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## Title

**Challenges faced by EFL teachers at University of Biskra in assessing their students in the era of Covid-19 pandemic.**

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Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Sciences of Language

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## **Declaration**

I, **Baissa Sabrina** do hereby declare that this submitted work is my original work and has not previously been submitted for any institution or university for a degree. I also declare that a list of references is provided forward indicating all the sources of the cited and quoted information. This work was certified and completed at Mohammed KHEIDER University of Biskra.

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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this modest work

To my dear mother **Zahia** who always believed in my ability to succeed in the academic field. You are gone, but your belief in me made this journey possible.

May Allah rest her soul.

To my first love and my super hero my father **Abd Elkader**, No tribute could live up to the love he keeps on giving. May God grant him good health and long life.

To my beloved supportative sisters who had a great impact in overcoming many obstacles and difficulties **Anissa, Karima, Sara and Aya** and to my brothers **Yahia** and the little **Youness** , thanks for your supports and thank you for being my family.

To my step mother **khawla** thanks for your understanding and your support.

To my nephews **Adem,Israa,Taline, and Youcef**

To my wonderful companions, I dedicate this research; To thank them for being in my life, always encouraging me, and pushing me forward, especially in those moments when I almost gave up **Meriem, Wafa, Samah, Chourouk, Soundous,Imen ,Ikram and Ibtihel.**

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## **Abstract**

The global shutdown caused by COVID-19 has affected the education sector. This situation has dramatically changed the education sector, with the distinctive rise of e-learning and teaching. One of the most important parts of online learning and teaching is assessment; this situation demands an online form of assessment of students progress. The aims of this study is to investigate how EFL teachers performed online assessment, what are the challenges that faced and how they overcome it at university of Mohamed Khaider of Biskra during the Covid-19 pandemic. The objectives of this study are (1) describe how teachers performed online assessment at university of Biskra. (2) How teachers deal with the challenges that they faced during performing of the online assessment. In this study the researcher used a descriptive qualitative method. The researcher gathered the data using Opinionnaire designed for 20 EFL at Biskra-university. The results show that teachers faced several challenges in implementing online assessment.

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## **General introduction**

In December 2019, a respiratory tract febrile illness called corona virus was reported in Wuhan, Hubei province, China, and spread across China and the worldwide. In February 2020, the World Health Organization officially named this pandemic as Corona Virus 2019 or Covid-19. Like the countries of the world, the corona virus has spread in Algeria as well. Because of the rapid spread of the disease, the Algerian Minister of High Education and Scientific Research has approved precautionary measures to ensure the continuity of online learning, starting on 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2020. The success of online learning depends on the willingness of teachers and the educational institution to implement the process and assess.

Assessment of student learning is a fundamental aspect of instruction (Lorna R. Kearns, 2012:198). Assessment can be defined as all activities that teachers and students undertake to get information that can be used to alter teaching and learning. This includes teacher observation and analysis of student work (homework, tests, essays, reports, practical procedures and classroom discussion of issues) (ET Amua-Sekyi, 2016). The aim of assessment in learning is to measure the progress of student learning during their study. There are two common categories of assessment are used, called formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment refers to methods using by teachers during the learning process to improve student's attainment. Meanwhile, summative assessment refers to the teacher's evaluation of students at the end of the lesson or instructional unit.

Since the corona virus has been hit Algeria, the Minister of High Education takes serious procedures to deal with the pandemic. In this context, the Algerian Minister has

directed universities to perform online teaching. Teachers in Algeria appreciated this measure, because they have the opportunity to do online assessment.

### **1. Statement of the problem**

The corona virus crisis has cast a shadow over the education sector. It prompted schools, universities and educational institutions to close their doors to reduce the chances of its spread. This aroused great concern among the participants in this sector. This prompted educational institutions to switch to e-learning, as an alternative, it has been talked about for a long time and the controversy over the need to integrate it into the educational process.

Teachers in Algeria seek to face pressing challenges of education because of the pandemic outbreak, what makes them put their efforts into online teaching. Many teachers faced problems of shifting from face-to-face to online teaching environment. There are teachers are not familiar with technology, but they must use teaching and assessment in online. By using the online assessment teachers face problems with their students, what gives the instructor less control over the test and assignment, which makes students cheat easily.

### **2. Significance of the study**

This study aimed to provide better knowing how teachers of English at university of Biskra assess their student during the Covid-19 pandemic. It also investigates the teachers' strategies used to assess their students in online courses and the challenges they faced. In addition, the study aimed to give knowledge about online assessment.

### **3. Research questions**

- What are the challenges that faced the English teachers at university of Biskra in assessing their students during the era of Covid-19 pandemic?

#### **4. Aims of the study**

- This research aims to describe how teachers performed online assessment at university of Biskra.
- The research also describes how teachers of English deal with the challenges that they faced in performing online assessment.

#### **5. Research methods**

##### **5.1. Sample**

As a sample, the researcher chooses to focus on 20 EFL teachers at university of Mohamed Khaider, Biskra.

##### **5.2. Research tools**

In collecting data the researcher use Opinionnaire. The researcher will carry out an online Opinionnaire for the EFL teachers. It involves close ended and generally open ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit opinion from the participants.

##### **5.3. Data collection and analysis**

In addition, the researcher will do deep Opinionnaire with around 20 EFL teachers at university of Biskra in order to get more knowledge about online assessment and the challenges that they faced when applied the online assessment.

#### **6. Structure of the study**

The research contains two chapters. The first chapter will be devoted to the theoretical part, in which it will include some definitions to the key terms, and identifying some new concepts related to the topic. In the other hand, the second chapter the researcher will analyze the gathered data from the Opinionnaire.

# I.

## Chapter one

### Literature review

#### **Introduction**

In the past little decades, assessment has obtained an increased quantity of attention; it plays a necessary role in education. It is considered as a bridge between teaching and learning (Saidi and Saddouk, 2021). Assessment is a continuous process which embraces much wider domains (Brown, 2000). By the spread of the corona virus, universities have shifted from face-to-face assessments to conducting exams online. The online assessment was one of the biggest challenges faced. Many teachers faced problems in shifting from face-to-face to an online teaching environment.

#### **I.1 Assessment**

##### **I.1.1 Concepts of assessment**

Assessment is the systematic process of documenting, and measuring knowledge, skills, dispositions, or beliefs gleaned through instructional sequences, intending to improve all aspects of student learning (Koç et al., 2015). Assessment is also used to provide feedback to students on their progress and evaluate students' mastery of the subject matter (Myron, 2014). Assessment is the planned process of gathering and synthesizing information to discover and document students' strengths and weaknesses, plan and enhance instruction, or evaluate progress and make decisions about students (McMillan & Workman, 1998).

According to Khairil and Mokshein (2018), assessment is a part of the teaching and learning process and aims to bring improvement for the assessor and the individual assessed. Assessment can also be viewed as the act of appraisal or judgment (Shaw, 2015). Assessment includes almost all activities that teachers carry out in assessing students that

will provide information that can be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they participate. Activities in conducting assessment may include classroom observation, class discussions, quizzes, homework, and test (Black & Wiliam, 2006).

The instructor uses assessment to improve teaching and to make students aware of their strengths and weakness. Gaining assessment information is a challenge for the instructor to transform their thinking and practices that are used to improve student learning. The assessment is also used at the end of the learning or teaching sequence to establish how much the learner can reproduce from a student's knowledge in a test or exam condition (Everhard C J and Murphy L., 2015). Generally, the assessment aims to identify what students should know, understand and be able to do.

To conclude and based on the previous definitions, assessment is the process of gaining information from the learning process and providing feedback to instructors or students.

### **I.1.2 Kinds of assessment**

Swearingen reveals that there are main kinds of assessment, according to their use. They can be used before, during, and after learning.

- Diagnostic assessment is a variety of assessment tasks used at the beginning of the course to determine a student's level of knowledge, test what the student already knows, it used to establish suitable course placement. These tests allow the teacher to design the syllabus to meet the needs of the student.
- Formative assessment refers to a wide variety of methods that teachers use to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a lesson, unit, or course. Formative assessments help teachers identify concepts that students are struggling to understand, skills they are

having difficulty acquiring, or learning standards they have not yet achieved so that adjustments can be made to lessons, instructional techniques, and academic support. The general goal of formative assessment is to collect detailed information that can be used to improve instruction and student learning while it's happening (The Glossary Of Education Reform, 2014).The goal of formative assessment is to provide feedback to students about their learning to positively influence their learning motivation and help them to take control of their learning (Čandrić et al, 2014).

- Summative assessments are used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement after a defined instructional period— typically at the end of a project, unit, course, semester, program, or school year. Summative assessments are given after a specific instructional period, and therefore they are generally evaluative, rather than diagnostic—i.e., they are more appropriately used to determine learning progress and achievement, evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs, measure progress toward improvement goals, or make course-placement decisions, among other possible applications (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013).

### **I.1.3 Assessment purposes**

Dr. Bouazid stated in his work “The advantages of online assessment-an asset for distance learning” some purposes of assessment, which are:

- The essential objective of the assessment is to improve student performance.
- Assessment should be based on an understanding of how students learn.
- Assessment should be an integral component of course design and not something to add afterward.



