Language Teaching and Educational Research

e-ISSN 2636-8102

Volume 5, Issue 2 | 2022

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To cite this article:

Önal, A., Küçükhayrat, C., & Doğanay, E. (2022). Pre-service English language teachers' readiness for online teaching. *Language Teaching and Educational Research (LATER), 5*(2), 109-125. https://doi.org/10.35207/later.1129519

LATER
http://dergipark.org.tr/later

Language Teaching and Educational Research
e-ISSN: 2636-8102 *LATER*, 2022: 5(2), 109-125
Turkish JournalPark ACADEMIC

Research Article

Pre-service English language teachers' readiness for online teaching

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Abstract
As a consequence of the sudden global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, all the countries around the world, including Türkiye, had to adopt online education as a substitute for face-to-face education, thereby leading to a radical and unprecedented transformation. In this respect, pre-service teachers' readiness for online teaching gained greater significance as they had to switch from face-to-face teaching to online teaching. Accordingly, this study aims to identify pre-service English language teachers' (PELTs) readiness for online teaching. A qualitative research design was adopted in this research. The data were collected through an open-ended survey from 45 PELTs who study at the department of English language teaching at a state university in Türkiye. The technique of content analysis was employed for the analysis of the data gathered. The findings indicated that even though most of the PELTs perceived themselves as ready to teach online, they expected their department/faculty to provide them with a more structured and efficient training in terms of improving their technology integration skills into their instruction. Moreover, a great majority of the PELTs expressed their worries about insufficient technological equipment and technical problems in their future classrooms.

Received
11 June 2022
Accepted
08 July 2022

Keywords
online teaching
readiness
Pre-service English language teachers

Suggested APA citation: Önal, A., Küçükhayrat, C., & Doğanay, E. (2022). Pre-service English language teachers' readiness for online teaching. *Language Teaching and Educational Research (LATER), 5*(2), 109-125. https://doi.org/10.35207/later.1129519

Note(s) from the author(s)
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»The ethics committee approval was obtained from Süleyman Demirel University Ethical Board with a document number of E-87432956-050.99-160333 on 12/11/2021.

Author(s)' statements on ethics and conflict of interest
Ethics statement: We hereby declare that research/publication ethics and citing principles have been considered in all the stages of the study. We take full responsibility for the content of the paper in case of dispute.
Statement of interest: We have no conflict of interest to declare.
Funding: None
Acknowledgements: None

Introduction

The concept of online education is not a new phenomenon because many educational institutions, particularly universities, started to offer online education to their students as computers, mobile tools, and the internet became more enhanced, innovated, and available. However, with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, this transition accelerated not only in Türkiye but also around the globe. As of March 2020, over 1.5 billion students were out of school due to closures in response to COVID-19. According to UNESCO (2020), over 181 countries had to implement nationwide lockdowns, impacting nearly 88% of the world's student population. Starting from the first half of 2020, schools at all levels across the world were required to switch to online teaching in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Lynch, 2020), and teachers were demanded to redesign their programs to teach in a 100% online environment (Howard et al., 2021). Even though the adoption of online education at the beginning of the pandemic was a demanding process for students and teachers (Alqahtani & Rajkhan, 2020), it surely opened promising doors in terms of education as video conference applications, Web 2.0 tools, and related educational software became a central part of all the stakeholders' daily lives. Moreover, it should be noted that the concept of online education will possibly not disappear at the end of the pandemic and, on the contrary, it will be integrated more profoundly into the instructional practices in the so-called *new normal* period.

The review of related literature indicates that in-service English teachers' readiness for online teaching has been studied extensively (Albaqami & Alzahrani, 2022; Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Cote & Milliner, 2018; Khan et al., 2018; Li, 2021; Putri, 2021; Saud, 2021; Simbajon, 2021; Suwartono & Aniuranti, 2019; Tafazoli, 2021; Tappoon, 2021; Yan & Wang, 2022). However, there is limited research examining pre-service English language teachers' (PELTs') readiness for online teaching (Baz, 2016; Birisci & Kul, 2019; Çalışkan & Caner, 2022; Liza & Andriyanti, 2020; Merç, 2015; Peled, 2020; Sarini & Dewi, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to reveal PELTs' readiness for online teaching as they will become in-service teachers and offer online education.

