022 is noticing the same hybrid way of teaching /learning as the year before, still in waves, but this time the waves come weekly instead of every three weeks. Thus, for the first week L1 and M2, the second week L1, M1, and L3, and the third week L1 and L2, and it goes on like this in a cyclical way throughout the whole semester where L1 students attend their lectures continuously throughout the weeks on Mondays and Wednesdays, while the other levels have one week of in-person learning, on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, and two weeks of online learning on the same days and the same timings as in-person schedules, too.

1.2. Purpose of Study

The main objective of this research is to explore the effectiveness of teaching through Moodle platform firsthand and then through the MS TEAMS application and in-person learning at second hand. It also aims at depicting third-year EFL teachers' and learners' views of hybrid learning and the constraints that faced while presenting and attending lectures online. To this respect, we have opted for a deductive (top-down) approach (Riazi & Candlin, 2014, pp.135-173) to carry on this research adopting a mixed-method approach combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis to shed light on learning English at the Department of English in Tlemcen University during the actual Covid-19 pandemic.

To carry on this research three main questions were put forward to shape the study:

a-To what extent was Moodle asynchronous teaching /learning during the first complete lockdown effective?

b- What constraints have faced teachers and learners while using the MS TEAMS application to teach from a distance?

c-What attitude do L3 teachers and learners have toward hybrid teaching/ learning?

2. Materials and Methods

The actual paper is an exploratory study divided into two periods: the first one studied the online teaching period imposed by the total lockdown sanitary protocol and involved all the students of the English department by collecting data through questionnaires that were sent to all students of the department during the complete lockdown period, more exactly in June 2020. However, the second one is an attempt to get insights about hybrid learning and see how effective it is with L3 students and how teachers do perceive it.

As already mentioned before, the study extends through two periods of time. The first one was concerned with students' online learning through the university Moodle platform and this phase extended from April 2020 to September 2020.

2.1. Data Collection Instrument

To collect data about how the process went during that period, a questionnaire was sent through Google forms to (L1, L2, L3, and M1) students on 06/26/2020 and was closed on 07/14/2020. Master Two (M2) students were excluded from this study as these students do not have any formal lectures during the second semester, instead, they have to write a memoir under the tutoring of a teacher supervisor. The questionnaire contained questions about whether or not learners used to log on to the platform to retrieve the lessons that were uploaded on the platform since the first days of the lockdown, and the extent to which they could study by themselves and without direct assistance of their teachers while being confined at home. The second period of the study was concerned with researching only (L3) students who have had nearly three years of online/ onsite learning. This category of students had the bad luck of studying during the Pandemic from its beginning while they were first-year students and had to endure its consequences for four semesters up to now and should have to carry on this way for their License sixth semester.

2.2. Participants

The number of informants in the first period was 802 students from all levels, except the M2 one, whereas for the second phase they were 77 (L3) students and 13 (L3) teachers who also provided us with data about hybrid learning through online questionnaires.

3. Results

3.1. Part One: Complete Lockdown and Asynchronous Learning through Moodle Platform

3.1.1. Section One: Participants' Gender and Asynchronous Learning

Among the 802 participants who took part in study 258 (32,16%) were first-year students which is the highest rate in comparison with the other levels, followed by L3 students 207 (25,82%), L2 students 177 (22,06%) and Master One students 150 (18,70%). It can be highlighted that 185 (20,07%) students were boys and 607 (75,68%) were girls while 10 students (1,25%) did not unveil their gender.

When asked whether they followed their lectures put on the university Moodle platform, 417 (52%) students said they did and 377 (47%) admitted they did not and the rest of the students did not provide feedback to this question.

However, when asked about the extent to which they had managed to grasp their lectures put on Moodle Platform, the researcher wanted to have insights about the ability of students to learn and grasp the lectures while studying alone at home during the first complete lockdown. Results are displayed in table 1.