- A good assessment provides useful information to report credibly to parents on student achievements regularly.
- Good assessment requires clarity of purpose, goals, standards, criteria, and a variety of measures.
- Assessment methods used should be valid, reliable, and consistent.
- Assessment requires attention to outcomes and processes.
- Assessment works best when it is ongoing rather than episodic.
- Assessment for improved performance involves feedback and reflection (Bouazid, 2015).

#### **I.1.4 Role of assessment**

Assessment is an important aspect of the teaching and learning process. Though it is the most difficult part of teachers' jobs since no single procedure can meet the needs of all learners and situations during instruction (Frank, 2012).

Assessment is seen as a way to help teachers provide their students with instructions that seek to guide them in their learning process. Assessment plays a crucial role in the educational process, it determines much of the work students undertake, affects their approach to learning, and is an indication of which aspects of the course are valued most highly (Rust, 2002).

O'Farrell (2002) reported that the roles of assessment are as follows:

- To identify that the objectives of the course are being achieved.
- To provide feedback to students' learning in order to improve their performance.
- To guide and support learning.
- To demonstrate that the teacher maintain the appropriate standards.
- To evaluate the teaching effectiveness.
- To motivate students to undertake appropriate work.

- To describe students' attainment, informing decisions on progression and awards

### I.1.5 Principles of assessment



**Figure1:** Principles of assessment (Brown, 2004).

#### I.1.5.1 Practicality

Bachman and Palmer (1996) defined practicality as “the relationship between the resources that will be required in the design, development, and use of the test and the resources that will be available for these activities” (p.36). So, both teachers and curriculum designers must be aware of the resources needed to develop assessment assignments and the resources available in the classroom for these assignments. So, both teachers and curriculum designers must be aware of the resources needed to develop assessment assignments and the resources available in the classroom for these assignments. The practicality of the test is identified according to (should not be expensive to perform), time (Within the right time limitations), administration (not too complicated or complex to implement), scoring (Time is efficient and easy to register and evaluate).

### **I.1.5.2 Validity**

Validity is another important consideration in the assessment that deals with the accuracy and correctness of methods and procedures of assessment (Boukaiba and Bourouh, 2020). The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (2014) defines validity as the “degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores for proposed uses of tests” (p. 11). According to Hughes (2003), “a test is said to be valid if it measures accurately what is intended to measure” (p. 26). The validity of a test can be demonstrated by five different types of proof. The validity of a test can be established through five different types of evidence which are content validity, criterion-related validity, construct-related validity, consequential validity, and face validity.

### **I.1.5.3 Reliability**

Miller, Linn, and Gronlund (2009) defined reliability as the consistency of measurement i.e. the consistency of test scores or assessment results from one measurement to another (p. 107). Assessments reliability may be affected by several factors including the student himself (physical and psychological factors e.g. illness and anxiety), administration (conditions in which the test is administered), rater reliability (human error, bias, subjectivity, etc), and the test itself (ambiguity of items, length, etc) (Brown, 2003, p. 21). Reliability refers to the assessment method or instrument that consistently measures a student's performance. Assessments are expected to produce comparable results, with consistent criteria over time and among different learners and examiners.

### **I.1.5.4 Authenticity**

Bachman and Palmer (1996) defined authenticity as “the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given language test task to the features of a target language use task” (p. 23). Brown (2003, p. 28) considered the following ways for a test to be authentic:

- The language of the test is as natural as possible.

- Items of the test are contextualized rather than isolated.
- The topics are meaningful to learners.
- The test represents (or approximately) real-world tasks.
- Thematic organization of the items.

Authentic assessment is the idea of using creative learning experiences to test students' skills and knowledge in realistic situations. Authentic assessment measures students' success in a way that's relevant to the skills required of them once they've finished their course or degree program (Shaw, 2019).

#### **I.1.5.5 Washback**

Washback" (alternatively "backwash") is a term used in education to describe the influence, whether beneficial or damaging, of an assessment on the teaching and learning that precedes and prepares for that assessment (Green, 2020). That is, if the assessment contains a positive washback, it will result in positive attitudes and a willingness to act on the part of both teachers and learners. In contrast, if the washback is negative, the assessment may not have any helpful results.

#### **I.1.6 Research on teachers' perceptions about language assessment**

Assessment in education has been affected by a lot of factors. Teachers' perception of assessment could be the most important factor. According to recent research works, teachers believed that assessment should be used to improve learning and teaching and provide information on student progress (Brown, 2004). Borg (2003) used the term *teacher cognition*, to cover more than a belief. According to him, cognition refers to knowledge, thoughts, actions, and views that language teachers have, so teachers have cognitions about teaching, learning, assessment, and others. Scaring (2013) investigates the implicit preconceptions and beliefs that language teachers hold about language assessment which inform their conceptualizations, interpretations, and practical decisions in assessment.

Davis and Neitzel (2011) stated that assessment depends on four characteristics: (1) how effective and efficient teachers provide feedback. (2) How often students use their cognitive and meta cognitive factors in the learning process, (3) how they can work individually or in a group, and (4) How do teachers understand the purpose of their daily assessment.

## **I.2 Testing**

### **I.2.1 Concepts of testing**

A test is used to examine someone's knowledge of something to determine what that person knows or has learned. It measures the level of skill or knowledge that has been reached (Knowly, 2020). The very term 'Test', in ELT, refers to a process of measuring learners' knowledge or skill in a particular issue through some oral or written procedures. It is a means to show both the students and the teacher how much the learners have learned during a course.

### **I.2.2 Testing Vs Assessment**

Test and assessment are used interchangeably, but they do mean something different. A test is a "product" that measures a particular behavior or set of objectives. Meanwhile, assessment is seen as a procedure instead of a product. Assessment is used during and after the instruction has taken place. After you've received the results of your assessment, you can interpret the results and in case needed alter the instruction. Tests are done after the instruction has taken place, it's a way to complete the instruction and get the results. The results of the tests don't have to be interpreted, unlike assessment (Knowly, 2020).

### **I.2.3 Online testing**

An online test is a test (a series of questions used to assess students' knowledge) that students solve using a computer rather than writing their responses on paper (Čandrić et al, 2014).

The outbreak of COVID-19 shows that online testing might become a must in critical situations, which require students to carry out their tests online to accomplish their studies. However, online testing might be a real challenge for all including students, teachers, and educational institutions in terms of implementing the exams, making tests more reliable and protected to avoid any misconduct or dishonesty from the student's side.

### **3. Online Assessment**

#### **I.3.1 Concepts of online assessment**

Online assessment or E-assessment is part of the assessment. It is the process of gauging the progress of students in an online way. We consider online assessments as any way to assess student achievement, provide feedback, or advance students in their learning process in online courses. The assessment process should be viewed as a system because there are many components to measure, and then the online assessment should be viewed as a system for evaluating students' academic achievement. The instructors must enlarge the assessment measures used throughout the instructional delivery of the online course to become an effective online assessment (Robels and Braathen, 2002).

Online assessment has a greater potential to measure complex learning skills, provide immediate feedback and record results, and reduce the time and cost of entering data manually in comparison to paper-based assessment format.

The online assessment process refers to students learning objective and program outcomes, facilitates students' reflection, preparation, and achievement, and guide improvement and accountability in the teaching-learning process. The use of technology or electronic tool to test or measure learning outcomes, both in face-to-face or distance

learning environments called an online assessment of learning. There are characteristics of online assessment tools for example; computer software, conferencing systems, or internet-based application (Hricko& Howell, 2006:4-6).

Define online assessment as an entirely automated process of delivering and marking assessments using Web or Internet resources (Harris et al; 2002). Within the limits of this definition, online assessment can be either formative or summative. Formative assessment refers to an assessment that is used primarily to provide feedback and further instruction to the student or inform the instructor of the student’s progress. While, summative assessment refers to an assessment that is primarily used to evaluate a student’s performance and contributes to their final grade (Bull & McKenna, 2004).

Based on the previous definitions, it can be concluded that online assessment is a new method involved in assessment to evaluate the use of technology in students' learning process.

### I.3.2 Online assessment types with examples and tools

Assessment type	Examples	Tools
<b>Traditional assessment submitted online</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Essays</li> <li>– Case studies</li> <li>– Article reviews</li> <li>– Proposal writing</li> <li>– Report writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) LumiNUS Files (upload via student submissions)</li> <li>(2) Online marking and feedback</li> <li>(3) ExamSoft + Rubrics</li> </ul>
<b>Automated online assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Online Quizzes (MCQs, MRQs, FIBs, T/F, matching, ordering)</li> <li>– In-video quizzes</li> <li>– Assessment of prior knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) LumiNUSassessment</li> <li>(2) ExamSoft</li> </ul>
<b>Invigilated online assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Mid-semester exams</li> <li>– Final exams (MCQs, short answers, essays)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) LumiNUSassessment</li> <li>(2) ExamSoft</li> </ul>
<b>Online interaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Contributions to forums, chats, blogs, and wikis</li> <li>– Reading summaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) LumiNUSassessment</li> <li>(2) LumiNUS Forum</li> <li>(3) LumiNUS Chat</li> <li>(4) Blogs/wikis/Google docs</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborative learning</li> <li>- Critical reviews</li> </ul>	
<b>Group assessments online</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online presentations</li> <li>- Group online projects</li> <li>- Roleplay</li> <li>- Online debates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Screencast (Ink2Go)</li> <li>(2) LumiNUS Files</li> <li>(3) YouTube</li> <li>(4) Google Docs</li> </ul>
<b>Critical reflection and meta-cognition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Electronic portfolios</li> <li>- Online journals, logs, diaries, blogs, wikis</li> <li>- Embedded reflective activities</li> <li>- Peer &amp; self-assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) e-portfolio</li> <li>(2) Wikis</li> <li>(3) Blogs</li> <li>(4) peer assessment tools</li> </ul>
<b>Authentic assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scenario based learning</li> <li>- Laboratory/field trip reports</li> <li>- Simulations</li> <li>- Case studies/Role play</li> <li>- Online oral presentations and/or debate</li> </ul>	

**Table 1:** Online assessment types with examples and tools.(Donnan , 2007).

### **I.3.3 Question types in an online assessment**

Online assessments support a set of question types. Listed below is the list of available question types.

