

## DESIGNING AN AUTHENTIC TASK AND ASSESSMENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: AN ANALYSIS OF TURKISH SOPHOMORES' WRITTEN NARRATIVES AND BELIEFS ON THE APPROACH

### KOVID-19 SALGINI SIRASINDA ÖZGÜN BİR GÖREV TASARLAMA VE DEĞERLENDİRME: İKİNCİ SINIF TÜRK ÖĞRENCİLERİN YAZILI ANLATILARININ VE YAKLAŞIMA İLİŞKİN İNANÇLARININ ANALİZİ

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**Abstract:** Considering the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, the present study aimed to investigate students' practice in and reflections on the design of an authentic task and assessment for an entirely online course. A total of 65 sophomores taking a linguistics course in a Turkish state university participated in the study in May 2021. The study first designed the course task based on the related literature. Data from all of the students' written tasks indicated that students differed in practicing and reflecting on the authentic task in terms of social, emotional, environmental, and physical aspects. Follow-up semi-structured interviews from 10 participants revealed that the authentic task and rubric were useful because of their suitability, online availability, functionality, and emotional support. The findings also showed that learning can be facilitated, centered, individualized, empowered, and scaffolded thanks to the relevance of activities with real issues. However, some students called for collaboration with other students. Therefore, it is recommended that in the design of a curriculum, authentic activities should be constructed in such a way that each individual can easily express their own voices as well as sharing their task with peers not only in a time of crisis but also in the future classrooms.

**Keywords:** *Authentic assessment, authentic learning, beliefs, higher education*

**Özet:** Bu çalışma, COVID-19 salgınının eğitim üzerindeki etkisini dikkate alarak tamamen çevrimiçi bir ders için özgün bir görev ve değerlendirme ortamı tasarlanmış ve öğrencilerin uygulamalarını ve sonuçlarını incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Çalışmaya bir Türk devlet üniversitesinde dilbilim dersi alan toplam 65 ikinci sınıf öğrencisi Mayıs 2021'de katılmıştır. İlk önce, çalışma ilgili literatüre dayalı olarak ders görevini tasarlamıştır. Tüm öğrencilerin yazılı görevlerinden elde edilen verilere göre, öğrenciler özgün görevlerinde uygulama ve yansıtma açısından farklılık göstermiştir. Bu farklılıklar sosyal, duygusal, çevresel ve fiziksel açılardan ele alınmaktadır. 10 katılımcıyla yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış takip görüşmelerine göre, katılımcılar özgün görev ve değerlendirme tablosunu uygunlukları, çevrimiçi erişilebilirlikleri, işlevsellikleri ve duygusal destekleri bakımından yararlı bulmuşlardır. Ayrıca, bulgular, faaliyetlerin gerçek dünya problemleriyle uygunluğu sayesinde öğrenmenin kolaylaştırılabileceğini, merkezlenebileceğini, bireyselleştirilebileceğini, güçlendirilebileceğini ve yardım edebileceğini göstermiştir. Ancak bazı öğrenciler diğer öğrencilerle işbirliği yapabileceği öğrenme ortamları istemişlerdir. Bu nedenle müfredat tasarlanırken özgün etkinliklerin her bireyin kendi sesini rahatlıkla ifade edebileceği ve görevlerini sadece kriz anında değil gelecekte sınıf ortamlarında da akranlarıyla paylaşabileceği şekilde tasarlanması önerilmektedir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** *Özgün değerlendirme, özgün öğrenme, inançlar, yükseköğretim*

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## Introduction

The recent global trends in tertiary education have been shaped by some factors such as the expansion of systems; the growth in the numbers of students; the rise in education providers and internationalization; the diversity of institutions, courses, and students; the progressive development and integration of recent technologies; and financial and marketing issues (Tremblay, Lalancette & Rosevearer, 2012). Accordingly, these trends have reshaped traditional educational models thanks to innovation and development in particular. By this, they have brought more impetus to investigate the digitalization of higher education institutions (HEIs). Research on online education in HEIs has indicated that HEIs are setting up and integrating more recent technologies and platforms (Costa, Teixeira & Alvelos, 2018). At the same time, the research has shown that it is aimed to make students more interactive and centered in learning by facilitating them to reflect on tasks they encounter in the real world (Damşa & de Lange, 2019).

However, because of some extraordinary challenges, new learning and teaching approaches may have to emerge, and existing ones may have to be revisited. In this context, the current era has witnessed the COVID-19 pandemic, which first started in Wuhan, China, in early December 2019 and then spread all around the world. While upheld globally, students need special care for teaching methods and learning assessment during times of disruption, which has not been clearly debated yet and has, however, led to some implications for constructing and designing curriculum with online learning resources (Daniel 2020; Reimers, Schleicher, Saavedra & Tuominen, 2020). Furthermore, Egbert (2020) argues and questions this challenge, the pandemic, as ‘the new normal’ (p. 314) through a model of language task engagement. According to the model, task elements cover course materials, topics, objectives, resources, tools, strategies, and assessment. Integrated with the task elements, engagement facilitators are characterized by authenticity, social interaction with peers and teachers, learning support through tools and resources, and learner autonomy. Despite being the hardest challenge of online learning, an indicator for task engagement may be behavioral, cognitive, emotional, agentive or social. This hardship inevitably results in difficulties to predict learning success and attitudes, task performance, and metacognitive strategies. Although this prediction is getting worse, especially in a time of crisis, authentic learning should be centralized as a solution to this hardship (Teräs, Suoranta, Teräs & Curcher, 2020).

However, in spite of the emphasis on authentic learning in online environments, the issue of learning assessment has still remained questioning. Therefore, the present study aims to expand the understanding of rethinking individual differences in authentic learning and assessment. In order to understand the effects of a designed authentic task and assessment on students’ performance and learning, the study designed research based on Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirsiehner’s (2004) five-dimension framework and applied qualitative research instruments. It sought out to answer the following research questions:

- 1 How do Turkish students differ in implementing a designed authentic task and assessment?

- 2 What do Turkish students think about a designed authentic task and assessment, and their implementation?