Literature Review

Online education can be interpreted as the mainstream way of distance education today, which is defined as a type of education in which students learn and study away from school and teachers (Yılmaz, 2019), and the utilization of computers and internet technologies highlights the online dimension of the concept. Although it has recently achieved widespread popularity, distance education dates back to the 1800s when a group of teachers and students, who were not in a classroom but in different places, experienced getting in touch with their class through correspondence programs at the University of Chicago, in the United States (McIsaac & Gunawardena, 1996). Since then, with the introduction of communication tools such as computers, tablets, and the internet into the field of education, the way for online education has been paved. Today, the most important reason why online education has become a globally more popular education model can be attributed to the adoption of online education by almost all educational institutions around the world, with the declaration of a pandemic as a result of the COVID-19 virus in 2020. As for Türkiye, almost all the universities (with a percentage of 99.2%) switched from face-to-face education to online education in line with the Council of Higher Education's immediate decision of online education in March 2020 (YÖK,

2020). Thus, online education is adopted in many countries, including Türkiye, especially with the ongoing pandemic effects around the world.

Online education in EFL classrooms

In recent years, the widespread use of the internet and mobile applications as well as the compulsory switch to online education due to the COVID-19 pandemic led to remarkable changes in the design, delivery, and assessment of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses. Besides computers, smartphones and various applications have recently been used in EFL classrooms (Ipek & Ustunbas, 2021). According to Arslan (2008), there are certain online instructional sources used in EFL classrooms such as lexical quizzes, grammar games, listening and pronunciation podcasts, blogs, e-portfolios, and social websites as authentic materials, among many others.

Although the instructional sources listed above have been used commonly for years in EFL classes, they are just the tip of the iceberg as there exist an immense number of sources available to be utilized in EFL classes, depending on the context and other factors. As a consequence, EFL teachers should be aware of and familiar with these opportunities if they are to offer veritable online education to their students because it is hardly possible for a teacher to teach any subject to *digital natives* without making use of any of these innovations. Furthermore, it should not go without saying that online education promises to occupy greater space in the educational arena thanks to the benefits it features; thus, discussion and specification of PELTs' readiness for online education gain more significance. In this respect, several studies have been conducted both locally and globally and they are presented and summarized within the following section of the study.

To start with, Park and Son (2020) discussed PELTs' readiness for the use of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in Hong Kong. The data was collected through in-depth interviews with six PELTs to investigate PELTs' experiences, self-efficacy, and perceptions concerning the EFL teacher training curriculum for CALL. As a result, it was found that the PELTs perceived themselves as more or less experienced with computer and internet usage. For this reason, the PELTs defined themselves as competent individuals in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). However, despite their stated experience in ICT use, the PELTs were found to be unmotivated to implement ICT technologies in EFL classes.

In a similar fashion, Liza and Andriyanti (2020) aimed to discover the digital literacy levels of PELTs in a state university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. A mixed-method research design was adopted to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data via Likert-scale questionnaires and interviews. It was observed that the PELTs had high digital literacy levels, which implies that they are competent enough to use digital technologies and able to fulfill the requirements as they are regarded as digitally literate English language teachers. Yet in another study, Peled (2020) examined PELTs' levels of digital literacy and readiness for integrating technology into their practices. The data was collected through a questionnaire including 54 items. The results indicated that most of the PELTs had high literacy in all areas included, especially in the areas of teamwork and ethical readiness on digital literacy in the case of Israel. In a similar vein, Sarini and Dewi (2021) investigated PELTs' readiness to teach online. A qualitative study was implemented through an interview. According to the results based on the thematic analysis, it was revealed that PELTs were conversant enough with technology to teach online. However, it

was also found out that PELTs did not feel ready enough to teach online owing to their lack of experience in the Indonesian context. At this point, the importance of supervision to improve PELTs' online teaching competencies was also emphasized. Finally, Caneva (2021) aimed to find out the level of digital technology use and self-efficacy beliefs of PELTs. The data was collected through a survey including both open-ended and closed-ended items. The findings revealed that most of the PELTs were keen to use traditional digital technologies such as e-mail and videos. However, even though they were taught how to use up-to-date digital technology in their professional development, they were found to be less confident while using them to teach English in the context of Costa Rica.