#### **I.3.3.a Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)**

Multiple choice questions present a question and ask students to choose from a list of possible options/answers (Ragupathi, 2016). The majority of MCQs have one correct answer, and two to four incorrect "distracting" options. Multiple Choice questions can be in form of incomplete sentences, statements, or complex scenarios. MCQs are most appropriate for factual, conceptual, or procedural information (Ragupathi, 2016).



### **I.3.3.b Multiple Response Questions (MRQs)**

Multiple response questions or MRQs look like multiple choice questions except that the student can choose more than one answer. MRQs present a question and ask students to choose multiple options from a list of possible options/answers and usually have more than one correct answer (Ragupathi, 2016).

### **I.3.3.c True/False or (T/F) questions**

True or false questions are a type of choice questions where you present your respondents with a statement and ask them to choose the correct answer between two answer options, which are “true” or “false”( Bibey, 2021).Students typically have a great deal of experience with this type of question. T/F questions are most appropriate for factual information and naturally dichotomous information (information with only two plausible possibilities) (Ragupathi, 2016).

### **I.3.3.d Fill-in-the-blanks**

A Fill in the Blank question can be a phrase, sentence, or paragraph with a blank space in which the student should fill the blanks with the missing word or words. The answers are generally one word. Fill in the blanks questions are similar to completion questions.

### **I.3.3.e Matching Questions**

Matching questions are made up of two lists of related items that students must pair up by deciding which item in the first list corresponds to an item in the second list. They are appealing to many teachers because they provide a compact way to test a great deal of information in a short amount of time (Kelly, 2019). These are best suited to assess a student's understanding of relevant information.

### **I.3.3.f Essays**

Essays and Short Answer Types are questions based on answers. An essay is a focused piece of writing designed to inform or persuade (Caulfield, 2020). Most appropriate for assessments that cannot be accomplished with other question types.

Because essays are the only question types that can effectively assess the highest levels of student mastery, they are the only option if the goal of testing is the assessment of synthesis and evaluation levels (Ragupathi, 2016).

### **I.3.4 Tips to enhance the effectiveness of your online assessment practices**

#### **I.3.4.A Align constructively**

Constructive alignment is designed for teaching where students must learn and how they should express their learning before teaching. “Constructive alignment (CA) has two aspects. The ‘constructive’ aspect refers to the idea that students construct meaning through relevant learning activities. That is, meaning is not something imparted or transmitted from teacher to learner but is something learners have to create for themselves. (...) The ‘alignment’ aspect refers to what the teacher does, which is to set up a learning environment that supports the learning activities appropriate to achieving the desired learning outcomes. The key is that the components in the teaching system, especially the teaching methods used and the assessment tasks are aligned to the learning activities assumed in the intended outcomes” ( IGI Global, 1988-2022).

#### **I.3.4.B Instill student confidence**

Teachers' role is not only to teach students lessons; their role is to gain the student's trust and motivate them to succeed. “One of the best ways to teach students confidence is by letting them know when something is done right. When a student does something wrong, show them the right way to do it, then praise them when they get it right themselves” (Teach Elementary, 2022).

#### **I.3.4.C Harness the power of learning analytics**

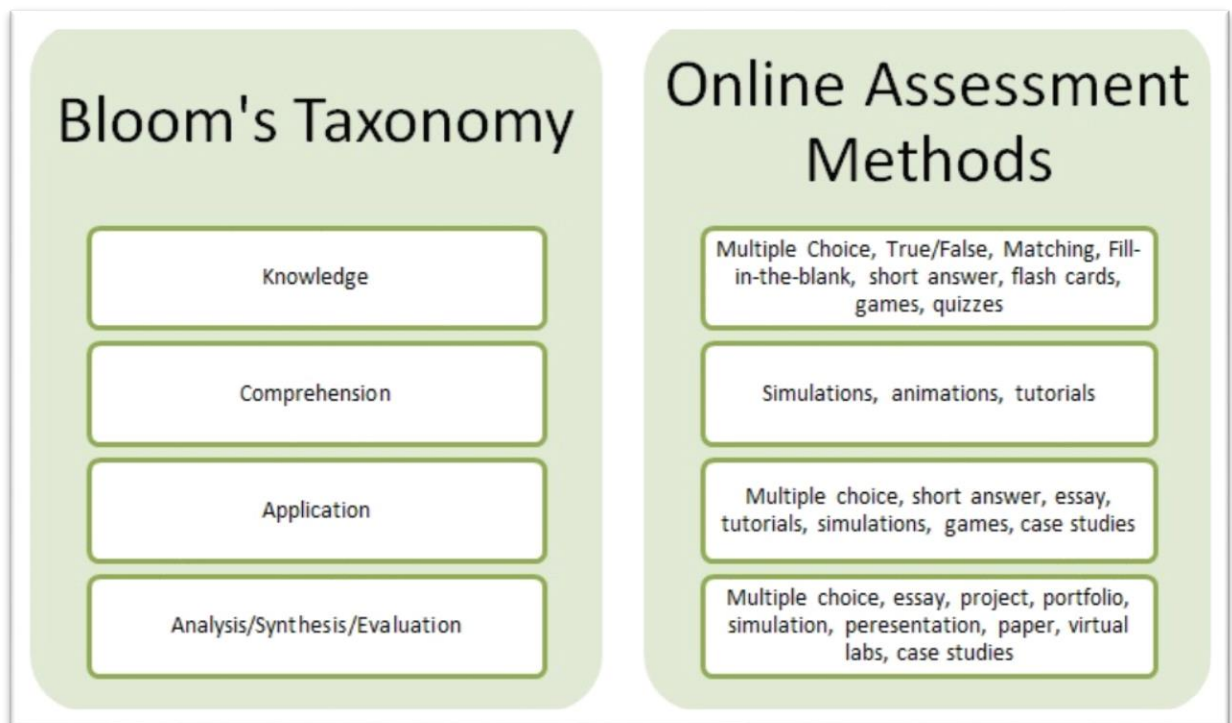
Learning analytics is the gathering, processing and reporting of data generated by students interacting with their digital learning environments. The goal is to understand and improve the experience of the learners (Coyote, 2021).

#### **I.3.4.D Check access and accessibility**

Online assessments offer a chance for students to work around distance, disability, or illnesses more effectively, and options to complete coursework at a time and place most suitable to their needs (Coyote, 2021). Yet, this feature can only be accessed if the requirements and deadlines are fair and clearly defined for the students.

#### **I.3.5 Online assessment methods**

The following are online assessment methods that work as suitable measures of cognitive levels in Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.



**Figure2:** Online assessment methods. Schreyer Institute Self-Paced Module (n,d)

#### **I.3.6 Challenges and how to manage an online assessment**

During the online assessment, the process may not always run well. If the online assessment does not well-measured, means that the teachers face challenges in doing the process. Here are the challenges in assessing students' progress (Hricko& Howell, 2006).

- Designing an effective assessment strategy

The success or failure of an online evaluation system will rest, primarily, on the evaluation instrument. Common errors made by evaluators include designing forms that are too long, too short, or have unclear questions or phrases (Hricko& Howell, 2006).

The design relies on the objective. For formative assessments, it is particularly necessary to maintain models and a complete process in a simple way. The evaluation must be a summary and focus on assessing very specific areas or evaluated within a specific time frame. While, for summative assessments, the process can be longer and can evaluate the experience in total, many strategies can be options in evaluation. This is the teacher's challenge to choose the effective evaluation of students, whether summative or formative assessment.

- Asking the right questions

This challenge is focused on some strategies in the design of an actual evaluation instrument. Asking the questions to the students may be a bit hard for the teacher because the students' responses will determine what feedback and action will be given. Evaluation instruments can focus on many different parts of educational activity but typically revolve around these global areas (Hricko& Howell, 2006).

- Communicating recommendations and building in follow-through

Communicating feedback online is complicated by several inherent constraints: A text-only context, especially in abbreviated or brusque e-mails, may lead to misunderstanding between the student and the instructor (Hricko& Howell, 2006). With the new online learning environment, it can be a problem when the content is difficult for students with a lack of conversation opportunities with teachers in the classroom which can lead to misunderstanding between the teacher and students.