### **Literature Review**

Authentic learning is associated with a pedagogical approach that centers learning materials and tasks on lifelong learning (Herrington, Reeves & Oliver, 2014). Over more than the last two decades, the discussion on the authenticity of a task has been enriched. While Savery and Duffy (1996) support that just real problem solving ensures authenticity, Barab, Squire and Dueber (2000) argue that authenticity can be actualized through the dynamic interactions between a learner, environment and task.

Based on these aforesaid studies as well as the related literature, Herrington and Herrington (2007) list nine characteristics of authentic learning. First, an authentic context needs a physical environment a realistic problem to reflect the knowledge into future use. Second, authentic activities must be relevant, complex and well-defined by acting as a course itself rather than a supplementary one to the course. Third, an apprenticeship model needs to be provided for learners to see an example of a target task; for example, a similar project or problem-solving strategy might assist them to observe a relevant task in a different periphery. Fourth, multiple roles and perspectives approach rather than a discipline-based one facilitates students to investigate problems from different perspectives, such as diverse stakeholders'. Fifth, collaboration among learners must be encouraged through group work, for instance, constructed by each of their interests. Sixth, reflection is not just a one-way but a two-way process occurring via interaction with another one. Seventh, articulation of a project through a dialogic-based approach, for example, a presentation has the potential to fundamentally or partly transform a pattern of ideas into a new one. Eighth, coaching and scaffolding from a teacher (or peers in some circumstances) promote students to complete a task that cannot be done in an opposite situation. Last, authentic assessment can be implemented with the integration of activities into tasks. These characteristics of authentic learning can provide a guiding way for course designers to pave the path for designing effective learning settings.

### **Authentic Learning and Assessment in Online Learning**

Previous research (Herrington, Reeves & Oliver, 2010; Lombardi, 2007) has shown that emerging technologies enable learners and users to engage with activities in realistic, namely, authentic contexts. This means that online tools, such as wikis, blogs, learning management systems and simulation tools (i.e. virtual reality), can be designed and utilized to improve learning and cognitive skills as well as learning curiosity (Herrington et al., 2010). In this sense, an authentic context provides an impetus for learners to learn by doing to such an extent that they can have greater independence for creativity and imagination, and implement their learning in real-life issues (Herrington & Oliver, 2000; Shadiey, Hwang & Huang, 2017). Furthermore, Bozalek et al. (2013) found out the relationship between degrees of authenticity and the purpose of online tools to

succeed in authenticity. Related to the issue of the degrees of technologies' authenticity, Shadiey, Hwang and Liu (2018) designed activity by integrating smartwatches with a fitness tracking tool into an English for a foreign language class. Although there was no correlation between learning performance and features of smartphones, students' positive views on the smartphones as well as their positive emotions on this type of learning were seen as an indication to create authentic tasks not just for learning but also for emotional and physical improvement.

Recent evidence has also suggested considering it as an authentic assessment part of authentic learning. For instance, Mueller (2005) designed the Authentic Assessment Toolbox, which describes the assessment including the methods. This toolbox prioritizes teachers' role in forming an authentic task, for example, with a well-designed rubric that can also work for peer feedback. Likewise, Meyers and Duncan (2009) refer to authenticity as one of the five curriculum design principles. On the one hand, in language studies, issues on authenticity have been mentioned, especially in order to engage and assist learners in immersive environments embedded within affordances (Ozverir, Herrington & Osam, 2016). On the other hand, they have been ignored in language classrooms despite their practicality and efficiency in supporting autonomous learning (Brown, 2019). For example, rubrics are a good means for a student to evaluate themselves.

### **Dimensions of Authentic Assessment**

The principles of assessment have been discussed in classroom teaching in such a profound way that its last level is, however, agreed to work as a facilitator to lifelong learning (Beck, Skinner & Schwabrow, 2013; Corcoran, Dershimer & Tichenor, 2004). Stiggins and Chappuis (2012) differentiate assessment for learning and assessment as learning. The former focuses on teachers' role to evaluate their knowledge for feedback provision and instructional skills, whereas the latter is linked with students' role for self-evaluation that targets promoting learner independence and autonomy and metacognition skills. Connected with Burke's (2005) framework, however, presenting a general one, Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner (2004) offer a five-dimensional framework as follows:

1. The authentic assessment task is created with the integration of students' capacities, skills and knowledge, which enabled the ownership of the students rather than teachers'.
2. The physical or virtual context reflects realistic contexts where students apply their skills, as well as fidelity to the place where learning is actualized.
3. The social context refers to social processes where the task is conducted whether the work is individual or collaborative.
4. The assessment result or form is based on creating a quality product and performance, demonstrating competencies, indicating multiple layers of learning, and presenting the task to others.
5. The authentic criteria and standards are relevant to the real-life ones, are decided and announced explicitly and transparently beforehand, and involve improving professional competencies for future real-life conditions.

Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner (2006) investigated educators' and students' views on all five dimensions. It showed that students did not see the social context as a crucial asset. Gulikers, Bastiaens, Kirschner and Kester (2008) added an issue on the subjectivity of the authenticity to the related literature. As the difference may occur between teachers' and students' perceptions, student control must be included in the design of authentic assessment and task. Based on Gulikers et al.' (2004) framework, Reston and Arawiran (2018) found that a designed authentic assessment may facilitate reflection and organization of teaching practice.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

