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MASTER

Applied Linguistics

**Importance of Online learning Platforms and the Use of web 2.0
Technologies in higher Education**

**Case Study: first Year LMD Students in the Department English at
Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University-Mostaganem -Algeria**

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Dedications

I dedicate this work to my parents who are the most important persons in my life. I would also like to dedicate this project work especially to Dr. Dallel Sarnou.

My dedication goes further to my entire family and friends not forgetting my compatriots and all foreign students living in Algeria who really helped me.

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ABSTRACT

This research work is an attempt to analyze the implication and the impacts of the use of online learning platforms and web 2.0 technologies in higher education. The sample population is a group from first year students (Master-Applied linguistics) of the English department of Mostaganem/Algeria. We will try to reveal how and to what extent online learning platforms and web 2.0 technologies could enhance successful learning at university level. To reach those objectives, the respondents (first year students Master one) were asked to fill some questionnaires about the main issues. The results revealed that many respondents have relative background knowledge on the use of online learning platforms in learning. They believe that the use of online learning platforms has an important role in education. It will facilitate learners' access to the outside world and to reinforce learning. Online learning platforms offer an opportunity to master some of the technological device of our generation. On the basis of the weaknesses noticed this research formulate some recommendations at the end, like the fact of creating and including more and more online learning platforms in education to reinforce it. Finally, this research work is an attempt to improve the development of the use of online learning platforms and web 2.0 technologies in education process.

List of Abbreviations

RSS: (Really Simple Syndication)

EFL: (English as foreign language)

USA: (Unity States of America)

PDF: (Portable Document Format)

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Almost all learners' activities are frequently based on the use of technologies in education.. The application of these technologies encompasses all aspects and processes of education that include the use of online learning platforms in learning. That's why studies are undertaken to understand the use of online learning platforms and web 2.0 technologies in education. This research can be defined in terms of application as an applied one because it attempts to bring learners to the application of online learning platforms in order to enhance learning process. Besides, it allows learners (first year students' Master applied linguistics) with different ways to integrate online learning platforms in their learning process.

In order to reach those objectives, the current research work will be around the following question:

What is the implication of online learning platforms in education?

What are the impacts of online learning platforms in education ?

Since the research is an exploration of phenomena we will try to test the following hypotheses

- Using online learning platforms can reinforce the access to learning materials.
- The application of online learning platforms can be have some advantages and limits in education.
- Online learning cannot fully replace the personal contact with a teacher.
- Online learning cannot be creating the human relationship that is developed in group practices in traditional system.

The research work is divided into three main chapters; the first one will be the review of literature. It will give room for main theories related to the information about the subject in general. This chapter is focuses on the value of online learning platforms can enhance learning in higher education.

The second chapter is devoted the practical one. In this chapter, data from the research tools will gather and analyze. It deals with the results of the different questionnaires administrated to the learners. Besides, it gives information's about the objectives, the methodology followed in the research work, the approach, the participants and the data tools.

Third chapter entailed discussion and recommendation will be the last one. It will give room to a deep analysis of results through the discussion. And finally we will provide some useful recommendations based on the weaknesses seen.

Chapter one: A Theoretical Background of the study

Introduction

In this chapter, the reader will find a framework and background information about the subject in general. This information will make him/her familiar with the use of online learning platforms in education. It will pave the way to a better understanding of the applied part of this paper that will follow in the second chapter. Because there is no practice without science, it seems to be important to have a theoretical base that would guide readers of the research work.

According to klabnik, (2012), there is always a tension between theory and practice. He continues claiming that these two separate realms are connected through a process of abstraction and application. Theory deterritorializes practice, and practice reterritorializes theory: a theory which is a becoming-practice and a practice which is a becoming-theory. To explain this relationship by way of practice, theory is an abstracted practice, and practice is applied theory.

The value of online learning depends on a number of different factors, and therefore the chapter focuses particularly on the appropriate conditions necessary for a successful use of online learning in distance education.

1.1 A Brief History of E-learning

The recent explosion in e-learning is the result of a series of innovations over the last two decades. Thanks to technical inventions in the 1990s, e-learning has been popularized by the development of a new business model.

In the scope of globalization we have to ask whether there can be a global culture without global information. And therefore, we may question the existence of global information in a world without global education. Thus, the two theories are complementary thanks to the application of e-learning.

The first teaching online started in the early 1980s, based on the invention of computer conferencing by **Murray Turoff in 1970**

(Hiltz ¹Turoff, 1978, p.43. Computer conferencing enables asynchronous communication between dispersed individuals. Asynchronous means that the users can communicate at any time, because messages from all participants are centrally stored, ordered and accessible on demand. Early computer conferencing depended on local computer networks, usually a single institution.

One of the first institutions to offer teaching through computer conferencing was the New Jersey Institute of Technologies in the USA. Using specially designed computer software called 'Virtual Classroom', between 1985 and 1987 Roaxonne Hiltz and Murray Turoff constructed' a prototypical virtual classroom, offering many courses fully or partially online'. (Hiltz, 1990, p.134²).

¹ Hiltz ¹Turoff, 1978, p.43

² Hiltz, 1990, p.134

Today, we can say that e-learning is mostly delivered through the internet, although in the past it was undelivered using a blend of computer-based method like CD-ROM. Technology E-learning gives the opportunity to the learners to share materials in all kinds of formats such as video, slideshows, word documents and PDFs and then, communicating with the professors via chat and message forums is also an option.

By the early 90s several schools had been set up, delivering courses online, making the most of the internet and bringing education to people who would not previously have been able to attend a college due to geographical or time constraints. Technological advancements also helped educational establishments.

In the 2000's, businesses began using e-Learning to train their employees. New and experienced workers alike now had the opportunity to improve upon their industry knowledge base and expand their skill sets. At home individuals were granted access to programs that offered them the ability to earn online degrees and enrich their lives through expanded knowledge.

Technological determinism affirm that “the belief that social progress is driven by technological innovation, which in turn follow an “inevitable course” Smith, 1994; p3³

³ Hiltz, 1990, p.134

1.2 What is web 2.0?

According to Tredinnick (2006⁴) the term “web 2.0” has been circulating for many years. It exploits computing conventions through decimal notation indicating major and minor software upgrades. Metaphorically, web 2.0 is major software upgrade to the World Wide Web.

O’Reilly (2005⁵) presented web 2.0 as the second stage in the development of the web technologies, superseding the predominantly publishing model of many web-based information applications and services. Information and services are become more dynamic, and more sensitive to the user activities. Web 2.0 is presented as a process to assign control over application to the users, it’s enable the users to give extract information, data, and its reuse in a flexible way, and enabling them in the process may be even to change the structure of the information system itself. (O’reilly,2005,p-1).