The teacher has a problem while conducting online assessments due to the students' lack of technology and internet data during doing their tasks and assignments. Therefore,

the teacher makes some quizzes for students through Google form that is related to the material. For this reason, those who did their task with a high score and submit it in time. (Yulianto & Mujtahid, 2021).



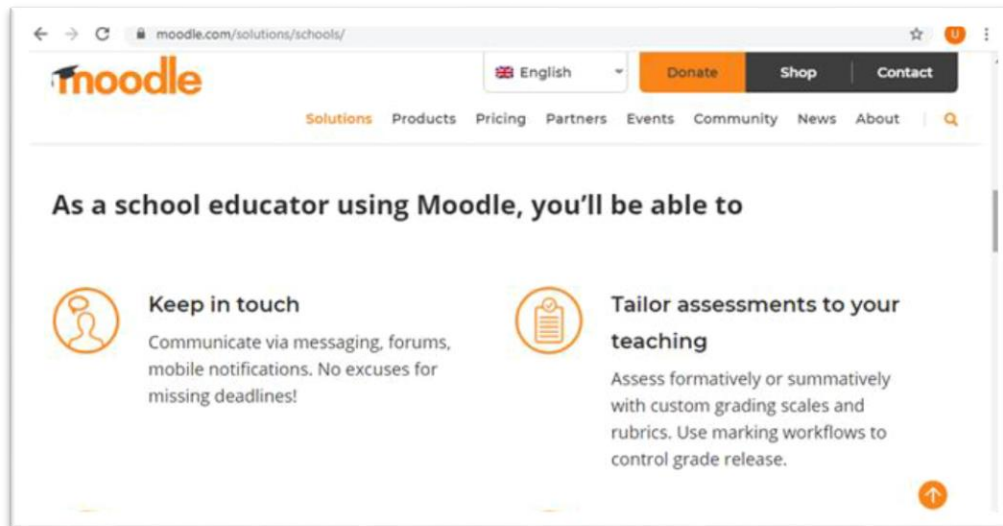
**Figure3:** Challenges in online assessment (Joshi et al; 2020)

### **I.3.7 Kinds of Online Assessment Tools**

There is a lot of software available on the web that helps in assessing students' language learning and it can be a formative and summative assessment by testing learners on vocabulary, phrases, fill in the blanks, and grammar. It can be transformed via mobile phones, laptops, tablets, or computers (PC). Here are some kinds of online assessments:

#### **I.3.7.a Model**

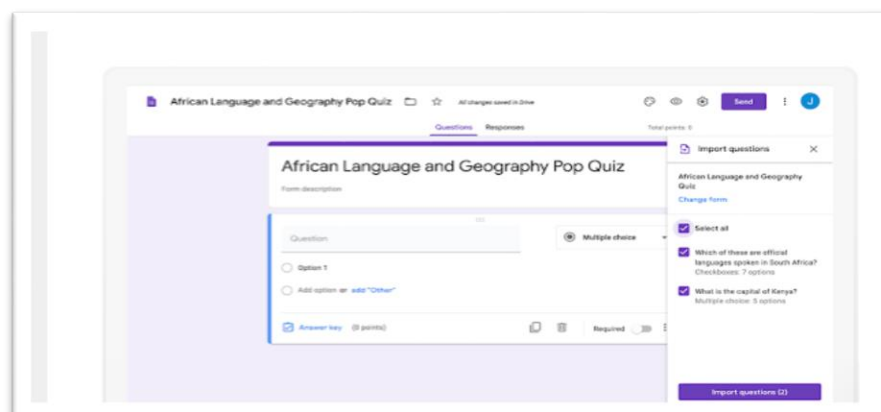
Model is a web-based assessment. Giving the educator the best tool to manage and promote learning. It is an open-source Course Management System (CMS) also known as LMS or virtual learning environment (Teachtaught.com, 2015). Model is an online learning platform that helps teachers create online courses, add assignments, and monitor their students' progress.



**Figure 4:** Model (Zulvan Arif,2020)

### **I.3.7.b Google form**

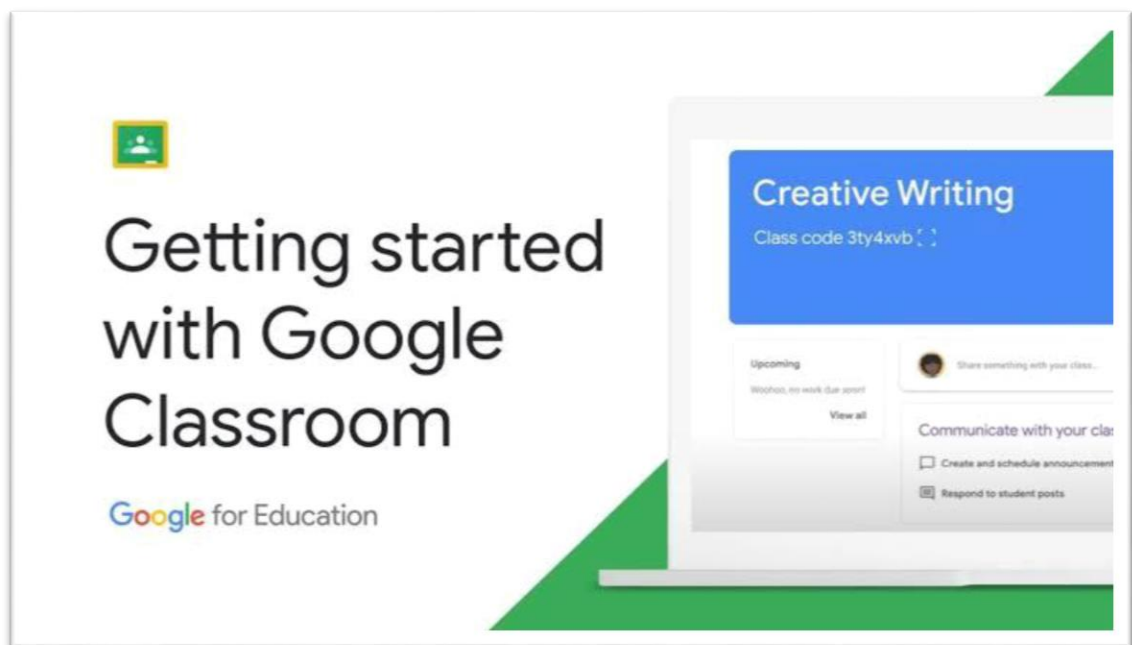
A Google form is a free online tool, which provides users to create forms, surveys, or quizzes. Educators can use Google forms to assess the students at the beginning of the class and gauge pre-existing knowledge. It can assess own students learning and set the learning goals as well as collect the data. Firstly, the teacher needs to sign to Google to be able to create, access, or share content on Google Forms. There are many types of questions in Google Forms, for example; short answers, paragraph responses, multiple-choice, checkboxes, dropdown, linear scale, and multiple-choice grids( Zulvan Arif,2020).



**Figure 5:** Google form (fauchaux, 2019).

### **I.3.7.c Google Classroom**

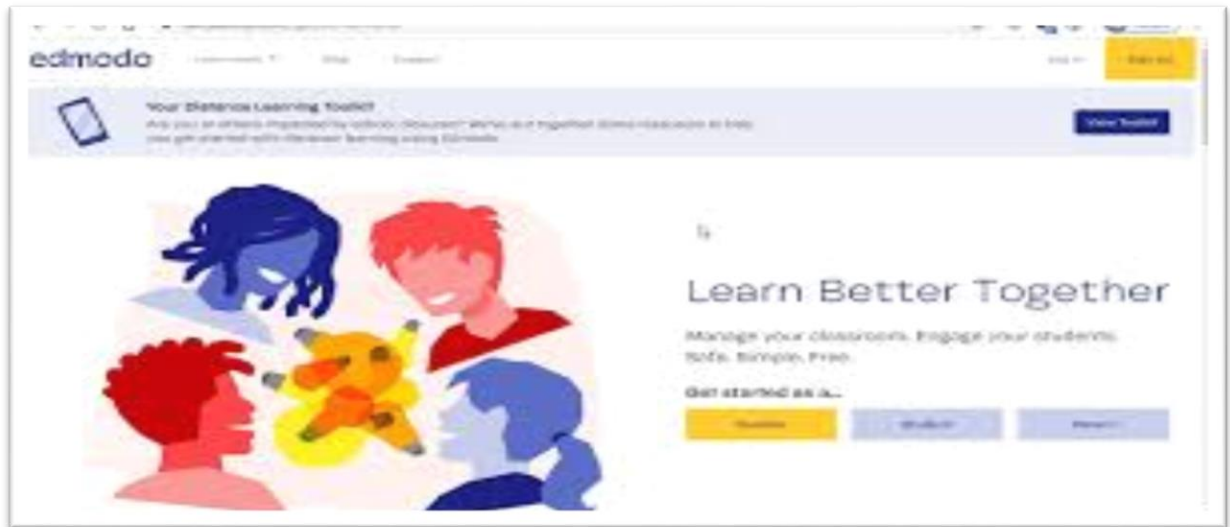
In Google Classroom, lecturers can provide materials on the subject being taught. The lecturers can post some teaching materials, assign tasks for students, and upload the students' grades so that they can immediately see the scores obtained in the course ( Arif, 2020). Sometimes the teachers can be outside the city or are busy, instead of postponing lectures they use Google classroom. Google Classroom also minimizes the costs incurred due to the use of more affordable stationery and other materials and can minimize time-released energy (Inoue & Pengnate, 2018).



