

EVALUATION OF EMERGENCY DISTANCE LANGUAGE EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES OF ELT STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the views of language teaching students on Emergency Distance Language Education (EDLE) during Covid-19 pandemic. The current study specifically aimed to reveal the perspectives of ELT students on EDLE in terms of its suitability, effectiveness, teachability, and study habits of the learners considering their gender, year of education, and time spent on the internet. In addition, this study aimed to reveal problems of EDLE and offer solutions to these problems. The present study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods. A Likert-type scale and interview forms were used in the data collection process. A total of 116 students answered the items in the Opinions about Distance Education Scale developed by Yıldırım, Yıldırım, Çelik and Karaman (2014). A series of descriptive analysis, T-tests, and One-way ANOVA were used in the analysis of the scale. Content analysis was used for the data collected through interview forms. The results showed that there were no differences in the views of male and female participants on any dimensions of the scale. The only significant difference was found between 2nd and 4th year participants' views regarding the personal suitability dimension of the scale. The most frequently stated problems of EDLE were technological difficulties, mental problems, lack of interaction, material problems, and lack of experience. Flexibility of time and place, efficiency of time and money, and opportunity to improve digital literacy skills were stated to be the advantages while lack of self-discipline and self-motivation, lack of teacher-student and student-student interaction, health problems, slow feedback, and technical problems were expressed as the disadvantages of distance language teaching. Finally, the students think that distance language teaching can be used as additional material in learning process but cannot replace traditional face-to-face education.

Keywords: Emergency distance language teaching, Problems, Foreign language, Covid-19.

ACİL UZAKTAN YABANCI DİL EĞİTİMİNİN DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ: İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN BAKIŞ AÇILARI

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğrencilerinin salgın döneminde acil uzaktan dil öğrenimi ile ilgili görüşlerini değerlendirilmesidir. Bu çalışma özellikle İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğrencilerinin, uzaktan eğitimin uygunluğu, etkililiği, öğretilebilirliği ve öğrencilerin çalışma alışkanlıkları ile ilgili görüşlerinin cinsiyet, sınıf, eğlence veya eğitim için internette geçirdikleri zaman açısından herhangi bir değişiklik gösterip göstermediğini bulmayı amaçlamaktadır. Buna ek olarak, bu çalışma acil uzaktan yabancı dil öğretiminde ortaya çıkan problemleri ve çözüm önerilerini sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada hem nitel hem de nicel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Veri toplama sürecinde Likert tipi ölçek ve görüşme formları kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmaya 116 İngilizce öğretmenliği öğrencisi katılmıştır. Likert tip ölçek ile toplanan verilerin analizinde bir dizi betimsel analiz, T-test ve Tek Yönlü ANOVA kullanılmıştır. Görüşme formlarıyla elde edilen verilerin analizinde ise içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın sonucu, erkek ve kadın İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğrencilerinin uzaktan eğitime dair görüşlerinde anlamlı bir farklılık olmadığı sonucunu göstermiştir. Bu çalışmada anlamlı farklılık bulunan tek boyut 2. ve 4. sınıf öğrencilerinin uzaktan eğitim anketinin uygunluk boyutunda olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Uzaktan dil eğitiminin en çok ifade edilen

sorunlarının teknolojik zorluklar, zihinsel problemler, etkileşim azlığı, kaynak eksikliği ve deneyim eksikliği olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Uzaktan dil eğitiminin avantajları olarak zaman ve mekân esnekliği, para ve zaman açısından ekonomi ve dijital okur-yazarlık becerisi geliştirmesi olarak ifade edilirken dezavantajları olarak da öz-disiplin ve öz-motivasyon eksikliği, öğrenci-öğretmen ve öğrenci-öğrenci etkileşiminin azlığı, sağlık problemleri ve yavaş dönütler olduğu ifade edilmiştir. Öğrenciler uzaktan eğitimin dil öğretiminde ek kaynak olarak kullanılabileceğini ancak yüz yüze eğitimin yerini tutamayacağını belirtmişlerdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Acil uzaktan dil eğitimi, Sorunlar, Yabancı Dil, Covid-19.

1. INTRODUCTION

The advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) reshaped teaching and learning settings. Computer and internet technologies enabled learners to study at their homes at any time without attending traditional face-to-face classes. In other words, distance education provides teaching and learning environment without time or place constraints. There are many reasons for preferring distance education over regular in-class education such as enabling learners control their pace (Cowan, 1995), and providing flexibility or access in terms of time and place (White, 2004). However, in recent time, because of the emergence of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, distance education has become a necessity for education to continue. The pandemic created uncertainty and panic all over the world and countries rapidly started to use distance education tools to minimize the negative effects of the pandemic on education and to maintain it.