Table 1

Students' ability to learn on their own

Approximate percentage of grasping the lessons	AF	RF
100%	10	1,24%
75%	56	6,98%
50%	164	20,44%
25%	186	23,20%
00%	165	20,58%
No answer	221	27,56%
Total	802	100%

Among all those who admitted they had retrieved their online lectures from Moodle, only 10 students (1.24%) claimed they had managed to grasp and understand 100% of their lectures without the help of their teachers, 56 students (6.98%) said they could grasp 75% of their lectures and 164 students (20.44%) claimed they could understand 50% of their lectures. The striking remark is that 186 (23, 20%) said that they could understand only 25% of the lectures. The two last categories of respondents did not retrieve their lectures from the platform and thus were not concerned by this question and did confirm that fact by saying that they either did not understand 165 students (20.58%) or did not even answer the question 221 (27.56%).

3.2. Part Two: Lockdown Alleviations and Hybrid Learning

3.2.1. Section One: Learners' Attitude towards Hybrid Learning

In this part of the study, students' attendance to online learning is analyzed altogether with their attitude towards in-person and online learning. It is mentioned that among the 77 L3 students who took part in this study, 61 were females (79, 23%) and 16 were males (20, 77%).

Item One: How often have you so far been able to follow your courses through MS TEAMS?

This question aimed to know if students did sit for their online distant lectures. The results are shown in Table 2 below

Table 2

Attendance to MS TEAMS Synchronous lectures

Frequency	AF	R/F
Always	18	23,38%
sometimes	31	40,25%
Rarely	24	31,17%
Never	04	05,20%
Total	77	100%

The data gathered in the table show that 18 (23,38%) of the respondents admit that they always sit for their lectures presented through Microsoft TEAMS by their teachers, which represents nearly a quarter of the total number of students taking part in the study. However, 31 (40, 25%) admit that they sometimes attend the courses and 24 (31, 17%) said they rarely do. This gives insights about the lack of punctuality of (71, 42%) of the respondents in attending their lectures and this might have a serious impact on the quality of their learning process, not to mention the four (05, 20%) of them who recognized they never attended the lectures. When this last category was asked about why they never sat for their online lectures they gave different reasons among which was the fact that online learning was not meant for them due to bad internet connectivity and the lack of adequate learning tools such as personal computers and smartphones. Some students complained about teachers' non-respect for their teaching schedule, and this, according to them, generates a kind of boredom that impacted their motivation to attend online

lectures. In addition to this, some students find online learning not interesting since they cannot participate during the lecture the way they do when in-person learning.

Item Two: How do you find online learning?

This question was asked to have some feedback about how students found and what they think of their online learning experience. The data collected are displayed in the table 3 below.

Table 3
Students' Attitude towards Online Learning

Attribute	AF	RF
Enriching	03	3,90%
Motivating	09	11,69%
Frustrating	13	16,89%
Boring	24	31,16%
A waste of time	28	36,36%
Total	77	100%

The data displayed in the table above show that the majority of students 65 (84, 41%) have a negative attitude towards online learning, while 12 (15, 59%) have a positive one. When later on asked about what they thought of Online learning, this attitude was confirmed as most of the students reported rather unpleasant online learning experiences among which are the following extracts:

Student One: *'Our teachers are always late, they often have internet problems so the lesson stops in the middle, they keep repeating the same things without sharing a background so we can follow with them, it's just a black screen with a teacher talking non-stop for 1h and a half. I don't think this is the best idea to share information, it's like literally listening to the radio.'*

Student Two: *'waste of time, we are in L3 and it's been two years that we are studying this way, we studied only the first semester of the first year normally and in the right way, but after that our level is not the one that should be, you would say that we have to learn by myself, yes I do but is not like a doctor who is the source of knowledge and provide me with a lot of information so that I can extract mine, this online learning and waves program is ruining our student's journey.'*

All students' comments on online learning went on like this and had negative connotations about it except eleven students who manifested a positive attitude and claimed that they enjoyed this learning experience. This nearly total negative attitude was even reinforced when they were asked to give their opinion about in-person and online learning. The results are shown in table 4 below.