Miller (2005⁶) described that web 2.0 is about the development of modular information services, where developers and users are able to build applications from practical modules.

⁴ Tredinnick,L. (2006) web 2.0 and Business : A pointer to the intranets of the future ? Business Information Review, 23; pp. 228-234

⁵ O’Reilly,Tim. (2005) ‘what is web 2.0 ? 10TH March 09

⁶ Miller, P. (2005).’web 2.0 : Bluiding the New Library’. Ariadne 45: 10th March 09.
<http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue45/miller/intro.html>

1.3 Key web 2.0 technologies (services)

These technologies are represented by (podcasting, blogs, and wikis, tagging and social bookmarking) which are commonly used among the students and teachers in higher education. However, these services are not only used by the students, teachers and others university staff, but also by building blocks of the technologies, tools and open standards which are used over the internet. Other examples of services include blogs, wikis, and multimedia sharing services content syndication, podcasting and content tagging services.

Many of these applications of web 2.0 technologies are relatively mature; they have been in used for a number of years, although new features and capabilities are being added on a regular basis. Many of these further technologies are sequences, for example, they make use of existing services. In this division, web 2.0 technologies are being introduced to make the ground for further research work in this field.

According to O'Reilly (2005⁷), web 2.0 refers to a loose collection of “second general” web-based technologies and services that are designed to facilitate collaboration and sharing between users. Its use covers a wide range of technologies and context. Kennedy et al. (2007⁸) provide the comprehensive list of web 2.0 technologies. There are number of “stone” technologies and services that most students and teachers are familiar with, but it has been focused on the most popular

⁷ O'Reilly, Tim. (2005) 'what is web 2.0 ? 10th March 09
<http://campustechnology.com/news/article.aso?id=156> (viewed 06 Apr 2009)

⁸ Kennedy et al. (2007). The Net generation are not big users of web 2.0 technologies : preliminary findings. In: Proceedings Ascilite Singapore, pp. 517-525.)

web 2.0 technologies in higher education such as podcasting, blogs, wikis, tagging and social bookmarking.

1.4 podcasting

According to Anderson (2007⁹⁹), podcasting describes the distribution of digital media files both audio and video by using syndicated internet feeds. These are usually in MP3 format to record the talks, interviews and lectures, which can be played either on a desktop computer. Users give to individual feeds by providing the feeds address to a software application called an aggregator. Apple's iTunes are perhaps the most readily recognized aggregator and RSS (Really Simple Syndication) and Atom is the second most widely used feed formats. Whenever new contents get available, the aggregator automatically downloads the podcast and stores it alongside other media files originating from the same feed.

Anderson (2007) describes RSS (Really Simple Syndication) as a family of formats which allow users to find actually having to go and visit the site. Instead, information from the website is collected within a feed which uses the RSS format and "piped" or toot to the user in a process known as syndication.

1.5 Blogs

The term blog was made-up by Jorn Barger in 1997 and refers to a simple webpage consisting of brief paragraphs of opinion, information, personal diary entries, or links, called posts, arranged chronologically with the most recent first, in

⁹⁹ Anderson, P (2007) what is web 20 ? Ideas, technologies and implication for education, JISC technologies and standards watch, pp. 1-64

the style of an online journal (Doctorow et al..., 2002¹⁰). Most blogs allow visitors to add a comment below a blog entry.

This posting and commenting process contributes to the nature of blogging (as an exchange of view) in what Yale university law professor, Yochai Benkler, calls a “weighted conversation’ between a primary author and a group of secondary comment contributors, who communicate to an unlimited number of readers. It also contributes to blogging’s sense of immediacy, since’ blogs enable individuals to write to their web pages in journalism time that is hourly, daily, weekly – whereas the web page culture that preceded it tended to be slower moving: less an equivalent of reportage than of the essay’ (Benkler, 2006, p.217¹¹)

Duffy and Bruns (2006¹²) present some possible uses of blogs in education.

Within a personal academic perspective a blog can support:

- Manifestation on teaching experience
- Categorized descriptions of resources and methodologies for teaching
- Ramblings regarding professional challenges and teaching tips for other academics
- Illustration of specific technology-related tips for others colleagues.
- A common online present for unit-related information such as calendars, events, assignment and resources
- An online area for students to post contact details and queries relating to assessment.

¹⁰ Doctorow et al (2002). Essential blogging. O’Reilly.

¹¹ Benkler, 2006, p.217

¹² Duffy, p and Bruns, A(2006). The use of blogs, wikis, and RSS in education : A conversation of possibilities. In: proceedings og the online learning and teaching conference 2006, Brisbane: September 26. (Accessed 17 april 2009).

Within a pedagogical perspective a blog support

- Comments based on literature readings and students responses
- A collaborative space for students to act as reviewers for course-related materials
- Images and reflections related to industry placement
- An online gallery space for review of works, writings, etc, in progress ,making use especially of the commenting feature
- Teachers encouraging reactions, reflections and ideas by commenting their student's blogs
- Development of a student portfolio of work.

The following potential benefits are identified by learning specialists Fernette and Brock Eide described by Duffy and Bruns (2006¹³).

- Blogs can promote critical and analytical thinking
- They can promote creative, intuitive and associational (creative and associational thinking in relation to blogs being used as braistoming tool and also as a resource for interlinking, commenting on interlinked ideas).
- They can promote analogical thinking
- They have potential for increased access and exposure to quality information
- They are the combination of solitary and social interaction

Blogs provide platforms for individual expression and also support reader commentary, critique and inter-connexion as subsequent steps.

¹³ Duffy, p and Bruns, A(2006). The use of blogs, wikis, and RSS in education : A conversation of possibilities. In: proceedings og the online learning and teaching conference 2006, Brisbane: September 26. (Accessed 17 april 2009

1.6 Wikis

According to Anderson (2007¹⁴), wiki is a webpage that can be easily edited by anyone who is allowed to access. This collaborative website like Wikipedia is most popular specially among the university students and teachers for group activity. Wiki can admit large numbers of pages. Effective navigation within a wiki usually depends on the extensive use of hyperlinks and robust search routines. Media wiki and wiki software are the power of Wikipedia and many other high-profile wikis. Wiki features include easy editing, versioning capabilities and article discussion.