As in other countries of the world, the Turkish government has stopped face-to-face education and education institutions closed down on March 12 (2020) temporarily to prevent the spread of the virus. Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in Turkey announced that primary and secondary schools would start distance education starting from March 23, 2020 (MoNE, 2020). Council of Higher Education (YÖK) in Turkey also announced that universities would be closed for the spring semester to halt the spread of the virus (YÖK, 2020). Since then, universities in Turkey precipitately started to use digital and distance education tools to maintain education. The transition from face-to-face education to distance education was very urgent because in this uncertainty, distance education was the only solution to overcome the educational problems that the pandemic created. Because of the rapid transition from face-to-face to distance education, there was not enough time to systematically plan the distance education process or to train the teachers during the pandemic (Durak and Çankaya, 2020). Thus, distance education during the pandemic is different from the qualified online teaching before the pandemic (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, and Bond, 2020). Therefore, alternative definitions such as emergency distance education or emergency e-learning were used for the distance education during the pandemic (Toquero, 2020). Accordingly, this rapid transition brought about some problems such as technical and infrastructure problems, the inexperience of teachers about distance education, the distractions from teaching and studying at home, and the efficiency and proportion of online teaching materials (Zhang, Wang, Yang and Wang, 2020).

Within this context, transferring knowledge and materials into distance education platforms without prior experience was highly challenging for language teachers. Language learning students also have difficulty in adapting distance language learning process which requires optimum interaction of student-student and student-teacher. With these considerations in mind, the present study aimed to find out the views of English Language Teaching (ELT) students studying at a public university on distance language education in the shadow of COVID-19 pandemic days. Examining ELT students' perspectives on Emergency Distance Language Education (EDLE henceforth) is important because EDLE is different from face-to-face in-class education or planned and qualified distance education and this was a new experience for ELT students. Such a study would provide new insights into the effectiveness of distance education and would provide implications for the improvement of EDLE.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies on distance education generally focused on the effectiveness and quality of distance education, learner autonomy in distance education, and the perspectives and views on distance education. For example, Xu and Jaggars (2011) evaluated the effectiveness of distance

education specific to introductory Math and English courses among community colleges and concluded that online courses were not as effective as face-to-face courses. The researchers suggested that online courses did not provide instructional and institutional supports to students as much as the face-to-face versions of these courses. On the other hand, Allen, Mabry, Mattrey, Bourhis, Titsworth and Burrell (2004) conducted a meta-analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of distance education and found that distance education, which allowed interaction with native speakers, was more effective than traditional in-class language education. Similarly, Zhao, Lei, Yan, Lai and Tan (2005) conducted a meta-analysis to analyze research in terms of the effectiveness of distance education. Zhao et. al (2005) concluded that there were no significant differences between distance and face-to-face teaching based on aggregated data; however, there were significant differences across the studies. The researchers stated that interaction among students and between instructors as well as the right proportion of human and technology were the keys to increase the effectiveness of distance education. The study also revealed that knowledge and skill can be taught more effectively in distance education. Therefore, the studies on the effectiveness of distance education have contrasting results.

The second arrays of studies on distance education focused on the learner autonomy because autonomy has been defined as the learners' ability to take charge of their own learning (Holec, 1981), the capacity of the learners to take control of their own learning (Benson, 2001), or learners being in charge of setting the goal, choosing methods, materials as well as tasks and finally selecting criteria for evaluation (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991). Therefore, autonomy has more significant role to play in distance learning (Fotiadou, Angelaki, Mavroidis, 2017) and distance learners need to be autonomous to varying degrees (Moore, 1972). In a similar vein, conducted with 391 distance language learners in Thai context, Vanijdee (2003) noted that learners showed varying degrees of learner autonomy and there were neither absolute autonomy nor total lack of it. She labeled those fairly distinct groups as dynamic and self-sufficient distance language learners. On the other hand, Fotiadou, Angelaki and Mavroidis (2017) found that learners' level of autonomy was above average; however, they needed interaction both with their peers and their tutors regardless of their level of autonomy. The researchers stated that learners needed academic, emotional, and psychological support, and communication had crucial role in autonomy levels of the learners. Firat (2016) aimed to measure autonomy of distance education learners in Turkish context and found that the autonomy level of distance education learners was high. The researcher also revealed that autonomy levels of the learners did not change according to the program they study or gender but there was positive correlation between learner autonomy and learners' Information and Communication Technology (ICT) literacy. Firat (2016) suggested to increase ICT literacy of the learners to increase their learning autonomy.

The third cluster of studies concentrated on the perspectives and views of learners on distance language learning or students' and instructors' attitudes towards distance language learning. For example, Ozudogru and Hismanoglu (2016) conducted a survey model study to reveal first year students' views on distance foreign language courses in Turkish context. The study showed that students had negative views on distance language education as it diminished the opportunities for natural interaction. Furthermore, the study showed that there were statistically significant differences according to gender and faculty. While female students had more positive views than male students on distance language education, vocational college students had more negative views on distance education compared to students studying at other faculties. Similarly, Altunay (2019) investigated Turkish EFL students' views on distance language education and she found that first year EFL students did not have clear idea about the teachability, suitability, effectiveness, and study habits of distance language teaching. Moreover, according to semi-structured interview analysis, students thought that although distance language education provided them the flexibility of time and place, face-to-face language education was more effective than distance language education. On the contrary, Ekmekçi (2015) demonstrated that distance language teaching met the learners' expectations although negative perceptions of distance education such as providing feedback, grading techniques, and clarity of students' responsibility were also stated by the participants. However, all these studies were conducted at regular times. The world goes through an extraordinary