As for the relevant studies conducted in the Turkish context, Cuhadar (2018) examined the faculty education and experience of PELTs in terms of ICT with the aim of investigating EFL teachers' competencies for online education. The data were collected through a survey and the study group was composed of 832 PELTs from four different education faculties in Türkiye. The results showed that PELTs did not receive adequate training in education faculties regarding the use of ICT. Likewise, Birisci and Kul (2019) investigated PELTs' competencies for technology integration and their self-efficacy beliefs on teaching online. 174 PELTs participated in the study and *Technopedagogical Education Competency Scale* and *Technology Integration Self-Efficacy Perception Scale* were employed for data collection. Results showed that PELTs adopt high levels of technology usage and their self-efficacy beliefs correlate with their competencies positively. Similarly, Yastibas (2021) carried out a study to investigate whether the English Language Teacher Education Program (ELTEP) of Türkiye prepared PELTs to teach at unprecedented times, namely, during the COVID-19 pandemic. A qualitative research design was adopted to collect the data and the data were analyzed through the technique of content analysis. It was concluded that ELTEP of Türkiye prepared PELTs to teach online in the faculties of education. On the other hand, Çalışkan and Caner (2022) investigated PELTs' technology readiness by implementing a mixed-method research design. The results showed that most of the PELTs had negative attitudes towards technology integration and, as a consequence, it was put forward that they were not ready to teach English through online platforms. It was also underscored that the e-readiness of PELTs considerably fell behind expectations in Turkish context.

In the light of the studies summarized hitherto, it would be justified to argue that PELTs' readiness for online teaching is a fresh and controversial area that still seeks answers. According to the review of the relevant literature, it can be concluded that almost all PELTs in the 21st century technology world are more or less familiar with the use of technology in education. However, while some studies argue that PELTs perceived themselves as adequately prepared for online teaching situations, the results of some other studies refute this claim. More precisely, some of the PELTs do not feel ready to teach online arguing that they are not provided with the necessary training for teaching online.

Research questions

The study aims to reveal PELTs' readiness for teaching in an online environment with a specific view to the training they receive at their department. Therefore, answers to the following research questions are sought for within the research:

R.Q.1. To what extent are PELTs ready to teach online?

R.Q.1.1. To what extent does the training they receive prepare them to teach online?

R.Q.1.2. What are PELTs' expectations from the training they receive in terms of teaching online?

R.Q.2. What are the positive and negative aspects of integrating technology into EFL classrooms?

Methodology

In line with the aim of the study, a qualitative research design has been employed in that it enables the researcher to work with individuals or groups to study a social or human problem with the subject in a natural setting sensitive to the people or place, and interpret the phenomena how the subjects deliver to the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research is akin to producing fabrics that are composed of different colors, textures, blends, and materials. Since different elements create the fabric, different views create qualitative research approaches. In this study, one of the five qualitative research approaches, the case study approach has been adopted. The case study approach includes the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (Creswell, 2007). Accordingly, the technique of content analysis has been utilized in order to analyze the data. Since every person is unique and may have different perspectives on a single issue, and the question of the readiness and attitudes toward online teaching could be seen as a social issue, researchers aimed to enable and encourage PELTs to openly express their diverse points of view, which would not be possible under quantitative research designs.

Study group

The study group was grounded on convenience sampling which involves selecting subjects who are easily accessible (Fraenkel et al., 2011). The data were collected from 45 senior year PELTs who studied at the English Language Teaching department of a state university in Türkiye. More precisely, PELTs who performed their practicum at state schools in the 2021-2022 Academic Year were included in the study. According to their responses collected in the demographic information section of the survey, all of the PELTs have teaching experience at practicum schools. Table 1. presents the demographic data of the PELTs.

Table 1. Demographic data of the participants by age and gender

	Male	Female	Total
22-23	15	19	34
26-27	4	7	11
Total	19	26	45

As demonstrated in Table 1., 42% of the participants (n=19) are male while 58% of them are females (n=26). The ages of the participants range between 22 and 27 and most of the (n=34) participants are 22-23 years old.

Instrument

The qualitative data were collected through an online open-ended survey in the present study which was adapted from 'Pre-service EFL teachers' readiness in computer-assisted

language learning and teaching (PETAROT)' by Park and Son (2020) which consists of 7 survey items. The adapted form of the survey was reviewed by three experts (who hold PhDs in ELT) and the final form of the PETAROT survey was obtained in line with their suggestions. Additionally, the researchers designed a framework for the study which includes demographic information about PELTs' gender and age, their perceived competence in using online teaching tools, readiness for teaching online, and their expectations from their pre-service training.

To be more precise, PELTs' opinions on the following aspects were aimed to be gathered via the adapted form of the survey. The first item aimed to reveal PELTs' self-perceptions of their competencies in using technology to teach online. The second item aimed to identify PELTs' expectations from the training they receive at their department with regard to developing their techno-pedagogical skills and enabling them to teach effectively online. In a similar fashion, the third item intended to specify the courses (if any) PELTs' regard as beneficial for improving their online teaching skills. Furthermore, the fourth item asked PELTs' to indicate the aspects of their training they found the most and least useful for improving their online teaching competencies. The fifth item, on the other hand, aimed to reveal the views of PELTs about the positive and negative aspects of integrating technology and online teaching tools into their instructional practices. Similarly, in the sixth item, the PELTs were asked if they noticed any barriers to integrating technology and online teaching tools in their instructional practices. Finally, the seventh item aimed to reveal the extent to which PELTs perceived themselves ready to teach online.