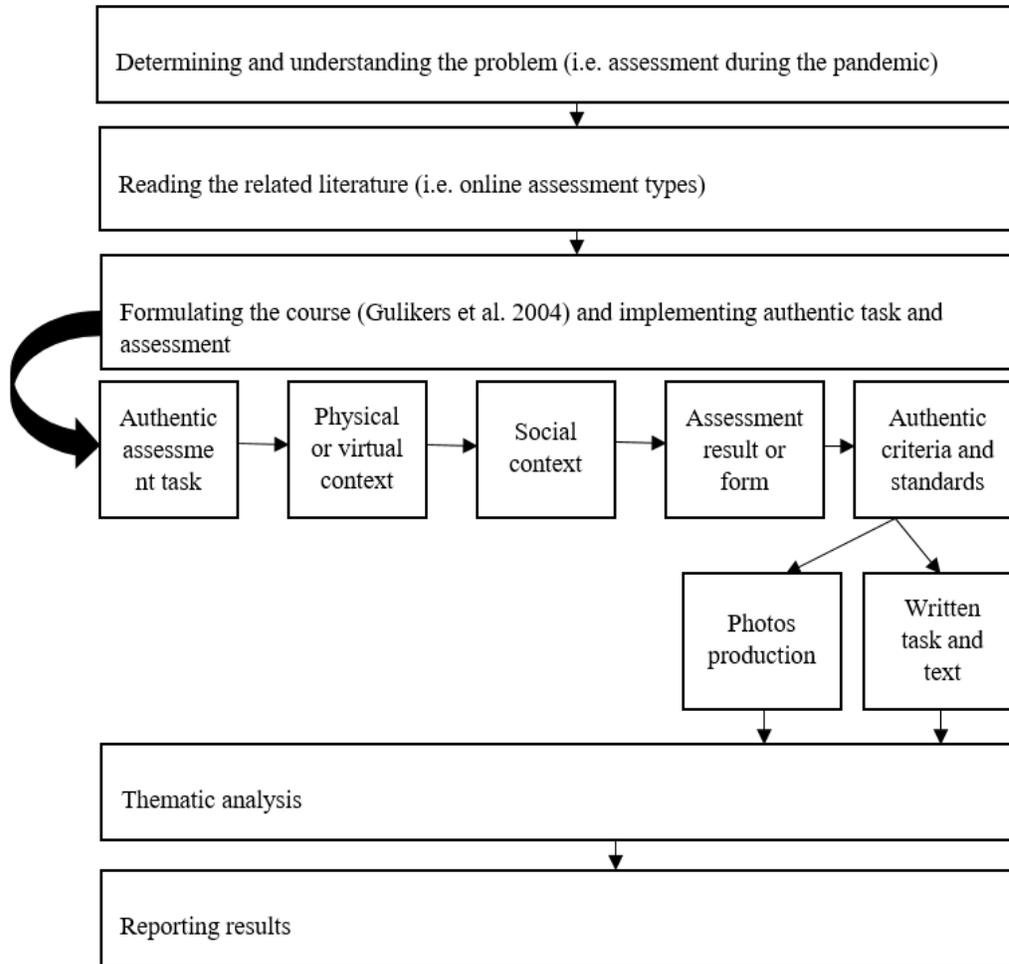
A total of 65 sophomores (50 females and 15 males) who were studying at the Department of Interpretation and Translation in a Turkish state university took part in the study. They come from different parts of Turkey, namely, the western, eastern, northern or southern parts. Their ages were varied from 20 to 32 and had an upper-intermediate level of English as a foreign language. All of them were taking a Linguistics course obligatorily, which covers linguistics contents such as linguistic parts, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, historical linguistics and neurolinguistics. Although they were enrolled in classroom courses, they had been moved to learn online since March, when the pandemic spread to the country severely. They were chosen purposely because of their online learning and the design of the course based on authentic learning as explained in the following section.

### **Research Design and Instrumentations**

The transition to online teaching during the pandemic led to seeking out ways to cope with its drawbacks, such as assessing students' knowledge. Figure 1 shows how this research was designed, namely, aimed to sort out its cons. Before implementing the instrumentation, it identified the problem, online assessment. Next, the researcher had a read on assessment types, especially during the remote instruction. Then, it developed an assignment based on Gulikers et al.'s (2004) framework in five stages: The assessment task about the pandemic was designed to be graded as part of their obligatory course, Linguistics. In the physical and social contexts, the participants conducted the task: They took a photo to illustrate the language in the current society during the pandemic from their own perspectives. This was individual work, so they did not have to collaborate with anyone. In the assessment result or form dimension, the researcher created a rubric as a written authentic assessment scale, and they were asked to write their views and describe their photo in their own words. In the assessment criteria dimension, two experts evaluated the design of the authentic task, and the rubric (see Appendix). Ultimately, the data from written texts and photos were analyzed thematically, and the results were reported.

Figure 1.

*Research design*



Research instrumentations were collected from 65 written texts and photos, that is, their answers to the assignment (see Appendix) of the participants, which enabled the study to answer the first research question. Following the assignment submission, interviewing was conducted by sending emails back and forth between the participants and the researcher. 10 students replied back to take part in interviews. Semi-structured interview questions included questions on their beliefs to answer the second research question, as follows:

1. What do you think of the authentic assessment and task?
2. How was your experience in authentic learning?
3. How did you find rubrics?
4. What is the role of rubrics according to you?

The interview method was designed by consulting two experts in online education and assessment. Both suggested the method to include open-ended questions to gather data about the research problem (Nelson-Gray, Haas, Romano, Herbert & Herbert, 1989). With an agreement, the questions were reframed.

### Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was applied as it allows the researcher to establish categories and “combine analysis of the frequency of codes with analysis of their meaning in context, thus adding the advantages of the subtlety and complexity of a truly qualitative analysis” (Joffe & Yardley, 2004, p. 57). Data were coded using Microsoft Excel, by which thematic areas were assigned, and data were labeled with different colors (Bree & Gallagher, 2016). Some codes were generated deductively to answer the research questions and see how the participants followed the dimensions of the authentic assessment (Gulikers et al., 2004), while others were created inductively to respond to the second research question and understand their differences in this implementation. In Microsoft Excel, the frequency and percentage of codes were calculated.

Ethical issues were also considered in this study. Data from the participants who consented that their assignments would be used in the study anonymously were analyzed. Before collecting data, the university ethics committee approved the conduction of this research. In order to increase the reliability of the codes, the researcher asked them to give their views on the assignment questioning “How did you find the assignment relevant to your social and learning life?”. Additionally, as the research was the lecturer of the course as well, two experts assessed research design and codes for the interrater reliability and agreed with them with 90% (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## Results

### Participants’ Differences in Preparing and Implementing an Authentic Task

**Differences in titling the task.** Table 1 shows the categories of 65 participants’ assignment titles based on the positive and negative aspects. When grouping the written titles, what they wrote in the task was also considered, as the titles alone would not give any evidence of their feelings.