period because of the pandemic and the most effective way to maintain education was distance teaching. However, the transition from face to face teaching to distance teaching was so urgent that naturally, there have been some problems. Some of the previous studies were conducted during the pandemic to reveal those problems and perspectives of the students towards distance education. For example, Hassan and Mirza (2020) found lack of face-to-face interaction, absence of physical gestures and human touch as the limitations of emergency distance education. Students also reported lack of motivation to attend classes and distractions during the class in the study. Likewise, Octaberlina and Muslimin (2020) found similar results in their study. The researchers identified three barriers for EFL learners in emergency distance education. These barriers were lack of personal touch, lack of technology and physical barriers. Huang, Shi and Yang (2020) investigated the students' experiences on emergency remote teaching of English language learning in China, where the pandemic has started. The study concluded that the most widely adopted instruction was grammar translation method during the distance learning and the interaction between student-student and student-instructor was very limited. The study also showed that the learning content and activities were similar to those used in face-to-face instruction and students' motivation was driven by extrinsic goals. Finally, Öztürk Karataş and Tuncer (2020) aimed to explore the effects of emergency distance teaching on language skills development in the Turkish context. Thematic analysis of the study showed that while content and implementation of online classes, flexibility of time and place, use of online resources, cost efficiency and teachers' role were among the advantages of emergency distance education, absence of face-to-face classroom environment, insufficient teacher guidance, technical issues, reading on a computer, and lack of individual effort were among the disadvantages of emergency distance education. The researchers also revealed that the most positively and negatively affected language skill during emergency distance education was writing and speaking respectively.

In the reviewed literature, it can be seen that face-to-face and distance language learning experiences of language learners are different from the distance language learning experiences of students during pandemic days. Therefore, it is a necessity to reveal students' views on the effectiveness and suitability of EDLE during pandemic days. This study specifically aimed to find out the views of language students on EDLE in terms of its suitability, effectiveness, teachability, and study habits of the learners considering their gender, year of education, and time spent in the internet. This study also aimed to reveal the problems, advantages and disadvantages of EDLE. The research questions formulated for the present study are as follows:

1. Are there any differences in the views of ELT students on EDLE in terms of their gender?
2. Are there any differences in the views of ELT students on EDLE in terms of their year of education?
3. Are there any differences in the views of ELT students on EDLE in terms of time spent on the internet for studying or entertainment?
4. What are the views of ELT students on EDLE in terms of its problems, advantages, disadvantages, and suitability?

3. METHOD

3.1. The Participants and Context

The participants of the current study were 1st year (N=38), 2nd year (N=28), 3rd year (N=25), and 4th year (N=25) students studying at the English Language Teaching Department in a Turkish state university. Therefore, a total of 116 students participated in this study. In the selection of the participants, convenience sampling method, a type of non-probability sampling method, was employed because the participants were easy to access and reach, especially in the pandemic days. The data of the study were collected in 2020 spring semester during online Reading II, Linguistics II, Material Development, and Contrastive Turkish-English Grammar lessons. As for the distance education system, Moodle and Zoom applications were used in the instructions.

3.2. Instruments and Data Collection

A Likert-type scale and interview forms were used in the data collection process. The Opinions about Distance Education Scale developed by Yıldırım, Yıldırım, Çelik and Karaman (2014) was the five-Likert-type scale of the study. The scale was applied online and in Turkish. The items of the scale ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Opinions about Distance Education Scale consists of 4 dimensions: Personal Suitability (6 items), Effectiveness (5 items), Teachability (4 items), and Study Habits (3 items). Reliability analysis was conducted for each dimension and for the whole scale. Because there were some contrasting items, these items were converted before the reliability analysis. Cronbach Alpha of the scale was found to be .882 for Personal Suitability, .892 for Effectiveness, .859 for Teachability, .705 for Study Habits, and .920 for the whole scale.

In addition to Opinions about Distance Education Scale, online interview forms were used for the data collection. Interview questions were sent to the participants and they were asked to answer the following questions:

1. What are the problems you face in distance language lesson?
2. What are the advantages of distance language teaching?
3. What are the disadvantages of distance language learning?
4. Which lessons are more suitable for distance language learning?
5. What would be your suggestions regarding distance language learning?

3.3. Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedures were employed in this study. The data obtained through the scale were analyzed by using SPSS 23 software. In the analysis of the scale, a series of descriptive analysis, T-tests, and One-way ANOVA were used. Before the analysis process, some contrasting items were converted to be in the same direction. Content analysis was used for the data collected through interview forms. Before the content analysis, the answers of the participants were numbered and classified according their year of education. Then, the data were listed under each interview question. Two researchers read the answers and worked together to code the data. Codes and themes were decided with a consensus. The findings were supported by direct quotations of the participants.

4. FINDINGS

First of all, the mean scores of the items found in the scale were presented below. According to the table below, item 17 (Most of the time, I do not finish the homework or exercises given.) had the lowest mean score ($M= 1.93$) followed by item 11 (Distance learning is more effective than traditional education.). On the other hand, item 12 (Face-to-face interaction is necessary for best English learning.) and item 13 (Communication in face-to-face English learning is more instant and clearer than in distance learning.) had the highest mean scores ($M= 4.18$). Therefore, these items showed that although students have self-discipline to accomplish their assignments or homework, they did not think that EDLE was as effective as face-to-face language education and face-to-face interaction was necessity to accomplish successful language education.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the scale items.