Item Three: Online learning is by far much better than in-person learning.

This question was meant to cross-check the data gathered through the previous question.

Table 4
Online Learning vs. In-person Learning

Options	AF	RF
Agree	03	3,9%
Agree	05	6,49%
I don't know	06	7,79%
Disagree	22	28,57%
Totally disagree	41	53,25%
Total	77	100%

The data displayed in the table above confirm what has been found before as 63 (81, 22%) students do not find online learning better than in-person learning. They argue, in response to a question asked to them later on, that they faced many challenges during online learning among which is the slow internet

connection which most often causes abrupt link cuts from the side of the teacher or the learners. They also raised the issue of teachers' inadequate competence in handling online courses through the TEAMS application in addition to teachers' lack of respect for the online lecture teaching schedule. Some students complained about their inability to follow a teacher explaining his/her lesson without sharing with them his slides and very often they do not even see his face. They also complained about the lack of interaction between the teacher and the students, as well as among students themselves as is the case during in-person learning. Not the least is the home learning environment which generally does not favor serious learning and concentration as there are too many influential factors such as home distractions that prevent one from focusing on his lectures.

Item Four: In-person learning is by far much better than online learning.

This question was asked to have some feedback about what they thought of in-person learning in comparison to online learning. The answer to this question is displayed in table 5 below.

Table 5

In-person Learning vs. Online Learning

Option	AF	RF
Totally agree	49	63,6%
Agree	20	26,00%
I don't know	04	5,2%
Disagree	03	3,9%
Totally disagree	01	1,3%
Total	77	100%

The data displayed here show clearly that most of the students 69 (89, 6%) prefer in-person learning, which is nearly the same rate as the students who showed a negative attitude towards online learning.

Item five: Hybrid learning is a very effective way of learning.

This question aimed at gathering data about what students thought of hybrid learning. Table 6 summarizes students' Attitudes toward Hybrid Learning.

Table 6

Students' Attitude towards Hybrid Learning

Option	AF	RF
Totally agree	06	7,8%
Agree	12	15,6%
I do not know	33	42,9%
Disagree	19	24,7%
Totally disagree	07	9,00%
Total	77	100%

Hybrid learning in our study is that which blends in-person and online learning and not another type of hybrid learning as made clear by (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004, pp. 95-105) "Hybrid or blended learning refers to a combination of face-to-face learning, including but not confined to lectures, and online learning", and this has been made clear beforehand to the respondents so that they know what they are supposed to comment in response to the item above. Yet, their answers seem to be a bit unexpected as 33 (42, 9%), could not give their opinion about it, they represent nearly half of the total sample population. This, however, does not affect our insights into the learners' attitude towards hybrid learning as the data collected throughout the questionnaire show clearly what the learners think of it. Despite all that, we can point out that 26 (33, 7%) of the students do not believe that hybrid learning is an effective way of learning, while 18(23, 40%) do.

3.3. Section Two: Teachers' Attitude towards Hybrid Learning

This part of the study is concerned with teachers' attitudes towards Hybrid learning during the 2021/2022 first semester. It is worth mentioning that 6 out of the 19 L3 teachers who were concerned by the study did not respond to the questionnaire through reminder e-mails sent to them all together with the Google Forms link which leads directly to the questionnaire. The reasons behind this reluctant behavior was not identified and no comments could be drawn.

Item One: How many classrooms in-person lectures have you taught during this 2021/2022 first semester?

This question aimed to know the number of in-person sessions performed by teachers to compare them with those done online. L3 students' in-person attendance protocol dictates they should attend lectures for four weeks and eight weeks are devoted to online learning, which makes a total of twelve hybrid sessions for each subject.