Data collection procedures

After the final form of the PETAROT survey was achieved, an application was made to the university for ethics committee approval in November 2021 in order to collect the data from the participants, and the approval was granted by the university ethics committee on 12/11/2021 (with the approval number: E-87432956-050.99-160333). Following the approval process, the PETAROT survey was delivered to the PELTs through an online platform (Google Forms) and they were requested to submit their responses within 2 weeks. The data collection process, therefore, started in November 2021 and lasted for 2 weeks, until December.

Data analysis

The technique of content analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data according to the framework suggested by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013). More precisely, the data was read and re-read several times by the researchers and coded independently by the researchers. Thus, three separate code lists created by the three researchers were compared and finalized by re-evaluating the conflicting interpretations between and among the researchers. The reliability of this procedure was calculated using the formula "(Agreement) / (Agreement + Disagreement) x 100" offered by Miles and Huberman (1994). The inter-rater reliability level among the coders was found to be 79% in the first round, and 100% in the second round. As a result of all the analysis process, emerging themes are presented and discussed in the following part of the study under the roof of research questions, and some of the representative responses of the PELTs are also presented verbatim in order to support the inferences of the researchers.

It should also be noted that while providing the responses of the PELTs, each PELT has been assigned a number in order to ensure confidentiality.

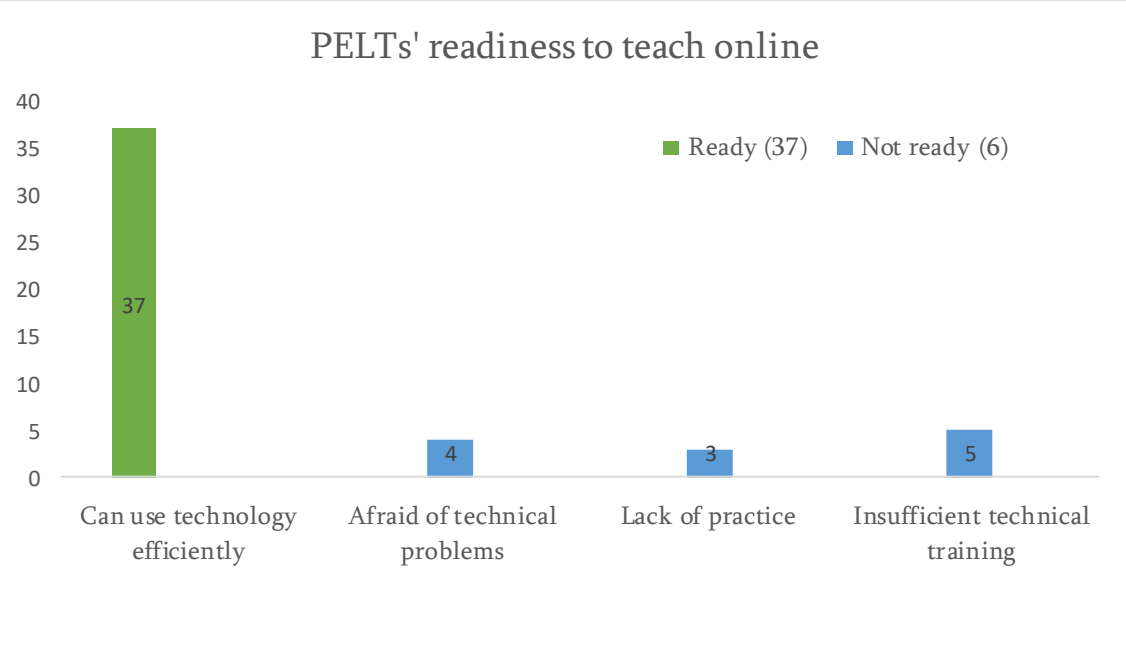
Findings and Discussion

According to the results obtained from the data analyzed via content analysis, certain codes and themes were obtained and the findings were demonstrated under the sub-sections of "Research Question 1 and 2".

R.Q.1. To what extent are PELTs ready to teach online?