Items	Strongly Disagree (N)	Disagree (N)	Neutral (N)	Agree (N)	Strongly Agree (N)	Mean (M)	Std.	
Personal suitability	1. It is convenient for me to learn English through distance education.	21	31	35	21	8	2.69	1.16
	2. Learning English through distance education is suitable for my lifestyle.	32	29	22	25	8	2.55	1.28

	3.	Distance learning is a suitable alternative to obtain the English education I need.	33	26	24	25	8	2.56	1.29
	4.	Distance learning allows me to learn English without losing time.	20	20	30	36	10	2.97	1.23
	5.	I need the flexibility of participating the lesson without time and place constraints.	13	21	20	42	20	3.30	1.26
	6.	It is difficult for me to go to the university campus to study.	28	50	12	13	3	2.08	1.05
Effectiveness	7.	Distance learning makes the student more active in terms of learning English.	43	39	14	16	4	2.13	1.16
	8.	Distance education offers the opportunity to do various activities to learn English.	29	29	32	20	6	2.53	1.19
	9.	Distance education allows students to learn English at their own pace.	18	21	21	46	10	3.08	1.24
	10.	Those learned in English classes are internalized thanks to distance education.	38	33	32	9	4	2.21	1.09
	11.	Distance learning is more effective than traditional education.	53	36	11	9	7	1.97	1.19
Teachability	12.	Face-to-face interaction is necessary for best English learning.	2	7	10	45	52	4.18	0.95
	13.	Communication in face-to-face English learning is more instant and clearer than in distance learning.	3	5	13	42	53	4.18	0.97
	14.	English education is offered better through traditional education compared to distance education	6	6	18	35	51	4.02	1.13
	15.	I need face-to-face communication to learn English.	4	15	11	37	49	3.96	1.16
Study Habits	16.	I have the habit of postponing to accomplish the given assignments or exercises.	18	39	17	29	13	2.82	1.28
	17.	Most of the time, I do not finish the homework or exercises given.	41	55	9	9	2	1.93	0.94
	18.	I wait until the last moment to do my homework or to study for the exams.	27	40	26	10	13	2.50	1.25

In order to find out if there were any differences in the views of the participants on EDLE in terms of their gender, Independent Samples T-test analysis was conducted. The analysis results are

shown in the table below. According to Table 2, there were no differences in the views of male and female participants on any dimensions of Attitudes towards Distance Education Scale.

Table 2. T-test results comparing the effect of gender on the views of the students about distance language teaching

Scale Dimensions	Female (N=86)		Male (N=30)		p
	M	SD	M	SD	
Personal Suitability	15.69	5.97	17.43	5.15	.343
Effectiveness	11.59	4.81	12.83	5.18	.737
Teachability	7.56	3.38	7.83	4.05	.212
Study Habits	11.08	2.73	9.76	2.75	.895

The second research question of the study seeks the differences in the views of the participants on EDLE based on their year of education. One-way ANOVA analysis was conducted to compare the effects of participants' year of education on their views about EDLE. The results of the analysis are as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. One-way ANOVA comparing the effects of participants' year of education on their views about distance language teaching

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personal Suitability	Between Groups	261.989	3	87.330	2.706	.049
	Within Groups	3614.519	112	32.272		
	Total	3876.509	115			
Effectiveness	Between Groups	159.010	3	53.003	2.262	.085
	Within Groups	2624.128	112	23.430		
	Total	2783.138	115			
Teachability	Between Groups	80.969	3	26.990	2.210	.091
	Within Groups	1367.824	112	12.213		
	Total	1448.793	115			
Study Habits	Between Groups	56.635	3	18.878	2.530	.061
	Within Groups	835.606	112	7.461		
	Total	892.241	115			

As shown in Table 3, the effect of year of education on the personal suitability dimension of the scale was significant ($F(3,112) = 2.706, p < .05$). The only significant difference was found in the personal suitability dimension of the scale. A Tukey post hoc test revealed that there were statistically significant differences between 2nd ($M=13.92, SD=4.89$) and 4th ($M=18.16, SD=6.06$) year participants' views regarding the personal suitability dimension of EDLE ($p=.039$).

The third question of the study aimed to reveal if time spent for education and entertainment had any effects participants' views on EDLE. One-way ANOVA results showed that there were no significant differences in the views of participants about EDLE in terms of time spent for education or entertainment.