Unlike blogs, wiki generally have a history function, which allow previous versions to be examined, and a rollback function, which restores previous versions. Proponents of the power of wiki cite the ease of use of the tools, their extreme flexibility and open access as some of the many reasons why they are useful for group working said by (Ebersbach et al., 2006, Lamb, 2004¹⁵).

Fountain (2005) present a survey of wiki uses in education and suggest several additional uses of wikis such as co-creating, co-monitoring project as collaborative concept.

Duffy and Bruns (2006¹⁷) present list of several possible educational uses of Wiki:

¹⁴ ¹⁴¹⁴ Anderson, P (2007) what is web 2.0 ? Ideas, technologies and implication for education, JISC technologies and standards watch, pp. 1-64

¹⁵ Ebersbach et et al.,2006, Lamb,2004

¹⁷ Duffy, p and Bruns, A(2006). The use of blogs, wikis, and RSS in education : A conversation of possibilities. In: proceedings og the online learning and teaching conference 2006, Brisbane: September 26. (Accessed 17 april 2009

- Students can use a wiki to develop research projects, with the wiki serving as ongoing documentation of their work.
- Students can add summaries of their thoughts from the prescribed readings, building a collaborative annotated bibliography on a wiki.
- A wiki can be used for publishing course resources like syllabus and handouts and students can edit and comment on these directly for all to see.
- Teachers can use wikis as a knowledge base, enabling them to share reflections and thoughts regarding teaching practices, and allowing for versioning and documentation.
- A wiki can be used as a presentation tool in place of conventional software, and students are able to directly comment on and revise the presentation content.

Duffy and Bruns (2006) describe few potential educational benefits of wikis.

1. wikis offer an online space for collaborative authorship and writing
2. Using wikis, students can easily create simple websites without prior knowledge or skill in HTML, programming or current software used for website authoring, thus eliminating the time overhead necessary to develop these skills
3. The organizations adopt the wiki for internet and external collaboration and information; work with wiki at university level builds crucial skill for the workplace.
4. It allows teacher and learners to see the evolution of written task.
5. It can be very useful for tracking and streamlining group projects.

1.7 Tagging and social Bookmarking

A tag is a keyword that is added to a digital object like: website, picture or video clip to describe it, but not as part of a formal classification system. One of the first large-scale applications of tagging was with the introduction of Joshua Schater's del.icio.us website, which initiate the social bookmarking 'phenomenon.

Social bookmarking systems share a number of common features

(Millen et al. 2005¹⁸). They allow users to create lists of **bookmarking** to store these centrally on a remote service **rather than within the client browser** and to share them with other users of the system **social aspect**. These bookmarking can also be tagged with keywords, and an important difference from the **folder** based categorization used in traditional, browser-based bookmarking lists is that a bookmark can belong in more than one category.

1.8 Knowledge building by using web 2.0 technologies

Throughout web 2.0 eras, Educational approaches have been changing in response to some technologies developments that mainly influenced collaborative rather than individual investigation in learning process. The main purpose of education is defined by Scardamalia and Bereiter (2003, p.102¹⁹), **“need to educate people for the knowledge age society, in which knowledge and innovation are pervasive”**.

Web 2.0 technologies play a principal role in today's educational system. According to Fountain (2005²⁰), he said that, the advantages and limits of web 2.0 technologies in education have a great impact in learning across worldwide. This is aggravated or compounded by the fact that there is very little reliable, original

¹⁸ Millen et al 2005. Social bookmarking in the enterprise. ACM Queue, nov 2005. Available online at: <http://www.acmqueue.com/modules.php?name=content&pa=showpage&pid=pid=344> (last accessed 12/02/07°.

¹⁹ Bereiter (2003, p.102)

²⁰ Fountain.R.(2005) wiki pedagogy. Dossiers pratiques.Profetic, Available at : <http://www.profetic.org:16080/dossier/dossiers-imprimer.php3?id-rubrique=110> (last accessed 30/03/ 09

pedagogic research and much of the experimentation using web 2.0 applications within higher education has focused particularly on wiki and others specialist research domains rather than learning and education.

Scardamalia and Bereiter (2006, p.97²¹), argued that the new idea **knowledge of knowledge** create enough educational implications “**ours is a knowledge-creating civilization**”. A growing number of **knowledge societies** are joined in a deliberate effort to advance all frontiers of knowledge said by **Stehr (1994²²)**.

Knowledge building is a process that can be affecting through teaching and learning processes where web 2.0 technologies are used. **Knowledge building** represents an attempt to refashion education in a fundamental way, so that it becomes a coherent effort to initiate students into a knowledge creating culture **argued by (Scardamalia and Bereiter, 2006, p.98²³)**. In web 2.0 technologies, students are not only developing knowledge-building but also, they are coming to see themselves and their work as part of the civilization-wide effort to lead knowledge paradigm. In this context, web 2.0 technologies tools and applications over the Internet have more influence on educational processes, both teaching and learning , particularly in higher education (Scardamalia and Bereiter, 2006).

Scardamalia and Bereiter (2006²⁴) formulate prominent advantages of knowledge of knowledge building “**it is an educational approach that provides a straightforward way to address the contemporary emphasis on knowledge creation and innovation**. They consist of outside the scope of most constructivist

²¹ Bereiter (2006), p.97

²² **Stehr (1994**

²³ **Bereiter, 2006, p.98**

²⁴ Scardamalia. M. and Bereite, C. (2006) Knowledge building : Theory, pedagogy, and technology. In K. Sawyer (ED.), Cambridge Handbook of the Learning Sciences, pp 97-118.

approach, whereas they are at the heart of knowledge building” (Scardamalia and Bereiter, 2006, p.99²⁵). They elaborated on key themes in which students are treated as learners, inquirers and members of a knowledge building community.

1.9 Teaching and learning

Learning and teaching are the major potential area of web 2.0 technologies (podcasts, blogs, wikis, and tagging and bookmarking) that this research specifically focuses.

According to Owen et al. (2006²⁶) presented the report about emerging technologies and discuss in the context of parallel, developing trend in higher education.

There are so many universities working with web 2.0 technologies (podcasts, blogs, wikis and tagging and bookmarking) in higher education.

According to Alexander (2006²⁷), he believed that in present higher education systems, wikis application can be useful as writing tools that aid composition practice, and that blogs are particularly useful for allowing students to follow stories over a period of time and reviewing their changing nature. Web 2.0 technologies (podcasts, blogs, wikis and tagging and bookmarking) have an impact in learning. They are playing a key role especially in high education where the pedagogy is based on conversations and learning content.