Table 1

*Themes and Categories Generated from the Titles of the Tasks, and their Frequencies*

Themes	Categories	Total (N=65)
Positive aspects (N=45)	Precautions	25
	Motivational paradigms	10
	Collaboration	4

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	Adaptation	3
	Education	2
	Moral values	1
Negative aspects (N=20)	Lack of socializing	10
	Lack of motivational paradigms	6
		3
	Lack of education	1
	Lack of precautions	1

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In the positive aspect, the most written title was about precautions for which the participants used evocative words such as ‘mask’, ‘Virus’s archenemy’, ‘secret armour of Turks’, ‘goodbye to virus’ and ‘fight’. In this sense, one participant created a word phrase named ‘Corona Virus Language Precautions 2019’. The second most used one, motivational paradigms, was written as ‘mutual values’, ‘hope’, ‘showing love’, ‘with a different way rather than hugging’, ‘rainbow’, ‘dreams’, ‘the healing power of affection’, ‘teaching to be good people’ and ‘lens’. The third most used title was related to collaboration as their writings (i.e. ‘all together to freedom’, ‘freedom’, ‘family isolation’ and ‘real heroes’) indicated. The fourth one was linked to adaptation as understood from their use such as ‘new greetings’, ‘changing life’ and ‘breath’. The least used ones were about education with the use of ‘distance education’ and ‘distance education’s benefits’, and moral valued with use of ‘help elderly’.

As for the negative aspect, the most written one was linked to lack of socializing as analyzed from the words such as ‘silence’, ‘social distancing’, ‘no pray’, ‘silence’, ‘nature with no people’ and ‘childless world’. The second most used one was about lack of motivational paradigms as words such as ‘stress’, ‘challenge alone kid’, ‘fear’, ‘imprisoned’ and ‘cruel’ showed. The third most used one was regarded as lack of education with the use of ‘no graduation’ and ‘laptop’, whereas the least used one was about lack of precautions with use of ‘careless people’.

**Differences in the themes of the photos.** Table 2 demonstrates the themes generated according to the participants' choices for the photos indicating their views on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on language. Most of them took people-themed photos, most of which represented lack of socialization in that just a street without any human was captured or a few people talked distantly on the one hand, and some of which illustrated sad kids watching a street behind window bars or keeping a distance from their grandparents, which also marked lack of motivational paradigms, on the other. The second most captured theme was about cleaning materials such as cologne, masks, gloves and bleacher, which highlighted the importance of precautions as it happened in titling the tasks. The third most themed photos included written warnings such as 14 rules (i.e. these rules were announced by the health minister and broadcast all the time by the media), 'keep your distance', 'stay home' and a warning as spoken by a dialect in Turkey. The least taken theme was the environment in that five participants captured trees, bush with iron arms and legs, a cartooned graduation ceremony or a study room with a laptop.

Table 2

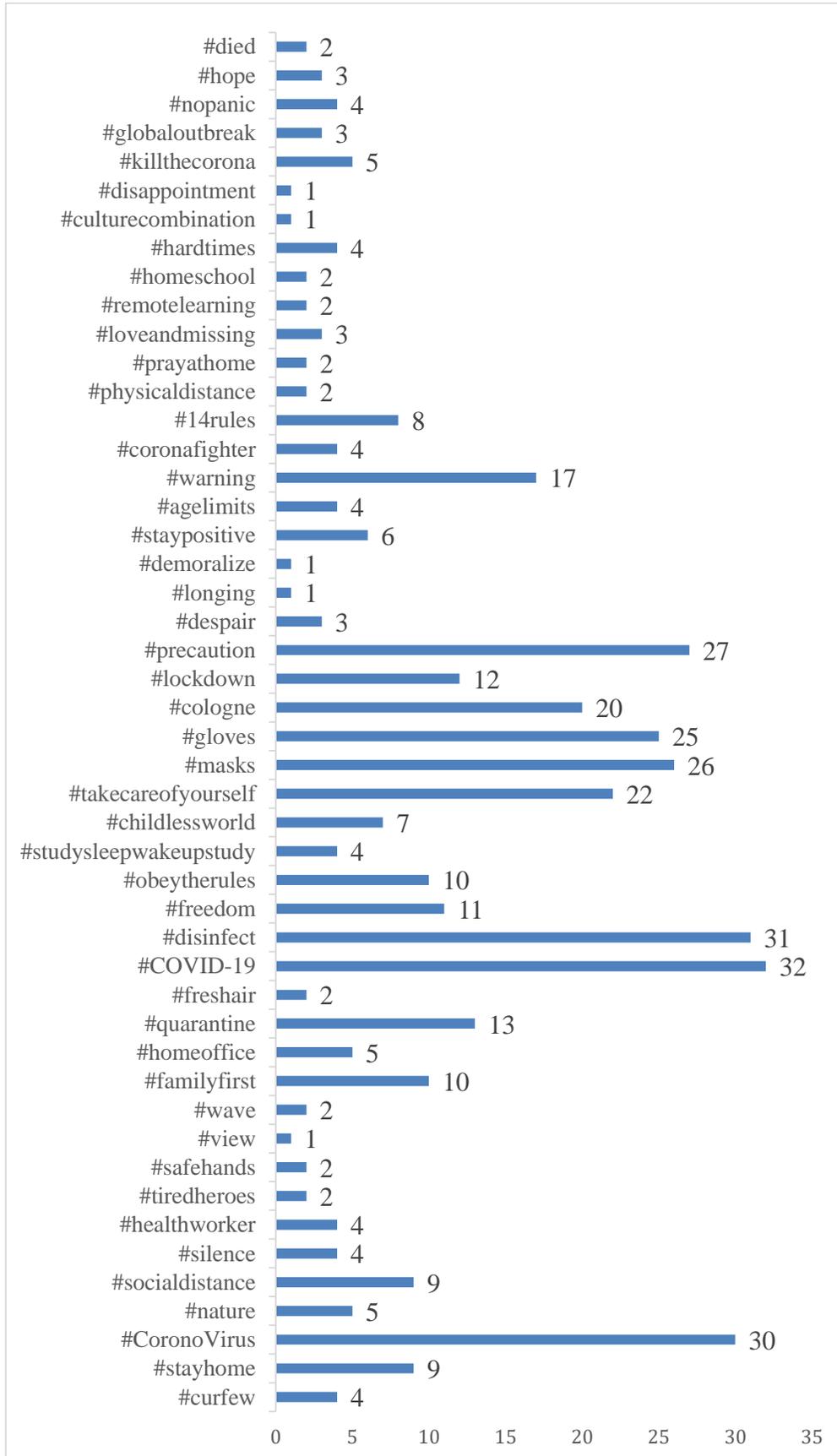
*Themes Generated from the Photos of the Tasks, and their Frequencies*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Total (N=65)</b>
People	36
Cleaning materials	15
Written warnings	9
Environment	5