Table 7

In-person Teaching Sessions

In-person sessions	AF	RF
One session	00	00 %
Two Sessions	1	7,70%
Three sessions	00	00%
Four sessions	4	30,76%
Five sessions	2	15,38%
Six sessions	6	46,16%
Total	13	100%

Table 7 shows that 4 (30, 76%) teachers have completed the four in-person teaching sessions scheduled to be done. However, 2 (15, 38%) said they taught five sessions, and 6 (46, 16%) said they taught six in-person lessons. Yet, while asked what pushed them to perform five or six sessions while they were only asked to do four, the 8 (61,54%) teachers justified that those in-person teaching sessions were extra lectures planned out of the L3 students' learning schedule imposed by the sanitary protocol sent by the Ministry of Higher education and Scientific Research. They also said that those in-person sessions substituted the online ones.

Item Two: How many online lectures have you taught during this 2021/2022 first semester?

This question aims at knowing whether or not teachers delivered online sessions and the reasons that pushed them not to do in case they did not.

Table 8

Online Teaching Sessions

Online sessions	AF	RF
One session	00	00%
Two Sessions	1	7,70%
Three sessions	4	30,76%
Four sessions	2	15,38%
More than Five sessions	3	23,07%
None	3	23,07%
Total	13	100%

The data displayed in table 8 above show that 3(23, 07%) of the respondent teachers delivered five or more lessons, and 2 (15, 38%) L3 teachers delivered four online sessions which is a more or less acceptable rate in comparison to the scheduled ones. While the standard deviation of 5 (38, 46%) teachers is below the mean. The real problem is that 3 (23, 07%) of the teachers did not deliver any online lectures. These are the reasons why they did not deliver online lectures as given by the teachers themselves:

Teacher One: *In-person Syllabus was designed and lectures were delivered accordingly.*

Teacher Two: *Lack of readiness and eagerness.*

Teacher Three: *Oral Expression sessions are scheduled as in-person classes since it is very difficult to perform them online.*

Teacher one declaration confirms the findings described above, which is planning extra on-site lessons as a substitution for the online ones. While teacher two raises the issue of lack of readiness and eagerness, unfortunately, this issue is ambiguous since it is not clear which of the learners or the teachers are not ready and eager for such kind of learning. Finally, the third teacher recognizes that it is difficult to teach oral production online and this might be the case with all the teachers of this skill at all levels.

Item three: Using the Microsoft TEAMS application to teach online requires formal training.

This item aims to know if teachers believe they need formal training on how to use the MS TEAMS application before using it in their lecture delivery.

Table 9
MS TEAMS Training

Options	AF	RF
Totally agree	01	7,70%
Agree	09	69,23%
I don't know	00	00
Disagree	03	23,07%
Totally disagree	00	00%
Total	13	100%

Nearly all the respondent teachers 10 (76, 93%) do agree that using the MS TEAMS application to teach online requires formal training. While 3 (23, 07%) do admit that it does not. Yet, when asked if they attended any training about how to teach online using the TEAMS application 7 (54%) teachers said they did and 6 (46%) said they did not. Thus, if we take into consideration the number of teachers who believe formal training is compulsory, then having (46%) of the teachers who admit they did not have any will be problematic as this would either end up in an inappropriate way using it or can even generate a resistance towards using this new learning tool from the side of the teachers.

Item Four: How did you find online teaching?

This question was asked to unveil how teachers found online teaching and consequently check their attitude towards it. Table 10 displays teachers' Online Teaching Attitude.

Table 10
Teachers' Online Teaching Attitude

Options	AF	RF
Enriching	2	15,38%
Useful	8	61,53%
Tiring	2	15,38%
Boring	00	00%
Time-consuming	00	00%
Useless	00	00%
No answer	01	07,69%
Total	13	100%

After all, one can notice through the data displayed in the table above that most of the teachers have a positive attitude towards online teaching as (61,53%) find it useful and (15,38%) consider it to be enriching. However, (15, 38%) declare that it is tiring and thus, showed a negative attitude towards it.

Item Six: Online teaching is by far more effective than classroom in-person teaching.

This question was meant to check teachers' attitudes toward online teaching in comparison to in-person teaching. Results are shown in table 11.