²⁵ bereiter, 2006, p.99

²⁶ Owen,et al (2006) social software and learning. Bristol, England; pp.1_64

²⁷ Alexander, B (2006) web 2.0 : A new wave of innovation for teaching and learning. EDUCAUSE Review. Vol. 41 (2), pp. 32-44 Updated version available online at: <http://www.educause.edu/apps/er/erm0621.asp> (last accessed 30/03/09

As well as podcasts is concerned, it is used in Medical education to advance countries. According to Brown and Adler (2008²⁸), put forward some example such as Medical and health-related podcast which is included at the New York university ophthalmology CME (Continuing Medical Education) programs. Health-related podcasts are also available for patients and general public.

1.10 From web 2.0 to Education

In general, web 2.0 offers students' new opportunities to take more control of their learning and to create personalized information, resources, tools and services. Web also encourages a wider range of expressive capability, to facilitate more collaboration way of working, creates a setting for learners, dialogue and knowledge sharing to attract authentic audiences.

According to Brown and Adler (2008) said that web 2.0, which has emerged in just the past few years, is sparking an even more far-reaching revolution in higher education. Tools usually are being used for educational purpose such as social networks, tagging systems and some more popular such as podcasts, blogs, and wikis are example of a new user-centric information infrastructure that emphasizes participation (e.g.: creating, sharing, re-mixing) over participation, that encourages focused conversation.

The dominant approach to education focused on helping students to construct knowledge and cognitive skills that could be deployed later in appropriate situation. This approach to education worked well in a relatively stable, changing world in which careers typically lasted a lifetime. But the twenty-first century is quite different (Brown and Adler, 2008).

²⁸ Brown, J. S. and Adler, R.P. (2008) Minds on fire : Open education, the long Tail, and learning 2.0, EDUCAUSE Review, vol. 43 (1) pp.1-19

Conclusion

At the end, it is a question of willingness of people and the media to come together around interactive concepts. I hope that the use of e-learning is on the way of a good future. One good example of web 2.0 placed learning is the American university MIT. This university puts all its web course content online, free of use for anyone to go and see. This is in the spirit of the web. The courses are accessible for all, regardless of where one is hooking up to the web. It also find out the implication, and impact of the use of online learning platforms and web 2.0 technologies in education throughout some web 2.0 technologies such as (podcast, wikis, blogs; and tagging and social bookmarking).

In reality, we really believe that online learning platforms and the use of web 2.0 could be one solution to lifelong learning. The easy access and not being constrained by certain times and certain places makes it ideal for those in the workforce to participate in web based learning.

CHAPTER II: Methodology and Data Presentation

Introduction

This chapter, as the completion of the first one that dealt with theory, will constitute the practical side of this research work. It will be the space where we will try through a concise methodology to check the hypotheses raised at the beginning. In this chapter, we intend to discover learners' views about online learning platforms and the use of web 2.0 technologies in education. The current chapter will also deal with the degree of learners' familiarity with the use of online learning platforms in education and way they suggest for their implementation in EFL classroom. This research targets especially the learners of the first year Master of English in Department in Mostaganem/Algeria.

As the second part of the research work, this chapter will expose the results of questionnaires that have been addressed to a given number of learners (30) Master one of the English Department of Abdehamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem in Algeria.

2.1 Objectives of the research

This research work is an attempt to discover the online learning platforms and the use of web 2.0 technologies in education especially the students of first year master in English Department of Mostaganem. For instance, the method we used to attain our objectives in research are discussion and information which are provided by the participants to know: first, the types of web 2.0 technologies students prefer; The second objective is to focus on the importance of the use of online learning platforms in education; the third is to find out how online learning platforms are used in classroom context and the last is to mentioned the advantages and the disadvantages of the use of online learning platforms in education.

2.2 Methodology

In this section, we will describe the research approach, and then we will introduce the different participants who were engaged in it. Later, we will describe the data collection tool and finally we will present the results that were obtained found from the questionnaire.

2.3 Research approach

For this research, the qualitative approach has been chosen because we are dealing with a case study in which numerical data are not the focus. Instead a great deal of information required is more qualitative. We intend to discover new information, views and ways of doing things.

2.4 Participants

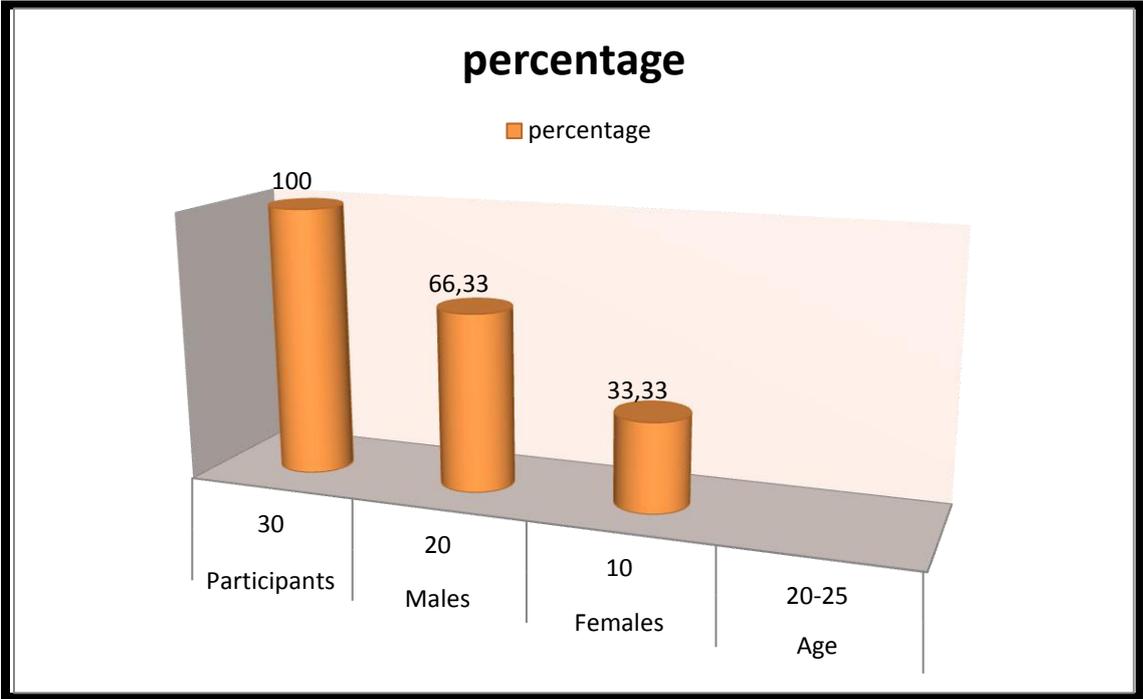
The participants in this study were first year master learners of the English department of the University of Mostaganem/Algeria (applied linguistics). The total number of the students is 30 divided into males (20) and females (10). This choice is made in order to get different opinions by means of the enlargement of information in our case study.

