

# Digital Teaching Aptitudes and Self-Efficacy of Tunisian Foreign Languages Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

*In this digital age, the educational scene has promoted from the technical advancements and the internet revolution and has witnessed the emergence of new modes of teaching such as online learning, e-learning, and distance learning. These new alternatives are challenging for both teachers and learners who must acquire a minimum level of digital skills particularly in foreign language virtual lessons owing to the fact that language is the medium and the area of teaching. This study aims to evaluate Tunisian foreign language teachers' online teaching aptitudes and self-efficacy to conduct virtual lessons. It targets 60 teachers from secondary schools and universities who completed a Likert-scale questionnaire to measure their competency in online teaching. The questionnaire is scored on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The preliminary findings reveal that though the participants typically have high online learning competencies, considerable disparities are marked.*

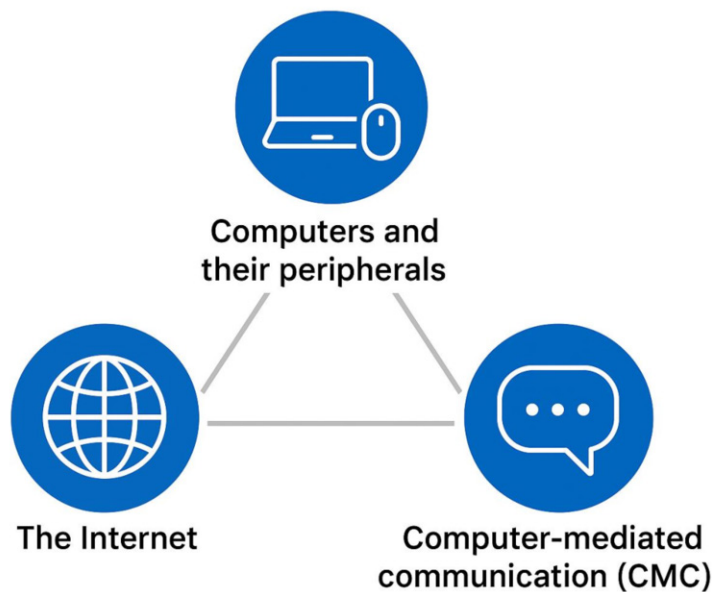
## BACKGROUND OF STUDY: E-TEACHING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

When talking about present-day education, modern modes such as online teaching, e-learning, and distance education prevail in the educational landscape (Bates, 2005; Desai, Hart & Richards, 2008). In fact, this trend of distance teaching dates back to the late 1990s and the early 2000s, when the internet revolution and technological innovations invaded almost all economic sectors, particularly the service sector embracing business, tourism, banking, and education (Harasim, 2000), and the orthodox toolset of education-pens, books, copybooks, chalkboards, and whiteboards- outdated. These tools were supplanted by computers, desktops, CDs, mobile apps, audio, and video platforms like YouTube, podcasts, e-books, and movies, which are more interesting and encouraging. These new tools are the pillars upon which, new form of communication well known “computer-mediated communication” (CMC) (Bush & Sorensen, 2013), referring to human communication via computers (Simpson, 2002, p. 414). This medium of communication has taken a dramatic outspread with the proliferation of social network sites(SNS): Facebook, Instagram, Twitter Whatsup, Viber, imo... which, by this significant surge, gave

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an effect to the general economy, specially to the service sector in which nowadays we talk about online shopping, online delivery food services, online hotel booking, online education as stated by Ubaedillah, Pratiwi, Huda & Kurniawan (2021). Accordingly, online teaching interweaves the three interconnected elements: computers and their peripherals, the internet and computer-mediated communication (CMC), as illustrated in Figure 1.

*Figure 1. The components of distance education*



The invention of the computer and the sophisticated technological accessories in 1930s to store information replaced the traditional pen and notepad, thereby setting a platform for an unparalleled uprising of the internet. The Internet was invented in 1967. The propagation of internet went through two phases, in the beginning, it was not available for all people as it was used only for military purposes, to exchange information then it become available for civilians. Naughton (2016) claimed: “the evolution of the network to date can be summarized in terms of two main phases: its development from a military experiment to a civilian utility, and the commercialization of the network” (p.7).

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