Survey items related to the first research question aimed to reveal the extent to which PELTs perceive themselves as ready and competent to teach online using technology. A summary of the findings was demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Findings of the research question 1 by codes and themes



As seen in Table 2., findings show that a great majority of the PELTs (n=37) believe that they are ready to teach online, and also it is deduced that a considerable number of PELTs (n=33) describe themselves as competent enough in their use of technology. The following responses of the PELTs reveal how ready and competent they view themselves in terms of technology use:

> *I can use technology efficiently. I can edit documents, manage folders/files. I can create games/activities for my English classes. I can even create websites.* (PELT 5)
>
> *In fact, I can say that I am even more ready than face to face teaching because I think my technological background knowledge will be sufficient.* (PELT 21)

It is clear from the findings that most of the PELTs are ready to teach online and they see themselves as competent enough to use technology. In a similar vein, Park and Son (2020) found that PELTs are competent enough to use technology in the Hong Kong context and, as a result, it is put forward that they are ready to teach online using technology. In the same way, Liza and Andriyanti (2020) discovered that PELTs are digitally literate enough to use technology, and also it is emphasized that PELTs are ready to teach in an online environment in the Indonesian context. Birisci and Kul (2019) also came up with the result that PELTs are good enough to use technology efficiently in Türkiye. For this reason, PELTs are believed to be ready to teach online.

On the other hand, some participants (n=6) stated that they are not ready to teach online because of the reasons such as lack of practice, insufficient technology training given in faculties, fear of not being able to deal with possible technical problems during the lesson etc.

> *I don't feel ready enough because I don't have practice.* (PELT 28)

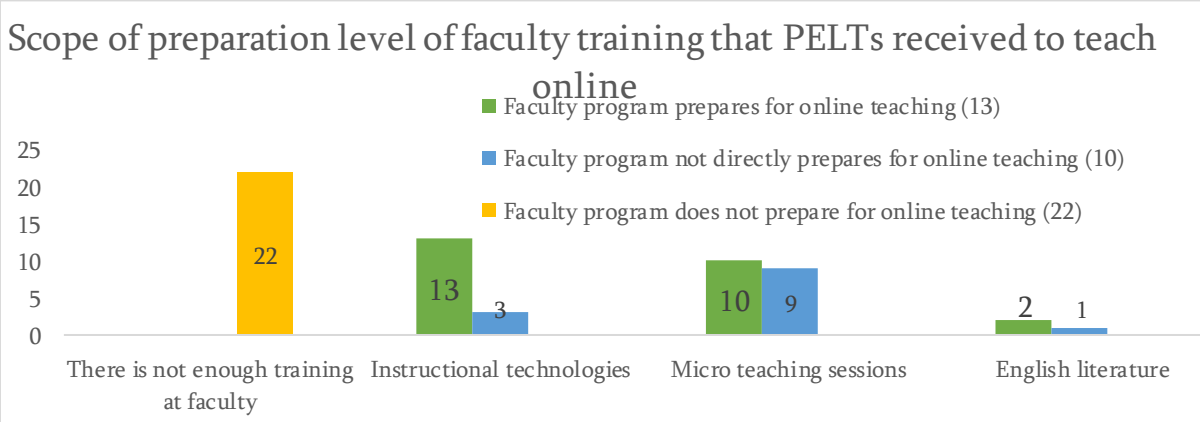
> *I am afraid of not being able to deal with the technical problems that may occur during the lesson.* (PELT 41)

Sarini and Dewi (2021) put forward that even if PELTs are competent enough to use technology, they do not feel ready to teach online mainly because of their limited experience of online teaching in the context of Indonesia. Similarly, Çalışkan and Caner (2022) also found PELTs are not ready to teach online as they do not find themselves good enough to integrate technology into EFL classes in the Turkish context.

R.Q.1.1. To what extent does the training they receive prepare them to teach online?

This sub-research question aimed to find out the extent to which the training they receive prepares PELTs to teach online. More specifically, the PELTs were requested to specify the courses (if any) they regard beneficial for improving their online teaching skills. The summary of the findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Findings of the research question 1.1 by codes and themes



According to Table 3., findings demonstrate that only 13 PELTs took courses that assisted them in improving their online teaching skills and 10 PELTs stated that they took courses that helped them improve their techno-pedagogical skills indirectly. On the other hand, 22 PELTs reported that they did not take any technology-related courses.