In addition, a non judgment sampling technique was employed to select a representative sampling of the subjects in this study. The participants aged from 20 to 25 years old, were selected as a sample to fill in the questionnaires.

The following table shows the characteristics of the learners participating in the research

Table 1: Participants' background

		Percentage
Participants	30	100
Males	20	66,33
Females	10	33,33
Age	20-25	



Graph 1: The characteristics of the learners participating in the research

2.5 Data collection tools

Questionnaires are the data collection tools that have been used in this research. The entire questionnaire was addressed to the students of the first year master applied linguistics in English department of Mostaganem (Applied linguistics). See the questionnaire in appendixes.

2.6 Data presentation

The learners' questionnaire was designed with the intention to know their views about the use of online learning platforms in education. It started with general question about students' gender. The rest of questionnaire was devoted to research issue.

Firstly, students were asked to classify the types of online learning platforms according to their preferences from the most important to the least one in the following list:

(a)Google maps; (b) youtube; (c) wikis; (d) blogs; (e) podcasts; (f) social bookmarking (g) instant messaging; (h) moblogging; (i) vlogging.

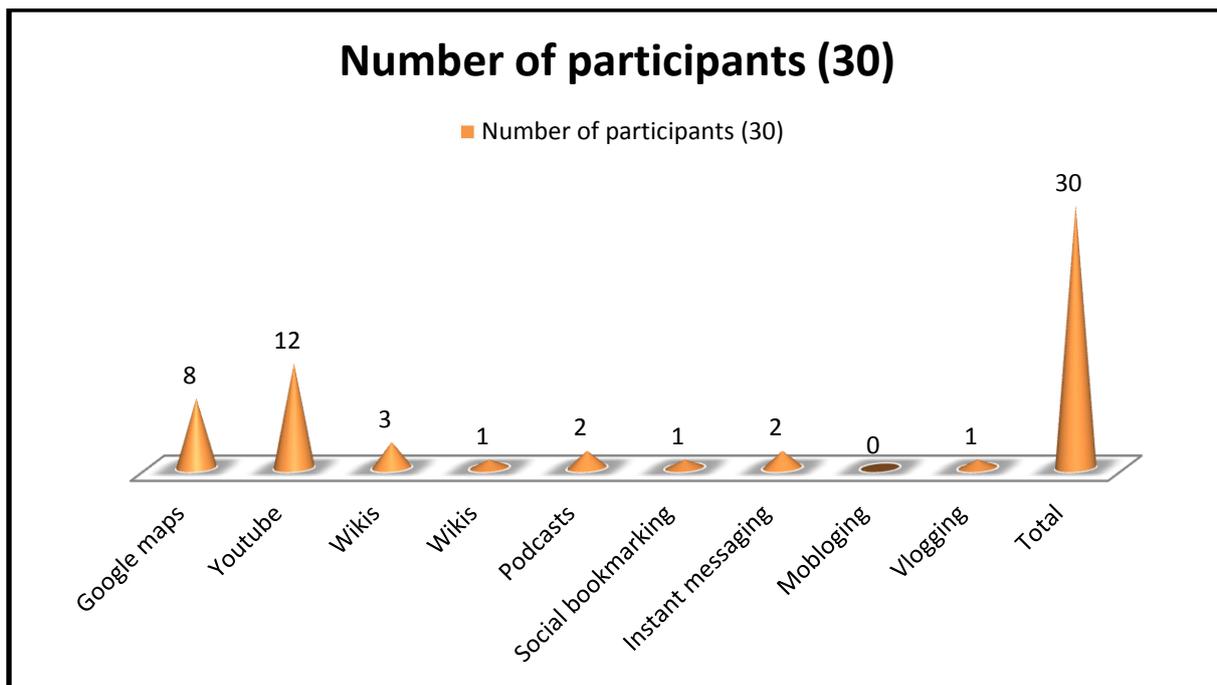
Students were also required to answer some questions like: Is the use of online learning important at university level? Can using online platforms reinforce learning? By checking yes or no with justifications; and then, how could be used online learning platforms in classroom context? They were asked about to list some advantages and disadvantages of the use of online learning platforms in education.

2.7 Classification of the types of online learning platforms

This study guides us to classify the types of online learning platforms in education according to students 'views.

Table 2: students' classification of online learning

Types of online learning platforms	Number of participants (30)
Google maps	8
Youtube	12
Wikis	3
Wikis	1
Podcasts	2
Social bookmarking	1
Instant messaging	2
Moblogging	0
Vlogging	1
Total	30



Graph 2: Classification of the types of online learning platforms

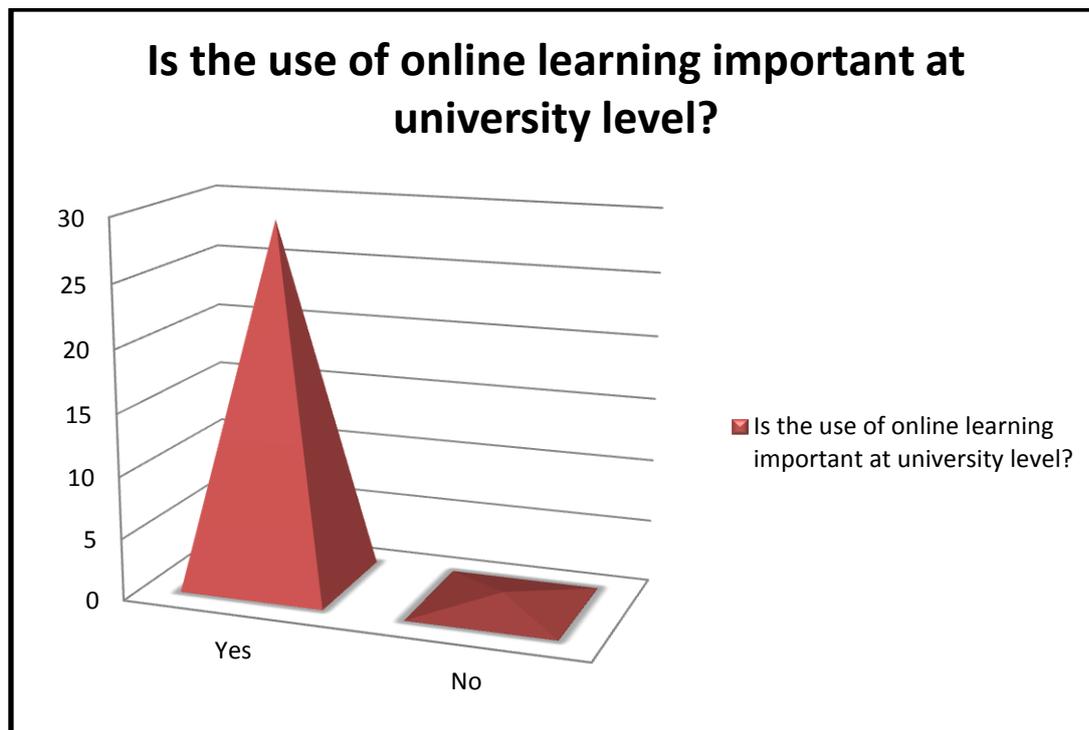
Through the results of the students, it appears that **YouTUBE** is more preferred than the rest of online learning platforms in the list in learning. More than twelve participants (12/30) prefer **Youtube** than the others. And more than nine participants prefer **Google maps (the first year student of applied linguistics)** in learning too. The rest of the types of online learning platforms are not used too much according to participants.