In addition to quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis was also conducted in the present study. The data collected through interview forms were analyzed quantitatively. The answers of the participants were listed under themes of problems, advantages, disadvantages, suitability, and suggestions. As for the problems with EDLE, the most stated problems were technological difficulties, mental problems, lack of interaction, material problems, and lack of experience. The most frequently stated problem of distance language teaching was technological difficulties. Almost one of every two students indicated problems with internet connection. Statements typifying these views are presented below:

"The second problem was the quality of my internet connection." (P17, 2nd year)

"I have had hard times hearing what teachers say and my connections have failed." (P48, 4th year)

“First, I have some problems about being able to have an internet connection as I live in the village. This is a challenge to me to write an entry to the system and I cannot even talk on the phone very well because of the connection problem.” (P19, 2nd year)

“Firstly, I do not have a good wireless connection. I did not have nonstop lesson during distance linguistic lesson. It paused several times because of my weak internet connection.” (P27, 2nd year)

Participants also stated that they had problems with motivating in lessons. The findings showed that it was difficult for students to focus on their courses. The following quotations exemplify mental problems distance language teaching created:

“Being at home in comfort zone made me lazy. I cannot concentrate on my lesson during distance linguistics lessons.” (P35 3rd year)

“There are so many distractors at home; therefore, it was so hard for me to focus on lessons.” (P24, 2nd year)

“While I was studying on-line or I was looking at the screen, I lost my concentration too many times. Therefore, it is a bit hard to keep going on linguistics lessons on-line.” (P18, 2nd year)

Another frequently stated problem of distance language teaching was the lack of interaction. Most of the students thought that face-to-face interaction was more effective than distance language teaching on the grounds that distance language teaching decreased student-teacher and student-student interaction. Some of the students expressed interaction problems as follow:

“For my humble ideas the first common problem will be face to face interaction because Linguistics is a highly deep an incomprehensible lesson at some points that’s why as a student we may have some understanding and perception problem, these kinds of problems can be solved by asking questions to the lecturer or negotiating with friends. Moreover, in the classroom the learning atmosphere is more convenient and easier, sometimes even if we don’t understand a topic some friends can ask this question and rest of the students learn it in an indirect way which is that an advantage of all of the students.” (P21, 2nd year)

“I think the biggest problem of distance education is not being able to ask instant questions about a subject that is not understood especially in our English lectures such as Linguistics.” (P27, 2nd year)

“Our teacher explains the things that we do not understand in normal education process but in distance lesson, there are lots of things that I do not understand and it is not easy to ask the teacher all my questions about the class.” (P36, 3rd year)

“There is no eye contact and discussion environment in distance education. We cannot easily ask our questions due to the fact that we cannot face our teachers.” (P51, 4th year)

The students also expressed lack of experience and lack of sources as other problems of EDLE. Students did not have distance language education before and it was difficult for them to adapt online courses. Some of the students stated that the online resources were not enough to support their learning. Students’ views are as follow:

“I have not had distance education experience before, so it was hard to follow all lessons through Internet.” (P55, 4th year)

“The first problem I experienced was the process of adapting to the classroom environment at home, because I did not have distance education experience before.” (P10, 1st year)

“The most important factor that affected me negatively was being at home. It is difficult to go to my room and follow the lesson because I have never had such an experience before.” (P39, 3rd year)

Another question of the interview was about the advantages of distance language teaching. The most frequently expressed advantage of distance language teaching was flexibility of time and place. Most of the participants were happy to be at their comfort zone without time constraints and to watch lesson videos whenever they want. The participants also stated time efficiency and cost

efficiency as advantages of distance education. The students did not have to pay for transportation and dormitory fees or they did not lose time while preparing for the school or in traffic. Digital literacy was stated to be another advantage of distance education. The participants stated that this process was an opportunity for them to improve their technology competency skills and to learn new teaching tools.

As for the disadvantages of distance education, most of the participants specified lack of self-discipline and self-motivation. According to the participants, the amount of teacher-student and student-student interaction is very low in distance education. Lack of interaction and many distractors at home makes it difficult for the students to focus on their lessons. Apart from motivation, discipline, planning and concentration problems; health problems, slow feedback, and technical problems were also stated to be disadvantages of distance language teaching. Students think that distance language teaching can be used as additional material in learning process but cannot replace traditional face-to-face education. Moreover, distance language teaching is not appropriate for all the language lessons. The participants' views on the disadvantages of distance language learning as follow:

"In my opinion, distance learning requires self-motivation. Due to the fact that distance learning is flexible, you would like suitable organization, planning and work to create it happen." (P53, 4th year)

"The education given through a camera does not support all necessary information that we need to learn for our job in the future. You cannot make eye contact with your teacher, you cannot ask a simple question without waiting. Maybe for some of the students you cannot focus or adapt to lesson." (P43, 3rd year)

"There is no collaboration in distance language learning. When students are in class, they interact with each other, and it is necessary for learning." (P7, 1st year)

The participants stated theoretical courses to be more suitable for distance language teaching than practical lessons. Most of the students specified that Turkish History, General Culture, English Literature, and elective courses can be taught in distance education even after the pandemic. The students noted that the courses that require reading such as English literature was more suitable while the courses that require interaction and body language such as English Drama was not appropriate for distance language teaching. In general, the students do not think that the courses taught in English Language Teaching Department are suitable for distance education. One of the students expressed the following views:

"I do not think that any lesson is suitable for the distance learning. Especially, language students need to use language and hear the language from first hand. It has to be dynamic and it requires real time practice. These kinds of students need eye contact and feedback, for some cases the feedback needs to happen immediately. Teachers need to monitor students in order to understand their mistakes or accuracy about the language that they are teaching. Distance learning makes it impossible and it reduces efficiency in language learning." (P55, 4th year)