**Figure 6:** Google classroom (Arif ,2020)

### **I.3.7.d Edmodo**

Edmodo is a way to connect students so they can collaborate securely, stay organized, and get on with assignments. It is a tool for sending messages, sharing class material, assessing the students, and making learning accessible anywhere (Edmodo.com). Another tool for the social learning environment is Edmodo. It provides such a group monitoring and assessment tool. It includes an interaction–monitoring tool, the insight which allows the teacher to view the interaction of student responses to posts, assignments, quizzes, or other categories of interactions (Koç et al., 2015:49).



**Figure7:** Edmodo(ZulvanArif ,2020)

### **I.3.8 The advantages and the disadvantages of online assessment**

#### **I.3.8.a The advantages**

According to Khairil and Mokshein (2018:665-668), there are different advantages of online assessment as follows:

##### **I.3.8.a.A Auto-marking**

By using online evaluation pads that teachers can create on their own or using free online platforms. Teachers can easily get a result for their students immediately after completion of the exam.

##### **I.3.8.a.B Quality feedback and fun discussion**

In online assessment, students or educators can give very quality and longer feedback on their performance in the question paper they have answered.

##### **I.3.8.a.C Reliable and valid measurement**

The questions and marking in the online evaluation are reliable and valid. The international guidelines on the test based on computers provided that the outcome of the equivalent test must be established for a traditional paper-based test (PBT).



### **I.3.8.a.D Economic and Ecological**

The use of online evaluation may be paper as cost-effective. Using online assessment is very low because time and materials can be reduced and all acquisitions and analyses can be run automatically. Reduce the use of paper and reduce power consumption indirectly.

### **I.3.8.E Practical**

Online assessment is practical it can be done anytime and as what is planned by educators. It also enables a more flexible pace of learning.

### **I.3.8.F Motivation**

Online assessment affects motivation and student attitudes. The online assessment is more unique and enjoyable and takes absolute demands for the twenty-first century. Successful students are affected by the individual difference in motivation and achievement.

<b>Students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Higher control, friendly interface</li><li>• Higher flexibility</li><li>• Fast and easy to use</li><li>• Easy accessibility from remote areas</li><li>• Receive immediate feedback</li><li>• Increased motivation to enhance performance</li></ul>
<b>Teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greater flexibility with any place and any time assessments</li><li>• Better utilization of time through simplified and quicker examination procedures</li><li>• Improved quality of feedback to students</li><li>• Can track students' progress</li><li>• Easy to analyze assessments</li><li>• Reduced workload</li><li>• More flexible and imaginative assessments are</li></ul>

	possible, with greater relevance for students, for example; by using simulations, audio and video clips
<b>Institution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast and accurate results</li> <li>• Reduced cost for the institution</li> </ul>
<b>Educational goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports higher-order thinking skills like critiquing, problem-solving, reflection on cognitive processes, and facilitate group work projects</li> <li>• Provide accurate results by adaptive testing</li> </ul>

**Table 2:** Advantages of Online Assessments (Joshi et al; 2020)

### **I.3.8.b The disadvantages**

- Some people become more tired when reading text on a computer screen than when reading text on paper.
- Construction of tasks and scripts or programs for solving students' tasks takes a lot of time. Extensive time is also needed to examine the assessment tasks given by the students. Some questions can be automatically checked, but questions that involve diagrams and where students are asked which formulas have been used will take a lot of time (Abed Hmdi, 2011).

### **I.3.9 The effectiveness of online assessment**

Online assessment becomes an option to measure students' knowledge during the Covid-19 to support physical distancing and social distancing from the government. However, there are levels of effectiveness in doing an online assessment, such as aligning constructively, instilling student confidence, and personalized feedback, harnessing the power of learning analytics, and checking access and accessibility (Yulianto and Mujtahid,

2021). Yet, the experiences of both teachers and students with the use of technology have become another opportunity for the effectiveness of conducting online assessments.

### **I.3.10 Teachers' perception of online assessment**

Teachers play an important role in the teaching and learning process, especially in the classroom management system. Furthermore, teachers have different assumptions and views on classroom management, as well as from the point of view of students' assessment. For this reason, teachers should make auxiliary classroom management. There are some important factors to consider to keep the management successful contain teacher talking time, teacher talk, physical presence, and feedback.

Yulianto and Mujtahin in their study which is entitled Online Assessment during Covid-19 Pandemic: EFL Teachers' Perspectives and Their Practices stated: "Therefore, assessing students' learning is crucial in any educational environment, especially in online assessment. Through regular testing, teachers can monitor the students' progress and further offer required material" (2021). However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, assessment has been changed from traditional face-to-face test items to online assessments. Furthermore, based on the Covid-19 situation, the teachers should produce assessment test items to measure students' achievement in an online form and offers innovation for teachers who design and students who take the test (Yulianto and Mujtahin, 2021).

### **Conclusion**

The Corona virus (Covid-19) has disrupted teaching and learning around the world. Growing concern about the rapid spread of the virus has led to the closure of all educational institutions. This crisis has significantly hurried the switch toward an online environment. This chapter is devoted to the theoretical part, which includes some definitions of the key terms, and identifies some new concepts related to the topic. This chapter consists of 3 important components. (1)Assessment,(2) testing,(3) online

assessment. Also, it includes some kinds and purposes of the defined terms and what are the challenges that faced EFL teachers in online assessment.

## **II.**

### **Chapter Two**

#### **Results and Discussions**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will be devoted the methodological procedures part. In which the researcher will analyze and discuss the results of the gathered data obtained from the Opinionnaire that was presented to EFL teachers at university of Mohamed Khaider-Biskra in order to know their opinions and experiences concerning the studied problem.

#### **II.1 Research methodology**

##### **II.1.1 Research design**

One of two types of research is qualitative research. The researcher in this study used descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative research tends to interpret about what the researcher see, what the researcher heard and understand (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research attempts to make sense or interpret the phenomena (Arif, 2020).

The researcher in this study used Opinionnaire as a data gathering tool designed for EFL teachers at University of Biskra. The Opinionnaire helps the researcher in collecting additional knowledge and information about the problem studied.

##### **II.1.2 Data collection tools**

The researcher used qualitative data collection tool which is Opinionnaire. The Opinionnaire dedicated to EFL teachers at University of Biskra. It involves close-ended and open-ended questions that are designed to bring out the opinions of the participants that will help in the work.

##### **II.1.3 Population of the study**

The study aimed to find out the challenges faced the EFL teachers in assessing their students during the era of covid-19. The population of the study was designed by EFL teachers at Biskra University are 20 teachers.

### II.1.4 The sample of the study

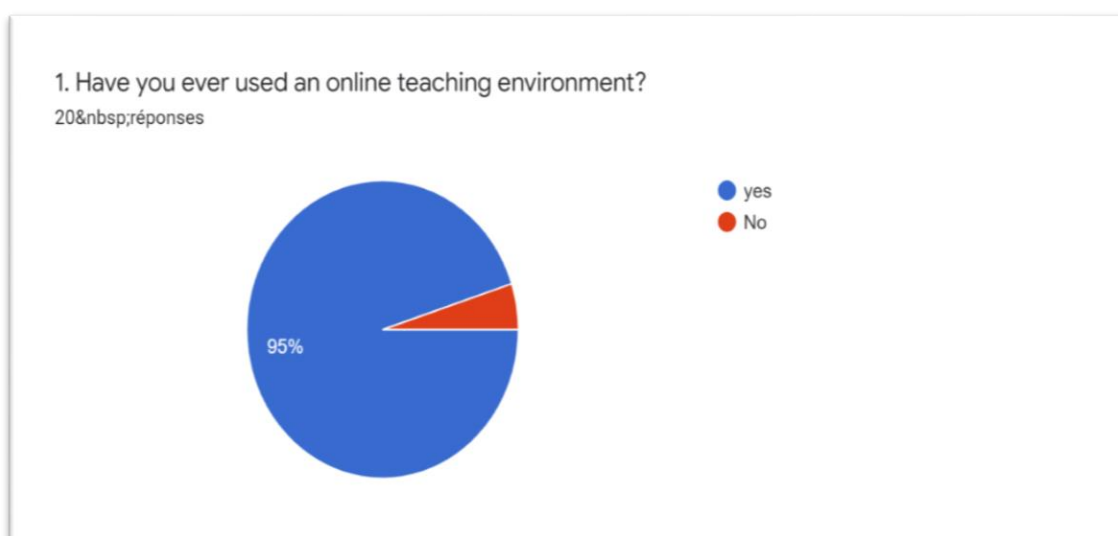
The sample of this research took place at University of Mohamed Khaider\_Biskra. University of Biskra was chosen as research location because it fit the research needs since the research tool designed for EFL teachers at University. The number of teachers was 20 teachers, involving the two branches (language sciences and literature and civilization).