2.8 The importance of the use of online learning platforms at university level

In this part, the objective is to find out the importance of the use of online learning platforms at university level.

Table 3: The importance of the use of online learning platforms at university level

Question	Yes	No
Is the use of online learning important at university level?	29	1



Graph 3: The importance of the use of online learning platforms at university level

Students' responses reveal that the majority of our participants believe that online learning platforms are quite important at the university level because, most of the educational materials are digitalized and easily accessible nowadays. It is easy to find the information one is looking for; one also gains in time, makes less efforts and spends less money. Besides, internet is more available nowadays than before. It offers an opportunity to master some of

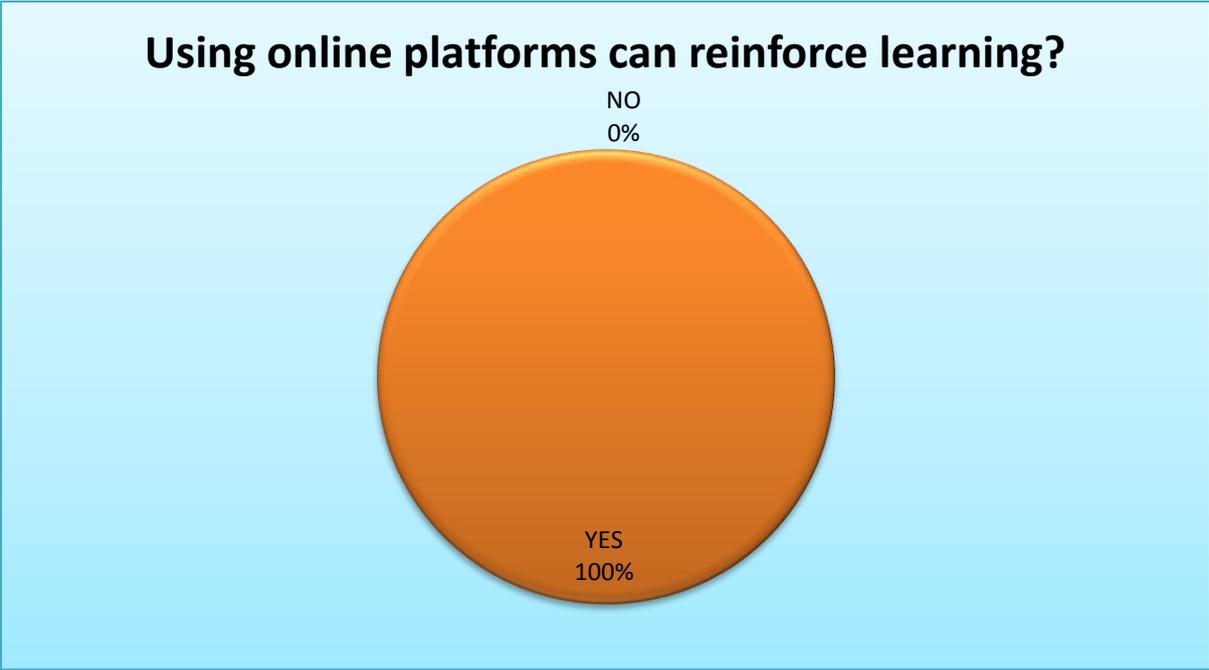
technological devices of our generation. “Digital learning opens up the scope and possibilities for education and training and enhances the learning experience”, says Tony Hicks.

2.9 Impact of online learning platforms on learning

The objective is to know if the use of online learning platforms can reinforce learning

Table 4: Using online platforms reinforce learning

Question	YES	NO
Using online platforms can reinforce learning?	30 (100%)	0 (0%)



Graph 4: Online learning can reinforce learning

Through the answers of the students, we deduce that all of them agree that using online learning can reinforce the learning process. They argue that online learning can be adapted to many learning styles and strategies. They kept information for a longer durability