**Differences in choosing words with hashtags.** Figure 2 illustrates the frequency and percentage of words with hashtags written by the participants to group their discussion on a specific word. As the participants were allowed to add as many words with hashtags as they wished, some words were entered more than once. They can be categorized into six themes including precautions, the COVID-19 pandemic, motivational paradigms, collaboration, the change of settings, and environment. The most used theme was precautions that were taken to stop the pandemic. These precautions contained words with hashtags such as precaution, masks, gloves, curfew, stay home, social distance, physical distance, quarantine, disinfect, obey the rules, take care of yourself, cologne, lockdown, age limits, warning, 14 rules. The second most used one was the COVID-19 pandemic-related words such as coronavirus, COVID-19 and global outbreak. The third most used one was motivational paradigms that were divided into positive and negative motivational paradigms. The latter that included words such as silence; study, sleep, wake up and study; despair, longing, demoralize, love and missing, hard times, disappointment and died outdid the former that involved stay positive, no panic and hope. The fourth most preferred one was collaboration-related activities, for example, tired heroes, safe hands, health worker, family at first, wave, corona fighter and kill the corona. Moreover, these activities formed a cultural combination in which every nation shared the same values as described by Participant 17. The fifth most noted one was the change of learning settings (e.g. home school and remote learning), work settings (e. g. home office), social settings (e. g. childless world) and religious settings (e. g. pray at home). The least used one was the environment-related words such as nature, view and fresh air. Additionally, what was sought out was freedom as inserted by Participant 47.

Figure 2

Frequency and Percentage of Words with Hashtags Used by the Participants



**Differences in participants' written descriptions.** Table 3 demonstrates the themes generated from the participants' written descriptions of the photos they had taken. Consistent with the titles chosen for the task (see Table 1), precautions were mostly described by using words such as 'using disinfectant and cologne' and 'wearing masks and gloves'. As Participant 1 noted, 'no virus is stronger than the measures we will take cause'. Furthermore, Participant 40 described these precautions as 'putting a wall between people and us'.

Table 3

*Themes Generated from Participants' Written Descriptions, and their Frequencies*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Total (N=65)</b>
Precautions	28
Effect on culture	8
Global context	8
Moral education	8
Richness in linguistics	4
Religious aspect	4
People's concerns	2
Wrong use of words	2
Understanding the value of the environment	1

The second most narrated ones were about the effect of the pandemic on culture, the COVID-19 pandemic as a global context and moral education as understood from their writings. For the effect on culture, they mentioned 'no greetings or visiting', 'not getting too close', 'no friendship', 'lack of communication', 'drinking coffee alone', 'being still able to talk, see and perceive things' and 'using dialects'. Participant 22 who took a photo of bush with iron arms and legs and named the bush as 'Rıfki' detailed that 'If you have noticed, there is iron on Rıfki's arms and legs, we understand from here that we see people who are caught between events and troubles'. Participant 41 regarded a lack of communication between people but the situation differed in nature as writes: 'The wind no longer touches people. It touches the trees and empty shops, then goes. The sun no longer touches our skin. It only warms trees and stones. People can no longer communicate.' As he added, 'this situation has taught us the value of communication'. Regarding the global context, they used 'rural areas', 'celebrities' post through social media networking websites', 'sharing a common language', 'use of social media' and 'home office'. Participant 2 pointed out that the

difference in the language used in his region caused local people to understand pandemic issues differently as follows:

Additionally, the official language is "Turkish" in Turkey. That means they have only chance to watch and read the news in Turkish language. This place is the rural side of the city. In this area the widespread language is "Kurdish". In this photo probably bilingual people whom you see or it can be sociolinguistic varieties between them. Although they try to obey the coronavirus distancing rules, they learned in such a manner as shown in the news even if their languages are different. However, there is only one word, coronavirus is the only word in their minds.

Similarly, Participant 17 drew attention to the similarities despite different languages used all around the world as writes:

When I saw this photo, it reminded me that all the people in the world actually lived on the same continent, pangea. Even if we humans speak different languages, we give the same reaction to many events. Basically we are all the same, but the languages of the words we use are different. I heard a word about it somewhere, it was like, 'Whatever color of our faces and eyes, our tears are the same color.' That is why the people who are intertwined in this picture remind me that we have a lot in common, the meanings we place on some objects are the same, but the language we speak is different.

As regards moral education, they mentioned 'not being people but being good people', 'showing love', 'social cooperation', 'social assistance', 'helping' and 'learning to call elders', 'learning to be hopeful' and 'looking from a good perspective'. Participant 27 explained its connection to love by stating: 'We do not always need words to show our love, sometimes we can reflect our love with our emotions and glance. I drew this picture of heart because the most important thing in the world is love.'