Table 11

Online Teaching vs In-person Teaching

Option	AF	RF
Totally agree	00	00%
Agree	00	00%
I don't know	2	15,38%
Disagree	7	53,84%
Totally disagree	4	30,76%
Total	13	100%

Even though teachers have a positive attitude towards online teaching, still, 11 (80,60%) of them do not find it better than in-person teaching. This was confirmed in another question where the same number of teachers (80,60%) claim that in-person teaching is by far better than online teaching. However, like in item six and as displayed in the table above, (15, 38%) of the respondents did not show their opinions on both types of teaching.

Item Seven: Hybrid teaching is an effective way of teaching.

This question tries to find out what teachers think of hybrid teaching. Results are displayed in table 12.

Table 12

Teachers' Attitude towards Hybrid Teaching

Options	AF	RF
Totally agree	5	38,46%
Agree	5	38,46%
I don't know	2	15,38%
Disagree	1	7,69%
Totally disagree	0	00%
Total	13	100%

Though most teachers found in-person teaching far better than the online synchronous one, 10 (76, 92%) of them see that blending the two types is an effective way of teaching. Still, it is worth mentioning that 2 (15, 38%) of the respondent teachers could not give their opinion about the question, and 1 (7, 69%) teacher has a negative attitude towards it. This attitude was later on confirmed when the informants were asked what they thought of hybrid learning and where they nearly gave positive feedback about it. Here are some of their opinions:

T.1-*Hybrid teaching is useful today as online meetings are of utmost importance in complementing on-site sessions. Indeed, many pedagogical tools are only available online, including instant sharing of documents and videos. Another positive feature online is the possibility of recording sessions that students refer to whenever they feel the need, including those who do not attend.*

T.2-*It is effective and useful if taken seriously.*

T.3-*Online teaching is not a substitute for on-site teaching. It is rather complementary. -Hybrid teaching is effective as it can be done on-site and from the home, even at a late time when the teacher/students are not restricted by any constraints - we should adapt to hybrid teaching to keep with the ongoing changes worldwide.*

These are a few examples of teachers' opinions about hybrid teaching, mostly all the remaining comments follow the same reasoning.

Item Twelve: What constraints have hindered your online teaching?

This question aims to detect the difficulties faced by teachers while teaching online. The qualitative data collected here may lead us to propose some solutions to the revealed problems that hinder the proper use of MS TEAMS to teach online.

While analyzing the data, it has been noticed that 9 (69, 23%) respondent teachers raised the problem of Internet connectivity either as being very slow or the sudden cuts that take place while presenting the lecture. Another issue mentioned by teachers is that of students' attendance which according to 7(53, 84%) teachers, is very low. Another problem that faced teachers was the difficulty to involve students to take part in the lecture. This issue was raised by 3(23, 07%), who confirmed finding problems to interact with their students as well as making their students interact with each other. The lectures were just one-way delivery they admitted and no pair or group work activities could be performed online.

4. Discussion

Throughout the data collected in this study, it was noticed that Moodle asynchronous teaching /learning during the first complete lockdown period was nearly completely not efficient as among the 802 respondents 417 (52%) students said they followed their lectures uploaded on the platform and 377 (47%) admitted they did not and the rest of the students did not provide feedback to this question. Yet, even though a large majority of the students declared they had retrieved their lectures for self-study at home, only (1.24%) of them could understand the whole lectures without the assistance of their teachers, and the vast majority declared that they had faced problems understanding the content of the lessons and recognized that it had been difficult for them to study alone far from their teachers. Contrary to what Kunin et al. (2014) explain, the problem faced by the students under focus during this period is that Moodle platform provided no interactive options that enable students to get in touch with their instructors and receive instant feedback from them. All students could do was download the lectures and the activities that were uploaded by the head of the Department who was the only one who had access to the platform to insert the lectures sent by teachers (Pratama, Dewi & Susilowati, 2022).