According to the participants, the most important skill they needed during distance education process was digital literacy; therefore, the students suggested that digital literacy lesson should be added to the curriculum of English Language Teaching. The participants stated that they would need to have digital literacy skills not only for their distance education process, but for their future professional career. The participants also expressed that instructors should be active to increase motivation of the students, adapt more technological tools in their courses, and increase student-teacher and student-student interaction. Students' suggestions for distance language teaching are as follow:

"Generally, we aren't motivated in distance education process. I think teachers should arrange a meeting to motivate us." (P3, 1st year)

"We are learning how to use the tool during our lessons. It may be a perfect idea to inform students about how to use distance education tools. A lesson on how to use distance education tools can be added to our curriculum to adapt this process and to solve any problems when we encounter." (P21, 2nd year)

“Students need interaction, and distance language learning does not offer interaction as in the face-to-face education.” (P31, 3rd year)

5. DISCUSSION

The descriptive analysis of the scale showed that the item “Most of the time, I do not finish the homework or exercises given” had the lowest mean score while the items “Face-to-face interaction is necessary for best English learning” and “Communication in face-to-face English learning is more instant and clearer than in distance learning” had the highest mean scores. This finding is compatible with the previous findings (Altunay, 2019; Ozudogru and Hismanoglu, 2016). For example, Altunay (2019) applied the same scale to ELT students and found the same results. The researcher stated that students prefer face-to-face learning in language learning process and they think that they need face-to-face instruction in language learning process. In a similar vein, Ozudogru and Hismanoglu (2016) revealed that distance ELT students had negative attitudes towards distance language teaching and they are not satisfied with distance language learning applications. Therefore, it can be concluded that face-to-face interaction is necessary especially for language learning students and distance language education cannot provide as much interaction as traditional face-to-face education.

One of the important findings of the current study showed that there were not any statistically significant differences in the view of the participants on any dimensions of distance education scale based on their gender. It is hard to make direct comparison of this finding with the previous findings because previous studies were conducted in regular times. Among the previous studies, Altunay (2019) found that there were not any differences in the views of students on distance language teaching regarding their gender. On the other hand, Ozudogru and Hismanoglu (2016) revealed significant differences between males and females only in the ‘Information Content Quality’ dimension of the scale they applied. The scale that is used in the current study did not consider content quality of distance language teaching. Köprülü and Öznacar (2019) analyzed the attitudes towards distance learning in foreign language education based on various variables including gender. The researchers revealed that there were significant differences in the attitudes of male and female student towards distance language education in favor of female students.

The current study demonstrated that there were statistically significant differences between 2nd and 4th year participants’ views regarding the personal suitability dimension of the scale in favor of 4th year students. It is difficult to compare this finding with the previous findings because previous findings on EDLE did not consider year of education as independent variable. The reason for such a finding might be that 4th year students are preparing for The Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS) and they spend most of their time for preparing the exam. Being time-efficiency, distance language teaching may be more suitable for them.

One-way ANOVA results showed that there were not any statistically significant differences in the views of ELT students on distance language teaching in terms of time spent on the internet for studying or entertainment. Similarly, Ozudogru and Hismanoglu (2016) revealed no significant differences between time spent on e-learning system and all the dimension of the scale they applied to Turkish students.

The current study also revealed important findings from qualitative analysis. The content analysis showed that technological difficulties, mental problems, lack of interaction, material problems, and lack of experience were the most frequently stated problems of EDLE. These findings were in line with the previous findings. For example, a qualitative analysis conducted in India by Hasan and Khan (2020) revealed that poor network and connection (51%), distractions (16.71%), lack of interaction (14%), poor comprehensibility of content (14%), and lack of support (10.78%) as the top five most disliked elements of distance language teaching.

Flexibility of time and place, time efficiency, cost efficiency, and opportunity for digital literacy skill were expressed as the advantages of distance language teaching in the current study. These findings were compatible with the previous findings. For example, Öztürk Karataş and Tuncer (2020) identified nine themes on the advantages of distance language teaching. These themes were

content and implementation of online courses, comfortable atmosphere of home, free time, properties of distance education platform, use of computer/online tools/resources, time and cost efficiency, teacher's role, no advantages, and no answer. The researchers concluded that distance language teaching was advantageous because it allowed time for focusing on skill development, provided comfort-zone without stress, offered time efficiency, cost efficiency, and gave opportunity for the use of online tools and resources. Correspondingly, Hasan and Khan (2020) demonstrated that flexibility was the most liked element of distance education. Therefore, flexibility of time and place that mostly stated by the participants of the current study as the advantage of EDLE was in line with the previous findings.