The third most stated ones were related to and richness in linguistics and religious aspect. Concerning richness in linguistics, they addressed the use of words like 'Covid-19', 'corona', 'pandemic', 'isolate', 'disinfect', 'curfew', 'intubate' and 'co-worldwide' that was created by Participant 4 meaning collaboration for co-. They also indicated the creation of 'new games and rhymes' during the pandemic. Participant 44 described the creation of new words as follows:

Many innovations have come into our lives due to the virus: disinfectants, masks and many more precautions. New objects that we do not know about and need to produce have entered our lives. For example, a painter was painting masks. Illustrated masks may have a new name that we give in the future. Just as the attack on September 11, which became a historical event, entered children's games and created rhymes and songs, the corona virus will affect the future of the current children and will be included in their rhymes. Games

and rhymes will emerge in a way that children in the past will not understand. This will change the language.

Concerning the religious aspect, they stressed more use of ‘Inshallah’ that means God willing’ and people’s call for more pray when they talked.

The fourth most ones were people’s concerns and the wrong use of words. Two participants reported that parents were worried about their kids’ education. Participant 39 added ‘Now, there are more anxiety, panic, fear in people and meanwhile in language.’ Other two of the participants suggested the right use of the word, ‘social distancing’, which should be ‘physical distancing’ as warned by Participant 4 who gave her reason for this as ‘we are not socially distant but physically’.

The least used one was about understanding the value of the environment as Participant 5 indicated: ‘On the good side, thanks to Corona, air pollution and noise pollution and environment pollution have been reduced. Nature was beginning to recover, and animals were able to move around fearlessly without fear of humans’.

### **Participants’ Beliefs on Designing and Implementing Authentic Task and Assessment**

Data from 10 students’ interviews show that the participants had positive views on preparing and implementing the authentic task and found the rubric attached to the task very useful. Despite their overall agreement on the effectiveness of the authentic task, they differed in highlighting its features such as suitability, online availability, functionality and emotional support as well as recommending the pedagogical aspects of authentic learning. First, Interviewees 1, 2 and 4 narrated how important it was to consider the suitability of an authentic task and assessment. Interviewee 1 explained: ‘We are currently experiencing the pandemic. This task has enabled us to express our feelings not only in our writings but also through our photos.’ Interviewee 2 added: ‘After receiving the course of Linguistics informing language in society, I can easily give my thoughts on the language during the pandemic.’ Consistent with both interviewees, Interviewee 4 expressed: ‘I have my own voice on the pandemic and its effect on the language and can shape my task according to this voice.’ Second, Interviewees 3 and 5 mentioned that online availability of a task helped them focus on their task anytime and anywhere. As they indicated, the pandemic changed their learning behavior but having an online assignment with a flexible deadline was able to improve their ‘concentration’ (Interviewee 3) and ‘preparation to the real life’ (Interviewee 5). Third, Interviewees 6, 7 and 8 noted the functionality of the rubric as it specified criteria for them to evaluate the task on their own. Last, Interviewees 9 and 10 referred to the instructions given in the assignment as emotional support as they were able to prepare the task on their own and reflect on their beliefs. Besides these aforesaid features, some of them gave some suggestions on the assignment. Interviewees 2, 4, 5 and 7 thought that it could be more effective if they could have shared their views with their peers before submitting their task.

## Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Related literature has indicated that authentic assessment is a way to enable students to take responsibility for their learning and demonstrate their competence, skills and knowledge, in which students might differ, it can be a good alternative to traditional or online assessment (Beck et al., 2013; Corcoran et al., 2004; Gulikers et al., 2004, 2006, 2008; Herrington & Herrington, 2007; Herrington et al., 2014; Shadiev et al., 2017), especially in emergency remote teaching (Egbert, 2020; Teräs et al., 2020). However, there is not enough study to look at online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in terms of authentic learning. Therefore, this study has focused on investigating students' differences in and views on an authentic task and assessment.

Data from 65 participants' written tasks informed that they had different views on the effects of the pandemic on language in society as can be seen from their named titles, taken photos, entered hashtags and written descriptions of the task. Mostly uttered themes ranged from taken precautions to social, emotional, environmental and physical aspects of the living. In addition to this, data from 10 participants' interviews indicated that the task fitted their learning situation as they were dealing with the challenges of the pandemic. In this sense, the study is consistent with the study by Barab et al. (2000) in that students can interact with a learning environment and task actively. Furthermore, it goes beyond indicating the digital interaction to such an extent that the participants of the study related the given task to their experience at that time, which is also suggested by previous studies by Herrington and Oliver (2000), Herrington et al., (2010), Lombardi (2007) and Shadiev et al. (2017). Meanwhile, it debates that an authentic task can be a means to give caring and affection (e.g. Interviewees 9 and 10) as also found out by Shadiev et al. (2018); however, the current study stresses that students can need affection and caring more in a time of crisis. Additionally, it can be inferred from the study that designing online learning setting embodied with authentic tasks promotes learning and meets learning needs in line with the most recent research (i.e. Daniel 2020; Egbert, 2020; Reimers et al., 2020; Teräs et al., 2020).

Based on the framework of Gulikers et al. (2004) and the list of Herrington and Herrington (2007) for authentic learning, the present study discusses as follows:

- In online settings, an authentic task can act as a *facilitator* to embed a physical environment in a virtual environment.
- Tasks should be *centered* into a course to deliver the content, particularly in global, regional and domestic issues such as political or health crises.
- An *individual* task can improve critical thinking, problem-solving and reflective skills; however, a *collaborative* task should not be excluded from the curriculum as said by Interviewees 2, 4, 5 and 7 in the study.
- Although the study gave specific instructions to accomplish the assignment, the participants' answers were varied, which demonstrates that multiple and diverse voices can be *empowered* through even one authentic task (e.g. Interviewee 4).

- Teachers should prepare a rubric according to learning requirements and share it with their students to understand assessment criteria. In this way, the rubric can work as a *scaffolder* that enhances the students' cognitive and emotional states.