> *Yes, I have taken a course named 'Instructional Technologies'. The course has helped to meet with Web 2.0 tools such as; PowToon, mind mapping applications. However, except these tools, there are many applications that still need to be learned which are very beneficial to our future students.* (PELT 10)

> *Not directly, but microteaching practices made it almost imperative to learn and search for the web tools in order to have an effective microteaching.* (PELT 8)

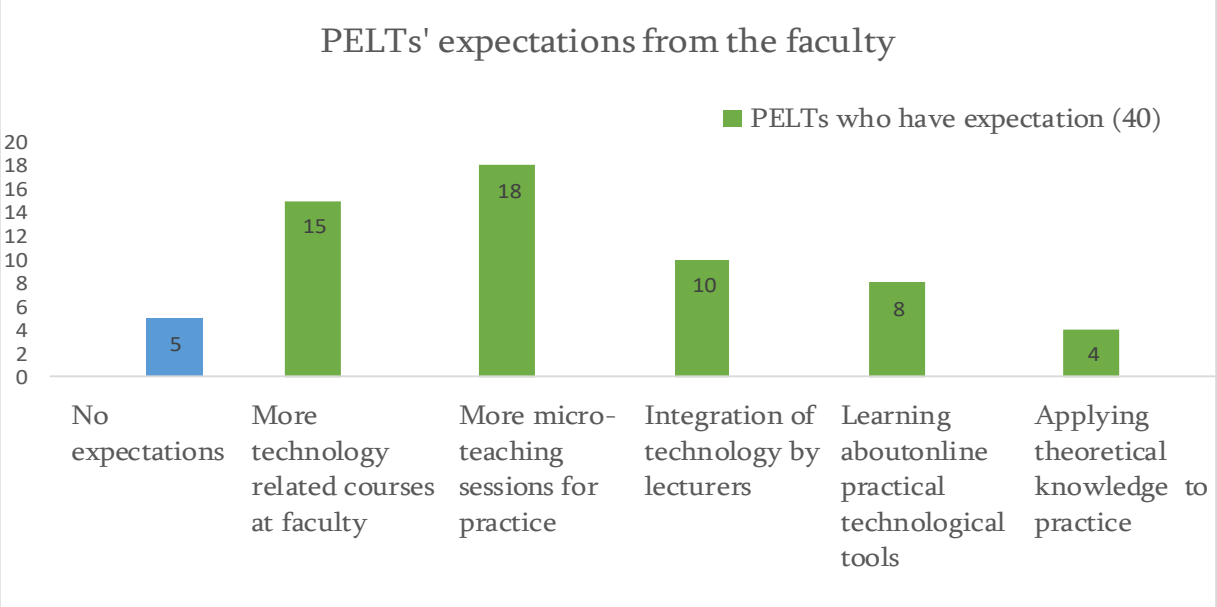
> *No, because none of the lessons are focused on online teaching specifically.* (PELT 2)

As can be inferred, the findings for this research question feature a double-edged picture as some of the PELTs believed that the pre-service training they received prepared them to teach online whereas some others disagreed with this. A similar study conducted by Cuhadar (2018) in the Turkish context put forward that PELTs do not receive adequate training in faculties of education to integrate technology. In the study of Rinekso et al. (2021), it is also deduced that PELTs should be given more training regarding online teaching at the faculties in the Indonesian context. Similarly, Merç (2015) and Baz (2016) concluded that technology-based training at the faculties was not sufficient for PELTs to teach online in Türkiye. Fathi and Ebadi (2020) found that even when technology-integrated courses are given at the faculties, PELTs still do not believe that those courses prepare them to teach online in real-life classroom environments in the Iranian context. On the other hand, Yüksel and Kavanoz (2011) came to the conclusion that sufficient technological availability and training are provided by faculties of education in Türkiye. Likewise, Yastibas (2021) exposed that the courses given at the faculties prepared PELTs to teach online efficiently in the context of Türkiye.

R.Q.1.2. What are PELTs' expectations from the training they receive in terms of teaching online?

This sub-research question aims to find out the expectations of PELTs from the training they receive in terms of developing their techno-pedagogical skills and preparing them for teaching online. The findings obtained are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Findings of the research question 1.2 by codes and themes



As can be seen in Table 4., the analysis of the data indicates that a majority of the PELTs (n=40) expect to learn more about various technological tools and how to integrate them into their future lessons. The expectations of PELTs from faculty are listed below in more detail. They expect to:

1. see more technology integration in their own courses at their own faculties
2. take more technology-oriented courses
3. learn more practical Web 2.0 tools that they can use in their future classes
4. be able to apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned at the faculty into practice

The following responses of the PELTs present their expectations from the faculty:

> *I was expecting to learn lots of new and informative websites, forums, applications, and video channels for my future lessons.* (PELT 4)