The current study showed that the most frequently stated disadvantage of distance language teaching was the lack of self-motivation and self-discipline, and too many distractors at home. Similarly, in Hassan and Khan's study (2020) 40% of the participants disagreed that they felt motivated. On the other hand, Huang, Shi and Yang (2020) revealed that the students' motivation was mainly extrinsically or instrumentally driven. Although this finding may seem to contradict with the findings of this study, the participants of the current study did their homework because of the necessity or to pass the exams as in the study of Huang, Shi and Yang (2020). In a similar vein, in Octaberlina and Muslimin study (2020), "I have too many distractions e.g., games YouTube etc." option was found to be the second barrier preventing the effectiveness of distance education. Consequently, it can be proposed that because students feel lack of motivation in distance language process, they can be easily affected by the distractors at home. Another striking finding of the study showed that the amount of teacher-student and student-student interaction was not as much as the interaction found in face-to-face classes. This finding was similar to the previous findings (Hasan and Khan, 2020; Hassan and Mirza, 2020; Öztürk Karataş and Tuncer, 2020; Octaberlina and Muslimin, 2020). Contrary to this, Huang, Shi and Yang (2020) demonstrated that distance education granted students more opportunities for interaction with their instructors and peers; however, distance education did not provide collaboration between the students as found in the present study. The reason for high interaction in Huang, Shi and Yang (2020) may be caused by application they used in distance education process.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Distance language teaching is the only way to maintain education during COVID-19 pandemic and the pandemic offered an opportunity to test digital platforms of universities and to practice technological way of teaching and learning. However, this urgent and unplanned digital learning transformation brought about some problems, but it also has advantages. The data of the current study showed that the students did not have positive attitudes towards EDLE, but they also know that it is the only way to maintain the continuity of their education. In the process of EDLE, one of the most frequently stated problems was technological issues such as poor internet connection or lack of computer. Such problems create inequality among the students and create a barrier against the implementation of systematic and effective teaching and learning environment. Therefore, governments, policymakers, and institutions should carefully plan their investments because "a systematic approach in investing, planning, and delivering online learning is an absolute must" (Vlachopoulos, 2020, p. 18). Other problems that remain as barrier against the implementation of successful teaching and learning environment during the distance learning were lack of motivation, lack of self-discipline, lack of student-teacher and student-student interaction, and lack of collaboration. To eliminate those problems, instructors should be active participants of the lessons to keep the students engaged and active. The instructors need to provide contexts that allow students to collaborate and interact with each other. They also need to take continuous feedback from their student on the effectiveness of the lessons and reorganize their lessons accordingly. We do not know what the future holds for us or how long this pandemic will continue. Therefore, the instructors and institutions should be prepared for the implementation of Emergency education situations by redesigning they syllabuses or investing in the most effective distance education tools. Because, the content of the lessons and the way how they are implemented define the effectiveness and success of EDLE.

One of the important problems of EDLE was students' lack of experience, which made it harder for them to adapt the process. In addition to that, this process showed us that the most needed skill was the digital literacy skills of the students and instructors. Therefore, it can be suggested that distance language teaching can be used as additional material in language learning process. Using distance education as additional material in teaching and learning process would offer the opportunity for students and instructors to be equipped with digital literacy skills that they will need for teaching and learning process. In addition, adding new courses such as technological knowledge, digital literacy skills, or online tools for language teaching to the curriculum of ELT departments would help students to cope with the problems they face during distance language teaching. Moreover, instructors should be supported by professional trainings focusing on digital literacy and they should be encouraged to combine their pedagogy and content knowledge with their digital literacy skills.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Amaç

Bu çalışmanın amacı İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğrencilerinin salgın döneminde acil uzaktan dil öğrenimi ile ilgili görüşlerini değerlendirilmesidir. Bu çalışma özellikle İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğrencilerinin, uzaktan eğitimin uygunluğu, etkililiği, öğretilbilirliği ve öğrencilerin çalışma alışkanlıkları ile ilgili görüşlerinin cinsiyet, sınıf ve eğlence veya eğitim için internette geçirdikleri zaman açısından herhangi bir değişiklik gösterip göstermediğini bulmayı amaçlamaktadır. Buna ek olarak, bu çalışma acil uzaktan yabancı dil öğretiminde ortaya çıkan problemleri ve çözüm önerilerini sunmayı ayrıca uzaktan yabancı dil eğitiminin avantajlarını ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Yöntem

Bu çalışmada hem nitel hem de nicel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Veri toplama sürecinde Likert tipi ölçek ve görüşme formları kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın nicel verisi Yıldırım, Yıldırım, Çelik and Karaman (2014) tarafından geliştirilen uzaktan eğitim tutum ölçeği kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Bu çalışmaya devlet üniversitesinde eğitim gören 116 İngilizce öğretmenliği öğrencisi katılmıştır. Likert tip ölçek ile toplanan verilerin analizinde bir dizi betimsel analiz, T-test ve Tek Yönlü ANOVA kullanılmıştır. Görüşme formlarıyla elde edilen verilerin analizinde ise içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır.

Bulgular

Bu araştırma, erkek ve kadın İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğrencilerinin uzaktan eğitime dair görüşlerinde anlamlı bir farklılık olmadığı sonucunu göstermiştir. Bu çalışmada anlamlı farklılık bulunan tek boyut 2. ve 4. sınıf öğrencilerinin uzaktan eğitim anketinin uygunluk boyutunda olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Bu çalışmada ayrıca eğitim veya eğlence için internette geçirilen zamanın uzaktan yabancı dil eğitime dair görüşlerde herhangi bir etkiye neden olmadığı sonucuna varılmıştır. Ölçek maddelerinden “En iyi dil eğitimi için yüz yüze etkileşim gereklidir ve yüz yüze İngilizce eğitiminde iletişim daha anlaşılır ve daha hızlıdır” maddelerinin ortalamaları diğer maddelerin ortalamalarından daha yüksektir.