In conclusion, the focus of the present study has lain on examining the design and implementation of authentic tasks from the perspectives of students' practice and beliefs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data from students' written tasks and opinions on their task completion has answered two research questions. As a response to the first research question, the findings obtained from the written tasks reported that 65 Turkish sophomores of a linguistics course differed in practicing the task in terms of giving titles, choosing photos, using hashtags and writing descriptions. For example, data from the entered words for each section of the task showed that the students looked at the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic in social, emotional, environmental and physical aspects. As regards the second research question, the findings received from interviews revealed that the students found both the task preparation and implementation overall and the rubric in specific very useful. Specifically, considering their suitability, online availability, functionality and emotional support, an authentic task and assessment have an influence on the advancement of learning.

Therefore, the study has some pedagogical implications. Authentic learning should be considered beyond a supplementary part of the curriculum in a time of crisis; however, it should be regarded as necessary in both today's affected education settings and future classrooms. Furthermore, in an authentic learning environment, students should be assigned to diverse and group activities to experience multiple roles (Herrington & Herrington, 2007). Moreover, teachers and designers should rethink individual differences in authentic learning and assessment. In this way, further research might consider framing the curriculum with the integration of authentic activities and explore students' practices. The present study is also limited in the number of participants and tasks. A further study should include more participants and activities in which they can reflect on their learning more.

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## Appendix

### ASSIGNMENT

As you know and realize, the world has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, our society and even language in our society have changed dramatically. Given this, the present assignment, is to show your view on the change of language in society. Before starting the assignment, look at Language in Society presentation and also recordings if possible.

#### Instructions to prepare the assignment:

1-Take a photo to show the change of the language in society. The photo needs to reflect your view on the current language situation. The photo should be the one that has been taken by you, not anyone else. (Do not take it from online and offline sources. Please bear in mind that you do not have to go out to take the photo.:-) )

2- Name your photo. What will you call it? It depends on you.

3- Use hashtags (#) which summarize and tell about your photo. One word or two words are enough for each hashtag.

4- Give a description about your photo. Explain it according to your photo. This is your photo, so there is no right or wrong; however, you need to tell your readers, (me in this case), what you have wanted to show in the photo.

## The template for Assignment 2

-----Insert the photo here-----

Name \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ photo:

.....

#

#

#

#

#

The description of the photo (Why have you taken exactly this photo? What have you wished to reflect on the photo? What should I see in the photo, what should come into my mind when I see the \_\_\_\_\_ photo? \_\_\_\_\_ Etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ :

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(It can be longer if you want.)

### Rubric

This is how your work will be evaluated.

Criteria	Beginning	Developing	Moderate	Qualified	Exemplary	Score
	1	2	3	4	5	
Photo relevance						

<b>Name relevance</b>						
<b>Number of Hashtag</b>						
<b>Accuracy with description</b>						
<b>Quality of explanation in description</b>						
<b>Total Score</b>						

Consent form: I am planning to conduct a study on students' views on the pandemic. Do you accept me to use your photo and views in my research anonymously (no share name and identity)?

Choose/Delete one: YES NO

Looking forward to seeing the current language in society from your own perspectives!

### Geniş Özet

COVID-19 salgını dünya genelinde eğitimde ve öğrenmede büyük etkilere neden olmuştur. Çoğu eğitim ve öğretim kurumları dersleri tamamen çevrimiçi yöntemlerle vermeye başlamıştır. Bu durum salgın döneminde verilen derslerin ne kadar elverişli, uygun ve faydalı olduğu sorusunu gündeme getirmiştir. Bu doğrultuda, araştırmacılar Daniel (2020; Reimers et al., 2020), bu konuda müfredatın yeniden tasarlanması ve oluşturulması gerektiği görüşüne varmışlardır. Hatta Egbert (2020) yaşanan soruna verilen cevabın ya da çözümün sadece salgın adı altında değil de 'normal bir durum' (s. 314) olarak değerlendirilmesi gerektiğini öne sürmüştür. En önemlisi de, özgün öğrenmenin bu zorluklara karşı çözüm olarak merkezileştirilmesi görüşülmüştür (Teräs et al., 2020). Özgün öğrenme, öğrenme materyallerini ve görevlerini hayat boyu öğrenme üzerine merkeze alan pedagojik yaklaşımdır (Herrington et al., 2014). Herrington ve Herrington (2007) özgün öğrenmenin özelliklerini şöyle listeler:

1. Özgün bağlam, bilgiyi gelecekteki kullanıma yansıtma için fiziksel bir çevreye ve gerçekçi bir soruna ihtiyaç duyar.
2. Özgün faaliyetler, kursun tamamlayıcısı olmaktan ziyade dersin kendisi olarak hareket ederek iyi tanımlanmış, konuyla ilgili ve uğraştırıcı olmalıdır.
3. Öğrencilerin hedef görevin bir örneğini görmeleri için bir çıraklık modelinin sağlanması gerekir.

4. Disipline dayalı bir yaklaşımdan ziyade çoklu roller ve bakış açıları yaklaşımı, öğrencilerin sorunları farklı paydaşlar gibi farklı bakış açılarından incelemelerini kolaylaştırır.
5. Öğrenciler arasındaki işbirliği, örneğin ilgi alanlarının her biri tarafından inşa edilen grup çalışması yoluyla teşvik edilmelidir.
6. Yansıtma yalnızca tek yönlü değil, bir başkasıyla etkileşim yoluyla gerçekleşen iki yönlü bir süreçtir.
7. Bir projenin diyalog temelli bir yaklaşımla ifade edilmesi, örneğin bir sunum, bir fikir modelini temelden veya kısmen yenisine dönüştürme potansiyeline sahiptir.
8. Bir öğretmenden (veya bazı durumlarda akranlarından) koçluk ve yardım, öğrencileri zıt bir durumda yapılamayacak bir görevi tamamlamaya teşvik eder.
9. Özgün değerlendirme, faaliyetlerin görevlere bütünleşmesiyle ile uygulanabilir.