> *I was expecting to learn how to put the theory to practice.* (PELT 38)

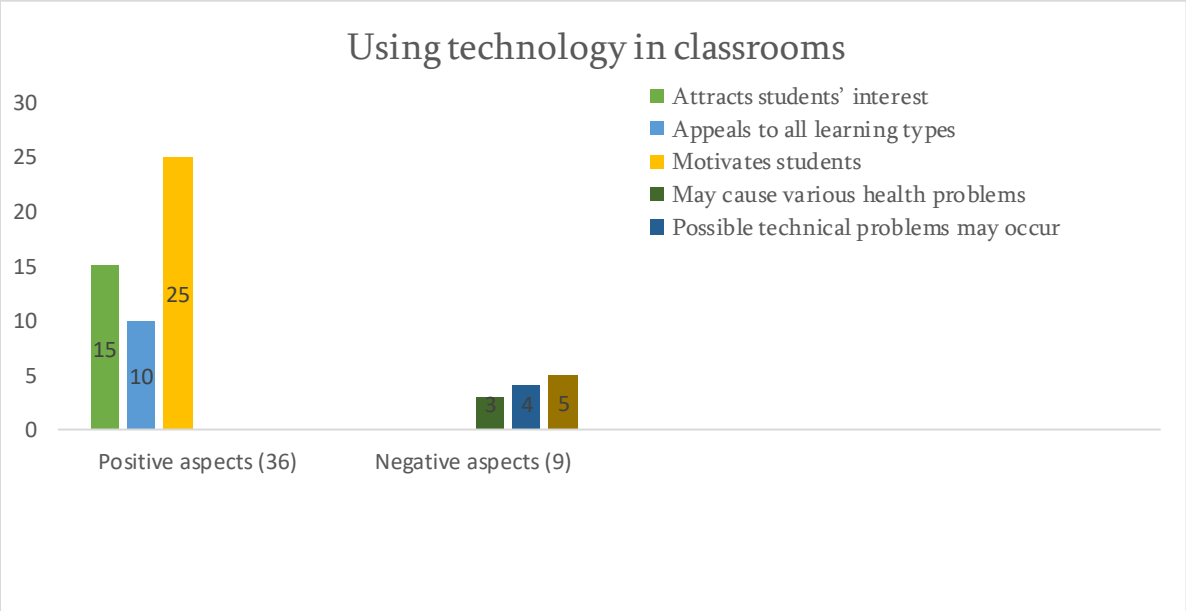
I expected my lecturers to use more technology during their courses at the faculty. (PELT 29)

More specifically, it was revealed that PELTs expected to learn more about practical online teaching tools so that they could make use of them in their future lessons. In this regard, Alhamami and Costello (2019) drew similar results from their study in that no matter how many technology-integrated courses are available in their training, PELTs expect to learn more about practical and useful online teaching tools for their future lessons in Saudi Arabia. In support of this, PELTs in the Turkish context believed that their students in the future would have higher expectations in terms of technology-integrated EFL classrooms (Merç, 2015). Hence, it can be argued that PELTs expect to learn how to put the theoretical input into action when they start teaching real classes. On the other hand, Hien (2020) observed opposite results in that PELTs give more importance to issues such as classroom management, assessment, and evaluation rather than integrating online teaching tools into EFL classrooms in the Vietnamese context. Thus, the expectation of PELTs from their training is to assist them in developing themselves in areas such as classroom management, assessment, and evaluation.

R.Q.2. What are the positive and negative aspects of integrating technology into EFL classrooms?

The purpose of this final research question is to find out the positive and negative aspects of integrating technology and online teaching tools into English language classroom practices from the perspectives of PELTs. A summary of the findings is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Findings of the research question 2 by codes and themes



According to Table 5., all of the PELTs provided both positive and negative aspects of integrating technology into EFL classrooms in their responses to the survey item. However, most of the PELTs (n=36) focused more on the positive aspects of integrating technology into

EFL classrooms by putting forward the reasons to highlight its positive aspects such as providing authentic materials, attracting students' attention and interest, motivating them, and also its effectiveness to address all learning styles.

> *Technology can be useful for making the input fun and effective for students. Also, we can provide them authentic materials.* (PELT 5)

> *As positive effects of integrating technology and online teaching tools, using visual and aural materials appeal to both visual and auditory intelligence by this way these enhance the permanence of knowledge and provide an interactive environment in class so students want to participate in class more eager.* (PELT 1)

On the negative side, as seen in Table 5., some of the PELTs (n=9) focused more on the negative aspects of integrating technology into EFL classrooms by asserting that some health problems may occur as a result of overexposure to technology. In addition, potential technical problems and the digital divide are seen as other disadvantages.