As for the second period where lockdown alleviations were applied and during which students could go back to their university seats and at the same time study at home through the MS TEAMS application, better reactions to this hybrid teaching/learning way in comparison to Moodle Asynchronous learning have been noticed as students could attend in-person lectures and consolidate their knowledge from a distance. Nevertheless, students and teachers alike complained about some technical problems which hindered the process of learning/teaching. As for teachers, they showed their deliberate wish to formal training in this new means of online teaching as they admitted that they encountered some technical problems while using it and that they could only make use of some limited teaching options that TEAMS could offer them. Teachers and students alike complained about the issue of the weak Internet flow and its repeated sudden cuts which impacted lectures delivery. Another inconvenience raised by lecturers is that of students' attendance rate (53,84%) which, according to teachers, was very low. This fact was also raised by Butler and Sullivan (2007) in their study besides the difficulty of involving students to take part in the lectures as (23, 07%) put forward the impossibility of interacting with students as well as making students interact with one another. This finding went counterpart to what Meydanlioglu and Arikan (2014) claimed that online learning was more likely to favor group interaction, competitiveness, teacher interaction, and freedom, in comparison to in-person interaction. In addition to that, Knowledge delivery was just one way, from sender to receivers. Not least, most students did not like the way teachers deliver the lectures as they said they were annoyed from sitting in front of a black screen listening for one hour or more to a voice on the other side of the line without sharing their screens with their students. This situation engendered a feeling of isolation from the side of the individual learner and plunged him into a kind of despair and a loss of motivation to learn online. So again here, what was found during the study proved to be the opposite of what Chen and Chiou (2012) stated that students in a hybrid course had a

better feeling of belongings in online learning classrooms than in traditional classrooms (pp.485-496). This might have one interpretation, which is teachers' technological illiteracy to use such teaching platforms in such a way as to make students benefit from them fully.

When asked about hybrid learning, students showed a kind of resistance to it as 65 (84, 41%) of the respondents manifested a negative attitude to it and that was, according to them, mainly due to the side of online learning which was a frustrating experience to them. There is one student who went very far in his argumentation against hybrid learning while he declared that they had been studying for two years in this way and that this online and in-person by-waves learning was ruining their journey as EFL learners. Here again, this study has given different results to what Park (2011) found in her study that hybrid teaching using new technologies give students a pleasant learning experience. She also says delivering classes 50% online, and 50% in-person showed to be an effective teaching technique, rather than delivering 100% in-person classes only (pp.6-9). As for teachers, a kind of acquaintance to hybrid learning has been unveiled as (76, 92%) of them see that blending the two types is an effective way of teaching as the MS TEAMS application provides them with tools that can help them share documents and videos with their students and students can even record the teaching session to listen to it another time when they are free. Likewise, Humbert and Vignare (2005) conducted a pilot case study, and they integrated hybrid learning at Rochester Institute of Technology, US. They reported beneficial outcomes as students showed that they enjoyed hybrid learning. They also believed that their teachers assisted them with a wide range of teaching styles and materials.

5. Conclusion

This exploratory research has enabled the researcher to come to the conclusion that studying during the Covid-19 pandemic period had been a tough experience for both teachers and learners. This was mainly because neither teachers nor learners have been ready for such a learning context and that they both found themselves in a *fait accompli* situation which forced them to cope with these new teaching/learning techniques in the best way they could. In the same context, there are significant challenges for both teachers and learners. They claim that the use of hybrid learning environments is challenged by lack of students attendance, lack of students engagement and interaction, demotivation, and students dissatisfaction with learning.

In addition, students develop a sense of social isolation. Many students reject online distance learning programs and choose them when they are not left with other alternatives to learning. Yet, it is worth mentioning that learners have been negatively affected during this period and that their learning and knowledge construction has automatically been affected too. This is why it would be wise that institutions take students' and teachers' problems that they faced while teaching/learning in a hybrid way. More challenges are necessary to be addressed such as the difficulty and cost of technology, and the lack of teachers and students training on the use of technology . Both students and teachers should be encouraged to employ synchronous learning for its feasibility, as it involves interaction within its process . Finally, it is recommended that remedial actions should be taken with these affected students who had disturbed moments of learning which will affect their exit profile if not reinforced.

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