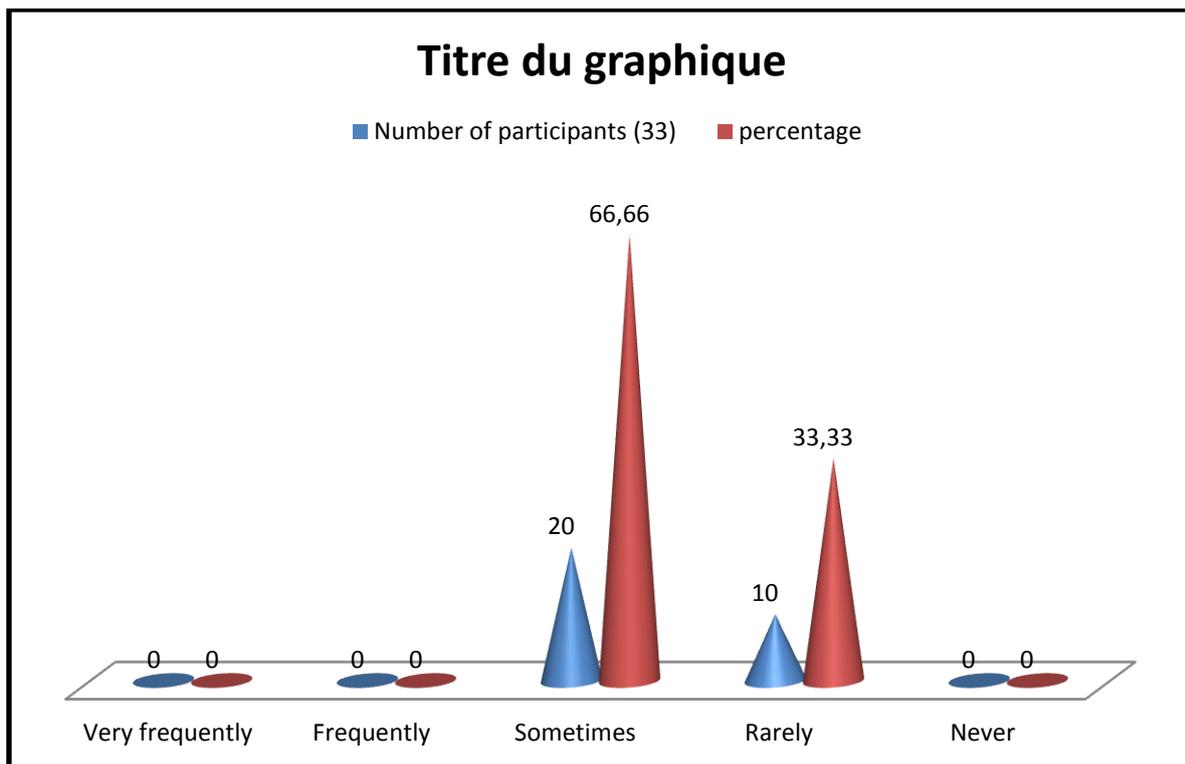
and they are exploitable to a greater extent. They eliminate the usual face to face barriers like shyness and getting informed vis- a- vis the outside world.

2.10 Degree of familiarity of the use of online learning in the classroom

The objective is to know the degree of the use of online learning platforms in the class context.

Table 5: Degree of familiarity of the use of online learning in the classroom

Degree of familiarity of the use online learning in the classroom	Very frequently	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Number of participants (33)	0	0	20	10	0
Percentage	0	0	66,66	33,33	0



Graph 5: Degree of familiarity of the use online learning in the classroom

Concerning the degree of familiarity of the use of online learning platforms in the classroom; many participants believe that the use of technologies grows regarding to the evolution of nations. In Africa, the use of online learning platforms at the university level is growing more and more. But it's far from the case of developed countries these technologies are much more used like (Japan, South Korea, USA and so on). Our case study done at the English department of Mostaganem University reinforces the view.

The participants approved that using online learning platforms in classroom can reinforce learning. They improve students' oral skills and create a good setting for students to express themselves. The use of online learning platforms in classroom improves the diversity of teaching and learning methods. For example implementing the use of computers in classroom; creating face book pages where some educational materials will be shared, using Google maps as supports for classes could ameliorate the learning process.

2.11 Advantages and Limits of the use of online learning platforms in education

According to the participants use online learning platforms is very helpful in education. They provide huge quantity of data. They allow more involvement of the students and enhancement of their creativity. It conducts students to be less dependent from the university's schedule and they are time saving. Another supporting idea is that online learning brings autonomy. Students don't need the teachers help to be informed. And it allows the students to go deeper in the research they need in education.

About the limits of the use of online learning platforms in education, the respondents said that students may be tempted to be interested in others things than learning. Example they can manipulate facebook during classes, looking video in youtube. These practices can impact the learning process. And another limit is that only a few people have access to the new technologies due to the expensiveness. At school, student learns how to make friends, be patient, get rid of disappointment, and especially to compete. The competition between colleagues can be so stimulating and students will only benefit from it. Therefore online learning can limit human interaction.

Conclusion

At the end of this chapter, we realize that the participants (first year master students of English department of Mostaganem/Algeria) are very eclectic in terms of the use of online learning platforms in education. The totality of the answers leads us to say that online learning platforms and the use of web 2.0 technologies are quite useful. They should be seen as complements and extensions of classical forms of learning (i.e. face-to-face learning). Not even the best online course can fully replace the personal contact with a teacher, or the human relationships that are developed in a group work. So, traditional classes should not be replaced by online learning platforms in education context, they should be added to them.

Chapter III: Analysis, Discussion of findings and Recommendations

Introduction

In this chapter, we will discuss and analyze the results of our research. After that, we will make some recommendations. And we will comment and interpret the results of the questionnaires. The discussion will mainly be on, classification of the types of online learning platforms (thank to learners responses), the importance of the use of online learning platforms at university level, impact of online learning platforms on learning, degree of familiarity of the use of online learning in the classroom. We will end up with advantages and limits of the use of online learning platforms in education.

The recommendations will be opportunities to suggest solutions to the main issues, and new ways of doing things for better results.

In our case, discussion and recommendation will play an important role which allows us to know the participants opinion and give the suggestion vis a vis the use of online learning platforms in education

3.1 Classification of the types of online learning platforms

Concerning the classification of the types of web 2.0 technologies by the participants, the results show that the majority prefer to use **google maps** and **youtube** in learning process. This reaction proves that in term of using web 2.0 technologies, the participants prefer these two types than the others.

According to the participants, they found that the applications of YouTube and Google maps are easier and more interesting than the rests, especially for higher educational institution. **Google maps** and **YouTUBE** give opportunities for learners to go deeper in the research of information.

3.2 The importance of the use of online learning platforms at university level

All the participants affirm that using online learning platforms is essential at university level, because, most of the educational materials are digitalized and easily accessible nowadays.

Online learning platforms play a large role in many aspects of day-to-day life, and its importance for education is undeniable. Online learning is rapidly changing the way students learn and how instructors teach at university level. There are many reasons for the growth of higher education online learning for both the institutions and students perspectives. Globally, the demand for post-secondary education (e.learning) is increasing at university level. With the limited capacity of existing classroom at academic institutions and the prohibitive cost of building new facilities, online learning platforms is an attractive alternative.

Another importance is that learners can exchange or share information between themselves and their teachers to improve the quality of learning.

The best things about online learning are that you can learn in a relaxed manner even if you don't want to get certified. You only need passion for learning and a quick online search that will take you to the right course. From that point on, you will be the master of your own education.

3.3 Impact of online learning platforms on the learning process

Regarding, the respondents' answers about the impact of online learning platforms on learning, all of them believe that using online learning can reinforce learning process.