Özgün öğrenmenin bu özellikleri, kurs tasarımcılarına etkili öğrenme ortamlarını tasarlama yolunu açmaları için yol gösterici bir yol sağlayabilir. Bu yüzden, bu çalışma, özgün öğrenmenin parçası olan özgün görev ve değerlendirmeyi göz önüne alarak tamamen çevrimiçi bir ders tasarlamış ve bu derse katılan öğrencilerden elde edilen verilere göre aşağıdaki araştırma sorularına cevap vermeyi amaçlamıştır:

1. Türk öğrenciler, tasarlanmış özgün bir görev ve değerlendirmeyi uygulamada nasıl farklılık gösteriyorlar?
2. Türk öğrenciler, tasarlanmış özgün bir görev ve değerlendirme ve bunların uygulanması hakkında ne düşünüyorlar?

Çalışmaya Türk devlet üniversitesinde, Mütercim Tercümanlık bölümünde öğrenim gören 50'si kadın, 15'i erkek olmak üzere toplamda 65 ikinci sınıf öğrencileri katılmıştır. Bu öğrenciler tamamen çevrimiçi verilen dilbilim dersi için tasarlanan özgün görevi tamamlamışlardır. Öncelikle, özgün görev Gulikers et al. (2004)'un beş açıdan ele aldığı teorik çerçevesine göre şekillenmiştir: Özgün değerlendirme görevi, fiziksel veya sanal bağlam, sosyal bağlam, değerlendirme sonucu veya formu, ve özgün değerlendirme kriterleri ve standartları. Buna göre tasarlanan ödevi/görevi tamamlayan bütün 65 öğrenciden alınan yazılı anlatımlar ve yarı yapılandırılmış takip görüşmelerine katılan 10 öğrenciden veriler toplanmıştır. Yazılı anlatımlardan toplanan veriler nitel ve nicel olarak incelenmiştir. Görüşmelerden toplanan veriler ise nitel olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Nicel veri analizinde katılımcıların frekansları verilmiştir. Nitel veri analizinde ise, katılımcıların verdikleri cevaplara göre veriler Microsoft Excel'de kategorilere ayrılmıştır (Bree & Gallagher, 2016). Güvenirliği artırmak için uzman ve araştırmacı arasında görüşmeler gerçekleşmiş ve güvenilirlik katsayısı %90 olarak belirlenmiştir.

Elde edilen verilere göre öğrenciler, pandeminin toplumdaki dil üzerindeki etkileri konusunda isimlendirdikleri başlıklarından, fotoğraflarından, girdikleri hashtag'lerinden ve yazılı açıklamalarından da anlaşılacağı üzere farklı görüşlere sahiptir. Çoğunlukla dile getirilen temalar, alınan önlemlerden, yaşamın sosyal, duygusal, çevresel ve fiziksel yönlerine kadar değişmektedir.

Buna ek olarak, görüşmelerinden elde edilen veriler, pandeminin zorluklarıyla uğraşırken görevin öğrenme durumlarına uygun olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu anlamda bu çalışma, Barab ve diğ. (2000)'ın çalışmalarıyla benzerlik göstermiştir. Ayrıca, Herrington ve Oliver (2000), Herrington ve diğ. (2010), Lombardi (2007) ve Shadiev ve diğ. (2017)'nin çalışmalarında da öne sürdüğü gibi, dijital etkileşimin ötesinde araştırmaya katılanların verilen görevi o dönemdeki deneyimleriyle ilişkilendirebildiğini göstermiştir. Shadiev ve diğ. (2018)'nin de ortaya çıkardığı gibi, bu çalışma özgün bir görevin ilgi ve şefkat göstermenin bir yolu olabileceğini tartışmaktadır (örneğin Mülakat Yapılan 9 ve 10). Bununla birlikte, mevcut çalışma, öğrencilerin kriz zamanında daha fazla şefkat ve ilgiye ihtiyaç duyabileceklerini vurgulamaktadır. Ek olarak, otantik görevlerle somutlaştırılmış çevrimiçi öğrenme ortamının tasarlanmasının, öğrenmeyi teşvik ettiği ve en son araştırmalar (örneğin Daniel 2020; Egbert, 2020; Reimers ve diğ., 2020; Teräs ve diğ., 2020) doğrultusunda öğrenme ihtiyaçlarını karşıladığı sonucuna varılmıştır.

Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma şu bilgilerle alana katkı sağlamaktadır:

- Çevrimiçi ortamlarda, gerçek bir görev, fiziksel bir ortamı sanal bir ortama yerleştirmek için kolaylaştırıcı rol oynayabilir.
- Görevler, özellikle siyasi veya sağlık krizi gibi küresel, bölgesel ve yerel konularda içeriği sunmak için bir derse merkez haline getirilmelidir.
- Bireysel bir görev eleştirel düşünme, problem çözme ve yansıtma becerilerini geliştirebilir. Ancak, işbirliğine dayalı bir görev müfredattan çıkarılmamalıdır.
- Çalışma, ödevi tamamlamak için belirli talimatlar vermesine rağmen, katılımcıların cevapları çok çeşitli olur. Bu da çoklu ve çeşitli seslerin tek bir gerçek görevle bile güçlendirilebileceğini göstermiştir.
- Öğretmenler, öğrenme gereksinimlerine göre bir değerlendirme tablosu hazırlamalı ve değerlendirme kriterlerini anlamak için bunu öğrencileriyle paylaşmalıdır. Bu şekilde, değerlendirme listesi öğrencilerin bilişsel ve duygusal durumlarını geliştiren bir yardım görevi görebilir.

**Etik Beyan:** “*Designing an Authentic Task and Assessment during the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Analysis of Turkish Sophomores’ Written Narratives and Beliefs on the Approach*” başlıklı çalışmanın yazım sürecinde bilimsel, etik ve alıntı kurallarına uyulmuş; toplanan veriler üzerinde herhangi bir tahrifat yapılmamış ve veriler toplanmadan önce Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen Üniversitesi Bilimsel Araştırmalar Etik Kurulu’ndan 28.04.2021 tarih ve 116 sayılı etik izin alınmıştır. Karşılaşılabilecek tüm etik ihlallerde “Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi Yayın Kurulunun” hiçbir sorumluluğunun olmadığı, tüm sorumluluğun Sorumlu Yazara ait olduğu ve bu çalışmanın herhangi başka bir akademik yayın ortamına değerlendirme için gönderilmemiş olduğunu taahhüt ederim.