## II.2 Opinionnaire's description

An Opinionnaire is a qualitative tool which contains questions designed to bring out perspectives on issues of opinion from which generalizations can be drawn. In this study, the researcher dedicates the Opinionnaire to teachers because they help in the continuity of the process by adding information to the researcher because of their opinions and experiences. The Opinionnaire involves 12 questions divided into close-ended and open-ended questions. The objective of the Opinionnaire is to gather new information and additional knowledge from teachers' thought, opinions and experiences about the challenges that they faced when assessing their students and if they conducted online assessment or not.

### II.2.1 Opinionnaire's results

#### 1. Teachers' perception of online teaching



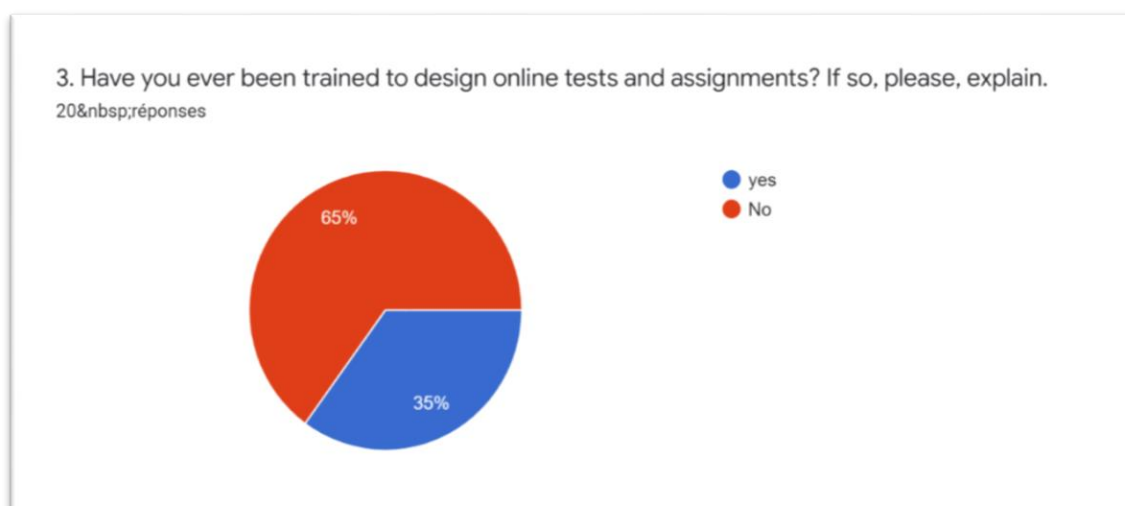
**Figure8:** Teachers' perception of online teaching

The figure mentioned above shows the proportion of teachers who used online teaching. The blue color shows the teachers' rates that have used online teaching while red color reflects the teachers who did not use it. The figure shows a high difference between the two results, the teachers who used online teaching were more than the teachers who did not. The percentage of the teachers who have used online teaching estimated 95% while the rest 5% is for teachers who did not use online teaching.

## 2. Teachers' experience with online assessment

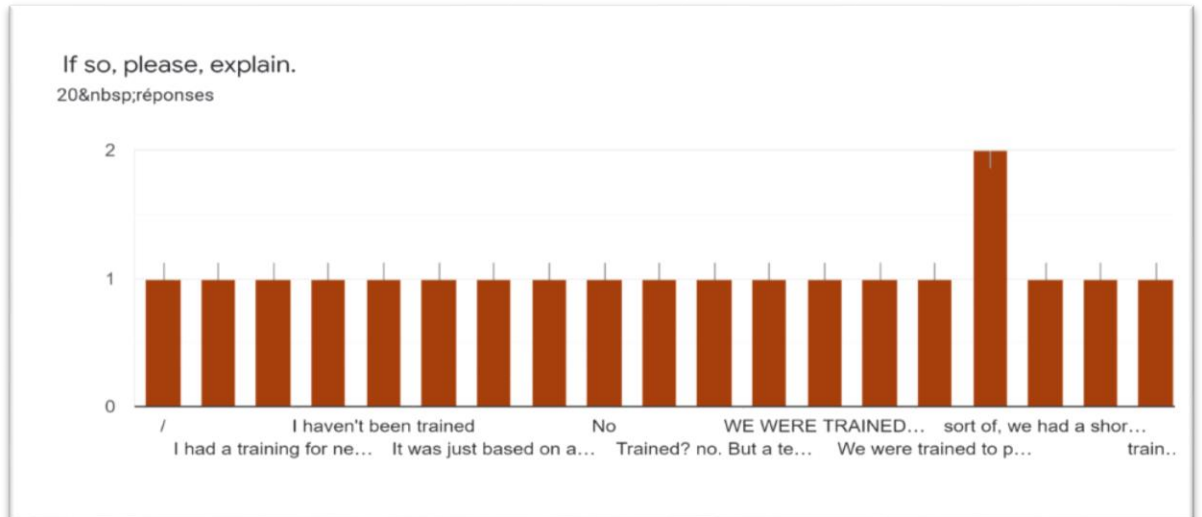
After asking 20 of EFL teachers at Biskra University about their experiences with online teaching, the answers were different from one teacher to another. Some said that it was interesting, successful, and very effective especially for phonetics and oral expression sessions. In the other hand, some teachers said that online teaching is not satisfactory, not effective, not successful since most of students had different problem such as no connection, no PCs. While others were neutral, they said that it is acceptable but not excellent one and it has pros and cons.

## 3. Teachers' usage of online testing and assignments



**Figure9:** Teachers' usage of online testing and assignments.

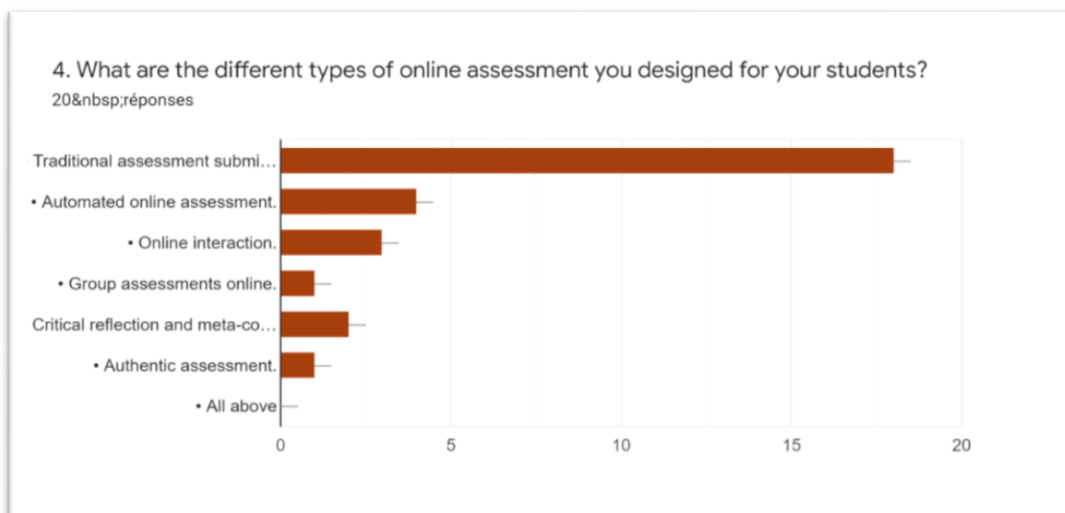
The pie chart above states the teachers' usage of online tests and assignments. The red color refers to teachers who had not trained to design online tests with 65%, while the blue color reflects teachers who had trained with 35%.



**Figure10:** Teachers' designing of online testing and assignment

Teachers at university of Biskra had not trained to design online tests, on the contrary they had been trained only to design online courses in moodle. In the other hand, they had trained only for newly recruits and pedagogical engineering. Because of the lack of technological literacy and materials teachers had difficulties in training to design online tests and assignment.

#### 4. Types of online assessment



**Figure11:** Types of online assessment

As we see in the bar chart above the types that EFL teachers at university of Biskra used for students. The figure above shows teachers used all the types that is mentioned but



in varying proportions. The figure shows that most of the teachers used traditional assessment submitted online in which it gets the highest number of uses, while the lowest number is for group assessments online and authentic assessment.