Many suggestions were given by the learners concerning the impacts of the use of online learning platforms on learning process. It means the participants see many reasons that make online learning more effective when the purpose is to create new knowledge in a crowd-sourcing mode. That gives the learners an opportunity to build off of each other's concepts, strategies and responses as they develop new responses to complex learning challenges. When the learners become co-creators, they simultaneously deepen their personal knowledge and skill. They expand the universe of information and understanding that become available to others.

Until our days, it is regrettable that although this is the most powerful mode of online learning platforms, it is often used in traditional school into 21st century learning organizations, where we fully embrace all the learning purpose and modes in education.

Another suggestion of participants said that online learning becomes more and more commonplace; instructors and learners also become more and more available to the use of online learning platforms in education.

3.4 Degree of familiarity of the use of online learning in the classrooms

Concerning the degree of familiarity of the use of online learning platforms in the classes, many respondents approve that the use of online learning in classroom can reinforce learning process. They suggest many arguments like: it improves students' capacity to think hardly and create a good setting to express them. One good example is, in our class, we set up a **group on facebook** to exchange information and files between us. This group is considered as a working tool between the learners and teachers.

As learning management systems, online learning platforms provide us external knowledge. It offers an interface for caring out even the most basic tasks, like viewing course materials and submitting work. One could also think of these platforms as digital classroom

where most online learning and teaching take place. This section explains what learning management systems do, how they impact learning and how to get the most from them.

According to the participants, in African education, the use of online learning platforms at the university level is growing more and more. But, it is far from the case of developed countries there is much more used like (USA, Canada, Japan, South Korea etc).

3.5 Advantages and limits of the use of online learning platforms in education

In the respondents' views, online learning platforms are an opportunity for learners to learn with comfort and success. But, there are some limits or disadvantages in the use of online learning platforms in education. The participants noticed that, although online education has some limitations, it has several advantages. Online learning or **e.learning** may be the greatest revolution in today's education.

Although many people still consider traditional universities as the best way to achieve knowledge and get a diploma, online learning is becoming a great alternative. Students have the chance to study in their own time and especially for free. It represents a great way to study many fields and to boost the level of self-motivation. Online learning is so effective because students can finish their homework quickly, and there is more time left for hobbies or for finding a job.

Access too many resources of traditional courses online allow students to learn wherever they are in a free way from this device. They are free to dispatch their time between studies and leisure. With basically an internet connection, a person can attend different courses. Among the advantages online learning, there are responsibility and self-discipline of students.

About the limits of online learning platforms in education, the respondents said that students may be tempted to be interested in others things like chatting with friends while learning. Example they can be using facebook or be watching video on youtube during the class. These practices can impact the learning process negatively. Online learning can also be difficult, if it is meant for disciplines that involve practice.

online learning should be seen as a complement and extension of classical forms of learning. Definitely, we can assume that despite its numerous advantages, online learning cannot fully replace the personal contact with a teacher, or create the human relationships that are developed in group practices in traditional classrooms.

3.6 Recommendation for Further Research

Suggestions for further research emerged from the findings of this study. Firstly, to get more general results, more participants should be undertaken in the research so that the outcomes could be more reliable and more important.

The recommendations are mainly the fact of creating and including more and more online learning in education to reinforce the capacity of learners at university level. And finally we suggest that provide some useful ways be created to implement the use of online learning in educational systems.

3.7 Limitation of the study

The major sources of limitation in this research were first the limit of time which hinders we to get more participants included in the research and which does not give enough time to use more research tools. The second one is the lack of documentation such as books and other means of documentation. There was another difficulty which was students' availability in order to get the task (questionnaire) back and well completed/answered.

Conclusion

This chapter was devoted to the analysis and the discussion of the results obtained from the questionnaire. Indeed, the study results showed how and which degree online learning is important in education, especially for first year students at Mostaganem University, Department of English.

General Conclusion

This research work aimed to find out the impact and implications of the use of online learning platforms and web 2.0 technologies in education system. We can assume at the end of this research that the use of online learning platforms and the web 2.0 technologies are very important for both teaching and learning. It's a complementary material tool that is very essential for all disciplines.

This opinion has been shared by the majority of the participants who think that the use of online learning platforms is very helpful in educational system. Besides the research was an opportunity to know the difficulties of the first year students of Mostaganem University in the term of using online learning platforms in the classroom. And it allows reinforcing the capacity of the comprehension of learners.

The research revealed the degree of familiarity of the participants to the use online learning platforms. In fact, the first year master students of the English department of Mostaganem that were the sample of this research, showed through their answers many levels of familiarity to online learning platforms. While some learners showed a high level of familiarity to these platforms, they were quite unknown by others.

The research showed also that despite the numerous advantages of the use of online learning platforms, it could have some limits. The positive implications of the use of online learning revealed were: help the teachers by reducing his/her responsibilities to provide everything in learning process, more involvement of the student, enhancement of the creativity and less dependency from the university's schedule.

Another suggestion approved that using online learning platforms have some negative aspect which were: addiction, may reduce physical communication, cyber-criminality and the distraction of the students during the classroom activities.

According to the participants, the use of online learning platforms can reinforce learning process because it can be adapted to many disciplines .They retain information for longer durability and are exploitable to great extent.

Online learning should be seen as a complement and extension of classical forms of learning.

Students recommend to the administration of English department to kindly set up a practice of the course computer room to improve the means of learning and facilitate the research. This reinforced my belief that the subject needs to be deeply analyzed in further researches. Further researches could be done on how to introduce and intensify online learning platforms in African educational systems. To close my research work, I am launching a call to all (students, administrators, and others to integrate to the use of online learning platforms because all kinds of activities such as (learning, running administrative services and others) are dependent on the use of online learning platforms.

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Appendix: Learners

This survey is designed for a study of the online learning platforms and use of web 2.0 technologies in education. Your answers to the following questions will be of a great importance to our research. Thank you!

Gender: male female

1- Order these technological tools in brackets according to the use of online learning platforms in education. Which types of web 2.0 technologies do you prefer in learning?

(a) –google maps) (b)- youtube (c)- wikis (d)- blogs (e)- podcasts - (f)- social bookmarking- (g)- instant messaging - (h)– moblogging- (i)- vlogging

<i>Most important</i>												<i>Least important</i>
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2- is the use of online learning important at university level?

Yes No

3-Why / Why not?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4-using online platforms can reinforce learning.

YES

NO

5- justify your answer

.....

.....

.....

6-According to you, how could online learning platforms be used in classroom context?

.....

.....

8-list some advantages of the use of online learning platforms in education?

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9- What are the limits of the use of online platforms in education?

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