Uzaktan dil eğitiminin en çok ifade edilen sorunlarının teknolojik zorluklar, zihinsel problemler, etkileşim azlığı, kaynak eksikliği ve deneyim eksikliği olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Uzaktan dil eğitiminin avantajları olarak zaman ve mekân esnekliği, para ve zaman açısından ekonomi ve dijital okur-yazarlık becerisi geliştirmesi olarak ifade edilirken dezavantajları olarak da öz-disiplin ve öz-motivasyon eksikliği, öğrenci-öğretmen ve öğrenci-öğrenci etkileşiminin azlığı, sağlık problemleri ve yavaş dönütler olduğu ifade edilmiştir. Uzaktan eğitime en uygun dersler Tarih, Genel Kültür ve İngiliz Edebiyatı olduğu öğrenciler tarafından vurgulanmıştır. Öğrenciler uzaktan eğitimin dil öğretiminde ek kaynak olarak kullanılabileceğini ancak yüz yüze eğitimin yerini tutamayacağını belirtmişlerdir.

Sonuç ve Tartışma

Uzaktan dil öğretimi, COVID-19 salgını sırasında eğitimi sürdürmenin tek yoludur ve salgın, üniversitelerin dijital platformlarını test etme ve teknolojik öğretim ve öğrenim yöntemlerini uygulama fırsatı sunmuştur. Ancak bu acil ve plansız dijital öğrenme dönüşümü bazı sorunları da beraberinde getirmektedir. Bu araştırmanın verileri, öğrencilerin Acil Uzaktan Yabancı Dil Eğitimine karşı olumlu tutumları olmadığını, ancak eğitimlerinin devamlılığını sağlamanın tek yolunun bu olduğunu da bildiklerini göstermiştir. Acil Uzaktan Yabancı Dil Eğitimi sürecinde en sık dile getirilen sorunlardan biri zayıf internet bağlantısı veya bilgisayar eksikliği gibi teknolojik sorunlardır. Bu tür sorunlar öğrenciler arasında eşitsizlik yaratmaktadır. Bu eşitsizlik sistematik ve etkili öğretim ortamının uygulanmasına engel oluşturur. Bu nedenle, hükümetler, karar alıcılar ve kurumlar yatırımlarını dikkatlice planlamalıdır çünkü "çevrimiçi öğrenmeye yatırım, planlama ve sunmada sistematik bir yaklaşım mutlak bir zorunluluktur" (Vlachopoulos, 2020, s. 18).

Acil Uzaktan Yabancı Dil Eğitimi sırasında başarılı öğretim ve öğrenim ortamının uygulanmasının önünde engel teşkil eden diğer sorunlar, motivasyon eksikliği, öz disiplin eksikliği, öğrenci-öğretmen ve öğrenci-öğrenci etkileşiminin olmaması ve iş birliği eksikliğidir. Bu sorunları ortadan kaldırmak için öğretmenler, öğrencileri aktif tutmak için kendileri de derslerin aktif katılımcıları olmalıdır. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin, öğrencilerin iş birliği yapmasına ve birbirleriyle

etkileşim kurmasına olanak tanıyan bağlamlar oluşturması gerekmektedir. Ayrıca derslerin etkililiği konusunda öğrencilerinden sürekli geri bildirim almaları ve derslerini buna göre yeniden düzenlemeleri gerekir.

Acil Uzaktan Yabancı Dil Eğitiminin en önemli sorunlarından biri, öğrencilerin sürece uyum sağlamalarını zorlaştıran deneyim eksikliği olarak ifade edilmiştir. Bunun yanı sıra bu süreç bize en çok ihtiyaç duyulan becerinin öğrenci ve öğretmenlerin dijital okuryazarlık becerileri olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu nedenle uzaktan dil öğretiminin dil öğrenme sürecinde ek materyal olarak kullanılabileceği önerilebilir. Uzaktan eğitimi öğretme ve öğrenme sürecinde ek materyal olarak kullanmak, öğrencilere ve öğretmenlere öğretme ve öğrenme sürecinde ihtiyaç duyacakları dijital okuryazarlık becerileriyle donatılmış olma fırsatı sunacaktır. Ayrıca, Yabancı Dil Eğitimi bölümlerinin müfredatına teknolojik bilgi, dijital okuryazarlık becerileri veya dil öğretimi için çevrimiçi araçlar gibi yeni dersler eklemek, öğrencilerin uzaktan dil öğretimi sırasında karşılaştıkları sorunlarla başa çıkmalarına yardımcı olacaktır. Ayrıca öğretmenler, dijital okuryazarlığa odaklanan profesyonel eğitimlerle desteklenmeli, pedagoji ve içerik bilgilerini dijital okuryazarlık becerileri ile birleştirmeye teşvik edilmelidir.