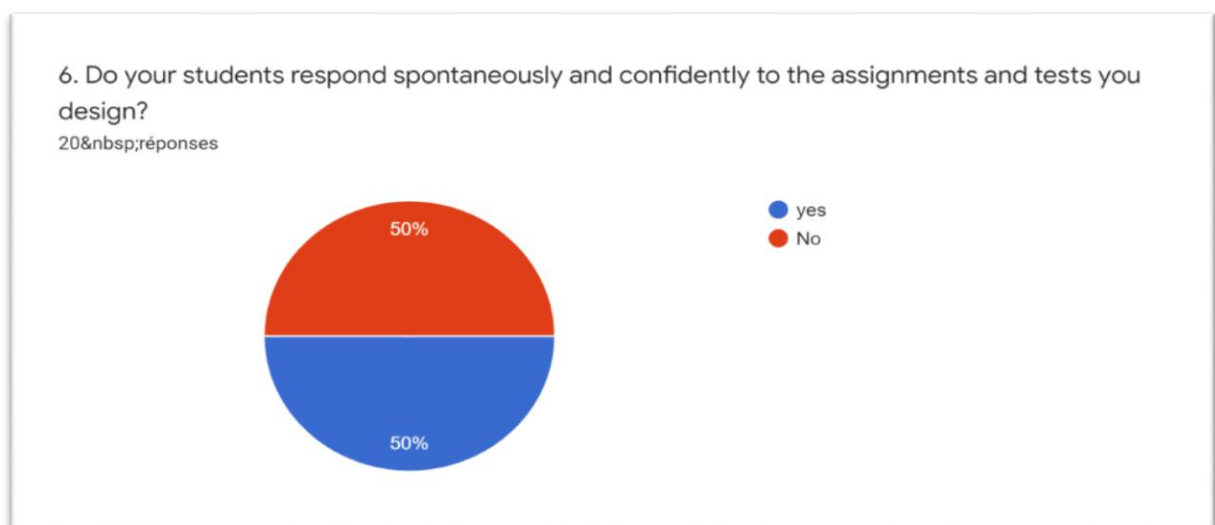
### **5. challenges teachers faced when assessing students online in the past two years**

Teachers at university of Biskra facet several challenges in assessing their students, such as:

- Technical problems: students are Not skillful enough in technology use, Problems of internet connection,
- Honesty: students were not honest in answering their assignments, teachers suffered from cheating.
- Number of students: large number of students was a challenge also for teachers especially in correcting tests.
- Deadlines: students did not respect the deadlines, they delayed submission of assignments.

After all this problems teachers found themselves obliged to re-assess or to change the type of assessment.

### **6. Teachers' perceptions about students' responses.**

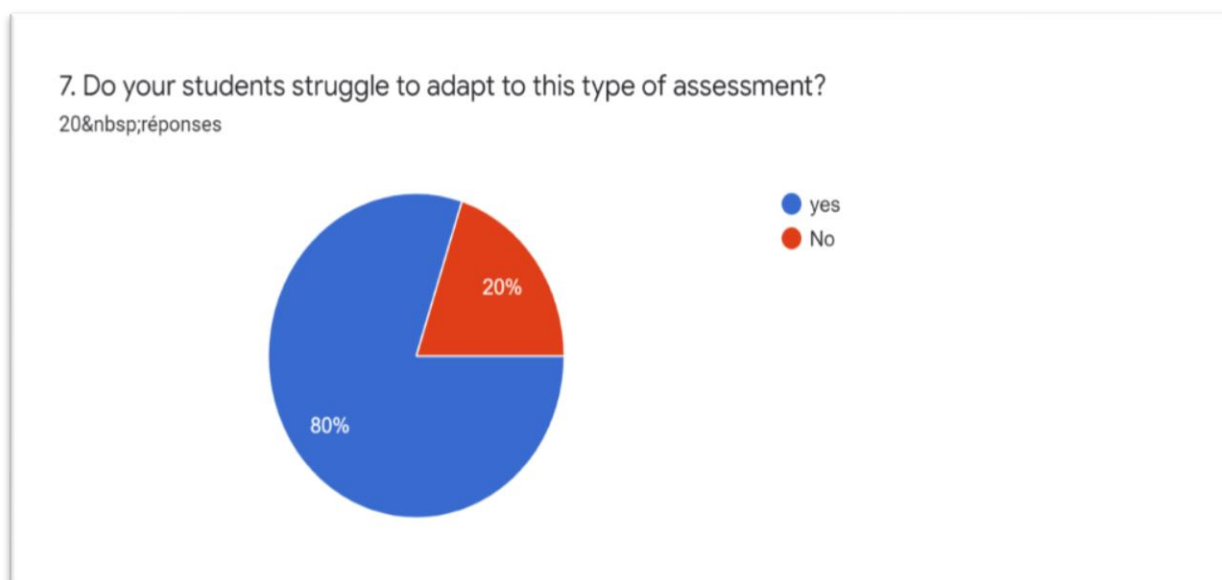


**Figure12:** Teachers' perceptions about students' responses.

The pie chart states the opinions of teachers about their students' responses. The score is equal, 50% said that students answered spontaneously and confidently, while the other 50% said that they were not.

According to EFL teachers at University of Biskra, students faced problems in answering tests because of some technical problems, in which some students are not familiar with technology. Concerning honesty in answering some teachers said that students cheat, plagiarize, they are not confident because they consider testing as sanction and do not respect the time, while other teachers said that students answer immediately and in confident way.

### 7. Students problems in adapting online assessment



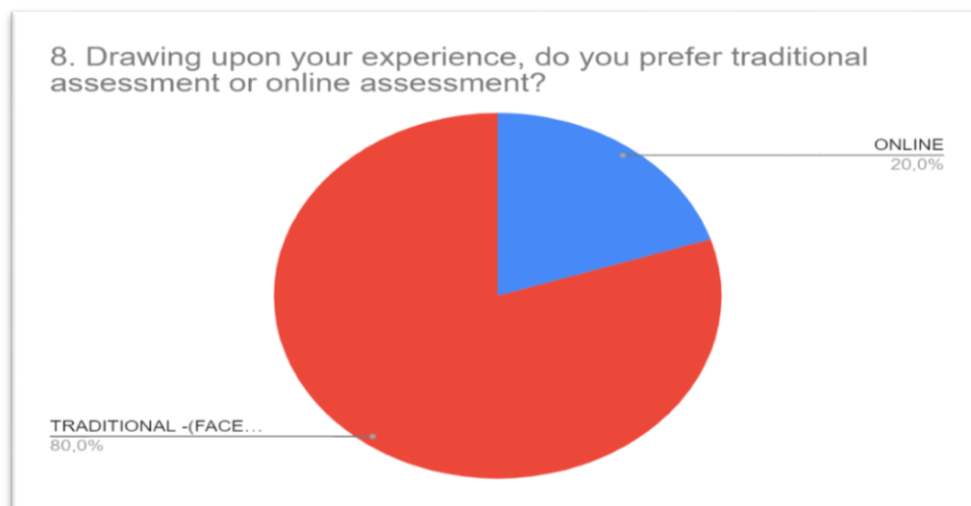
**Figure13:** Students problems in adapting online assessment

The figure shows that students struggle to adapt online assessment according to teachers' opinions that is stated in the pie chart above, in which in shows that 80% of teachers said yes, while 20% said no.

As stated by teachers, students are not trained in this type of testing; they have been tested traditionally for many years. In addition, students did not adapt this type of assessment due to internet unavailability, some students face challenges whenever they are

introduced to new testing methods online. In the other hand, some students manage application very well.

### 8. Traditional assessment or online assessment

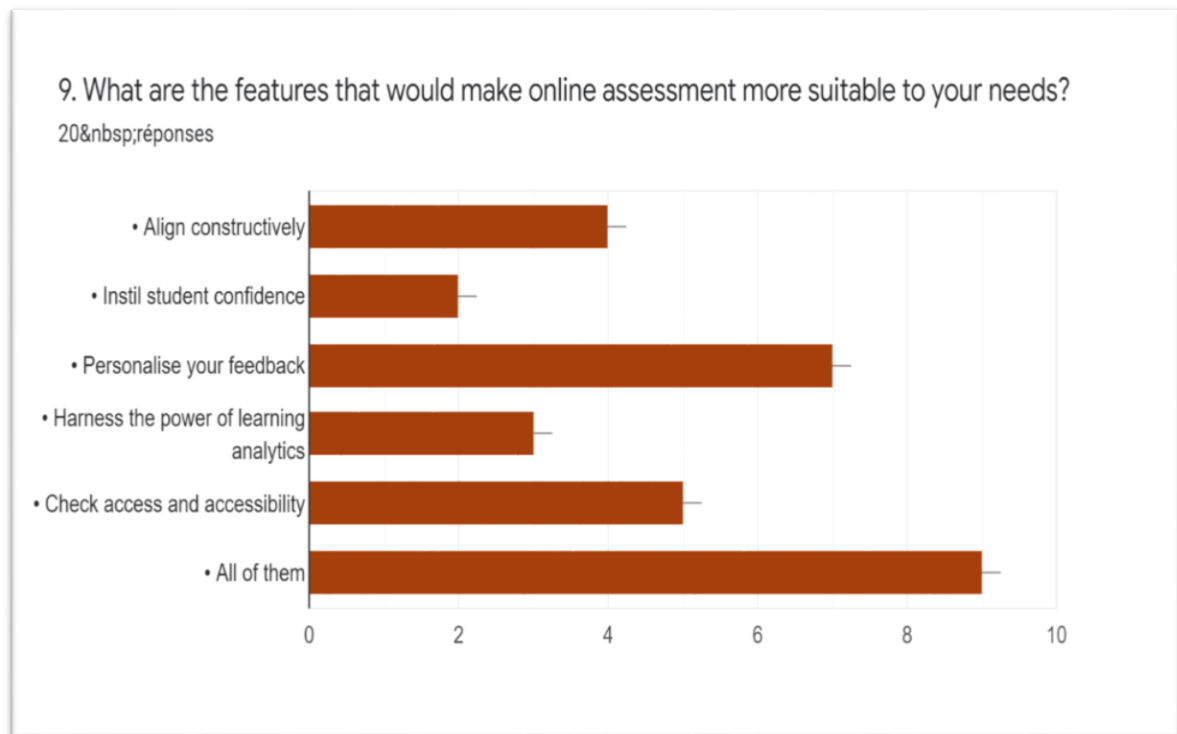


**Figure14:** Traditional assessment Vs online assessment

This graph shows the inclination of teachers whether to traditional assessment or online assessment. From the pie chart it is clear that the majority of teachers prefer to use traditional assessment rather than online assessment with 80% as the red color shows.

EFL teachers at university of Biskra was measured only by testing in traditional settings that is what made the majority of them choose the traditional one because it is more credible for the high rate of honesty and limited time, it allows the teacher to make fair reliable. In addition, face to face assessment is more effective because it limits the student to one specific area, the classroom. It provides a clear view of the students' abilities, methods and learning style. Furthermore, teacher can help students immediately whenever they have questions about the exam/ test. In the other side, some teachers preferred online assessment. Some teachers have difficulties in controlling their classes and students so online assessment made the process easier for them and time-saving. According to them it requires serious and systematic training for both learners and teachers, also it is practical.

## 9. Features of online assessment



**Figure15:** Features of online assessment

The chart gives some features that make online assessment effective and more suitable for teachers' needs.

According to the chart, the majority of teachers agree that all features should be present to fit their needs. Concerning the features mentioned above and with the comparison to each other, the highest number of chooses was for personalize your feedback , while the lowest was for instill student confidence.

## 10. specific competences that should be developed in online assessment to obtain better results

According to teachers' responses, university of Biskra suffers from the lack of many materials that make the process of assessing students in online way succeed. For teachers, technology literacy is the first problem that they struggle from. If the teachers have a high level of technological literacy it will go long way in helping them achieve what they want in online assessment. In addition, teachers mentioned another important problem

concerning students which is cheating. About the latter, teachers decided to use reflection questions to avoid cheating; also they suggested that students should seriously learn about ethics of having an online test. As a result to the responses, university of Biskra is still very far from a successful online assessment process. To make it successful first it needs to face all the challenges teachers encountered then look for what competences are needed from all the staff (university, administration, teachers and students).

### **11. How teachers overcome the problems that they feel in implementing online assessment**

Online teaching and assessment was a challengeable process for EFL teachers at university of Biskra. Teachers skip this problem by training and practices, Watching tutorials on YouTube about the best practices in e\_testing and evaluation, learning more about computer assisted language learning, using the right technique in the right way. Concerning students, teachers decided to provide awareness t students about the ethics of online assessment. As conclusion, everyone should start somewhere. Regardless, personalized teacher training and continuous administrative support will help the teacher harness the power of online learning tools and their potential for assessment.

#### **II.2.2 Synthesis of the results**

In this study the researcher used a descriptive qualitative tool which is the Opinionnaire that is provided in gathering data. The collected data was helpful for researcher to test and analyze the opinions of teachers about conducting online assessment and the challenges that they faced in managing it. The opinionnaire's results shows that EFL teachers at Mohamed Khaider university of Biskra faced a challengeable situation during the era of Covid-19 pandemic in assessing their students because of the lack of important materials that can facilitate the process of teaching and assessing. However, teachers conducted the online assessment. Few of them adapted to the situation, while

others was not familiar with it. Based on the findings, teachers used different types in assessing their students but the most were agreed on is traditional assessment submission. According to their experiences during the two past years, teachers still prefer to use traditional assessment. The research study concluded that university of Biskra still unable to use online teaching and assessment environment in official way, only if it started facing the challenges and problems that teachers encountered first.

### **Conclusion**

The second chapter was about the analysis of the study's research problem that is the challenges that faced EFL teachers in assessing and evaluating students during the era of Covid-19 and how they overcome these problems. The researcher in this study followed a descriptive qualitative method. The data collected by using Opinionnaire presented to teachers. This latter, facilitated the research process. As a result to teachers' responses, teachers demanded to look for their needs concerning this problem.

## Recommendations

As the result of this research, the most important recommendations made by the researcher are as follows.

- Teachers do not solicit students' opinion in the style they submit online assessment. So, it is better if teachers share their concepts with students to attract them to adapt online assessment and make it interesting to them. In addition, teachers should look for new techniques to make the online teaching and assessment process successful.
- Concerning their challenges, teachers should use questions that needs thinking to reduce cheating and make deadline longer to avoid student's excuses like bad network connection.
- The teacher must maintain the discipline and control of his students in conducting online assessment and enforce strict laws against those who break the rules.
- Teachers should treat students to study everywhere either in traditional settings or online environment.
- The necessity of interacting and dealing with universities of other countries that have succeeded in using platforms and in the teaching and learning.
- Conducting training lessons for teachers on the correct use of e-platforms, and establishing new teaching techniques that use these platforms.
- The use of multimedia to facilitate the communication with students via audio and video.

## **General conclusion**

In this dissertation, the researcher tries to investigate the environment of online teaching and assessment at University of Mohamed Khaider Biskra during the two last years. The researcher stated one essential research question in order to arrive with finished results. The question looked for the challenges that faced EFL teachers at University of Biskra in online assessment and how they assess their students in the era of Covid-19 pandemic.

The research contains two chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the literature review. While, the second chapter is related to the practical part of the research. The first part which is the theoretical part of the study is consisted of three sections; the first section the researcher started with a general view about assessment in general using some definitions, its main kinds, purposes and roles, principles, in addition to the teachers' perceptions about language assessment. The second section was about testing with its definition and the comparison between it and assessment, also the researcher talked about online testing by giving its definition. The third and the last section is devoted to online assessment with some definitions, types and methods, the researcher gave some tips to enhance the effectiveness of online assessment practices, the challenges that faced EFL teachers and how they managed it, kinds of online assessment tools and advantages and disadvantages of online assessment, its effectiveness and finally teachers' perceptions in it.

In the practical part of the thesis, the researcher used descriptive method to discover the challenges that EFL teachers suffered from in assessing their students; therefore, the researcher selected the Opinionnaire as a data gathering tool designed for EFL teachers at Mohamed Khaider University of Biskra to investigate the perception of teachers on online assessment, the problems that they faced in performing it and how they overcome it.

After analyzing the data collected from the Opinionnaire, it was found that teachers struggled from several difficulties and challenges in implementing online assessment.



According to results and teachers' perceptions on online assessment they stated that online assessment is an effective process but it contains many problems in performing this kind of assessment. Additionally, teachers suggested some techniques and materials for successful application of online assessment at Biskra University.

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## Appendix

### Opinionnaire For EFL teachers

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the teaching of foreign languages worldwide. Many universities have converted to online education. This Opinionnaire is designed to draw upon your experience with online assessment and the challenges you faced in designing and administering this type of assessment. Please answer the following questions by ticking next to the answers. **N.B:** you can choose more than one answer.

1. Have you ever used an online teaching environment?
2. If yes, how was your experience?
3. Have you ever been trained to design online tests and assignments? If so, please, explain.
4. What are the different types of online assessment you designed for your students?
  - Traditional assessment submitted online.
  - Automated online assessment.
  - Online interaction.
  - Group assessments online.
  - Critical reflection and meta-cognition.
  - Authentic assessment.
  - All above
5. What are the challenges you have faced when assessing students online in the past two years?
6. Do your students respond spontaneously and confidently to the assignments and tests you design? Whatever your answer, please explain.
7. Do your students struggle to adapt to this type of assessment? If so, please explain.

8. Drawing upon your experience, do you prefer traditional assessment or online assessment? Whatever your answer, please explain.
9. What are the features that would make online assessment more suitable to your needs?
  - Align constructively
  - Instill student confidence
  - Personalize your feedback
  - Harness the power of learning analytics
  - Check access and accessibility
  - All of them
10. What are the specific competences that should be developed in online assessment to obtain better results?
11. How do you overcome the problems that English teachers feel in implementing online assessment?

**We can now conclude our Opinionnaire. Thank you very much for participating and sharing your thoughts and opinions with us.**



## الملخص

ألفت أزمة فيروس كورونا بظلالها على قطاع التعليم، مما جعل الجامعات تغلق ابوابها للحد من انتشاره. كل هذا دفع بالمؤسسات التعليمية للتحويل إلى التعلم الإلكتروني. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في كيفية قيام معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية بإجراء التقييم عبر الإنترنت، وماهي التحديات التي واجهوها وكيف تغلبوا عليها في جامعة محمد خيذر بسكرة خلال وباء كوفيد-19. أهداف هذه الدراسة هي (1) وصف كيفية أداء المعلمين للتقييم عبر الإنترنت في جامعة بسكرة. (2) كيف يتعامل المعلمون مع التحديات التي واجهوها أثناء إجراء التقييم عبر الإنترنت. استخدم الباحث في هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي النوعي. قام الباحث بجمع البيانات باستخدام استبيان الرأي المصمم لـ 20 مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة بسكرة. تظهر النتائج أن المعلمين واجهوا العديد من التحديات في تنفيذ التقييم عبر الإنترنت.