> *As negative effects of integrating technology, technological problems may set limits for using online teaching tools.* (PELT 10)

> *Looking at a screen for a long time is harmful to everybody as well as to them.* (PELT 18)

> *As a barrier, sometimes not all of the students can reach the technology. Their economic conditions should be taken into consideration.* (PELT 5)

The findings demonstrate that there are both positive and negative aspects of technology integration in EFL classrooms according to the viewpoint of the PELTs, but most of the PELTs highlight its positive aspects. It should also be noted that PELTs refer to such advantages as enhancing learners' motivation, and being practical and authentic in terms of technology integration into EFL classrooms (Alkhudair, 2020; Boonmoh et al., 2022; Jayanthi & Kumar, 2016; Park & Son, 2009) in Arabian, Thai, Indian and Korean contexts, respectively. Consistent with the current study, Khatoony and Nezhadmehr (2020) discovered that the integration of technology motivated students and also enabled PELTs to address different learning styles in the Iranian context.

Concerning negative aspects of technology integration in terms of health, technical and digital divide problems, Alkhudair (2020) found out parallel results with the current study in terms of health problems; more specifically, it was argued that students may suffer from neck and backaches as well as eye problems, and also technical problems may impede learning in the Arabian context. Similarly, it was reported that possible technical problems and the digital divide may constitute a serious problem in integrating technology into the classroom on the grounds that teachers do not receive adequate training to cope with them in the Qatari and Indonesian contexts, respectively (Chaaban & Ellili-Cherif, 2016; Taopan et al., 2020). In the

Kuwaiti context, cases where teachers' failure to cope with technical problems is coupled with no technical support from the school administration (Alghasab et al., 2020). In a similar vein, inadequate access to the internet and technological tools (such as smartphones, tablets, computers, etc.) is seen as a major problem in the Kuwaiti and Indonesian contexts (Alghasab et al., 2020; Taopan et al., 2020). In line with the current study, Çakıcı (2017) also revealed that the cost of up-to-date technological equipment was perceived as a barrier by teachers to integrating technology into EFL classrooms in the Turkish context.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the light of the results of the first research question, it is obvious that even though PELTs state that they do not receive enough technology-integrated courses throughout their training, they perceive themselves as competent enough to integrate technology and ready to teach online in EFL classrooms. In terms of the expectations from the faculty, it was emphasized by PELTs that they preferred to have more information about practical online teaching tools. Therefore, most of the PELTs are of the opinion that more importance should be given to micro-teaching sessions during their undergraduate education process, on the grounds that these sessions are highly beneficial by providing opportunities to learn and use online teaching tools.

On the other hand, many PELTs also stress that there is no specific course in their faculty that prepares them for online teaching. In this regard, it is highly recommended that greater time should be allocated to microteaching sessions so that PELTs have the chance to put theory into practice. However, in order to do that, a suitable environment and program should be prepared for PELTs, so that microteaching sessions can be included into the scope of many courses in the faculty. At this point, when the English Language Education undergraduate program specified by HEC is examined, it is seen that there are many courses that could house microteaching sessions such as 'Teaching English to Young Learners', 'Teaching English Language Skills' and many other elective courses that are offered by the faculties of education. Therefore, it is highly suggested within the framework of HEC's program that lecturers should give more place to microteaching sessions in every course as far as possible to render PELTs familiar with online instructional tools. In a similar vein, since many PELTs believe that there is no course that prepares them for online teaching, it would be justified to argue that the program specified by the HEC should be updated in line with the requirements of the *new normal* period because online education has now become an indispensable part of the education process. In this regard, some infrastructure has been set off for unexpected conditions even after the pandemic, such as snow holidays and/or when a teacher wants to make up for a lesson that could not be conducted face-to-face. Likewise, the fact that many higher education institutions now offer certain courses completely online indicates that online education will secure its position rather than disappearing. At this point, what is expected from teachers is not only to do online teaching in unexpected conditions but also to adopt the online system at any time.

Another remarkable finding is the fact that PELTs believe that using technology has certain pros as well as cons. On the positive side, most of the PELTs put forward that using technology is beneficial in terms of motivating students who have different learning styles. The findings from the current study are in line with Aydin (2012) in terms of the benefits of

integrating technology into EFL classes for increasing student involvement besides its practicality in various teaching contexts. However, on the negative side, PELTs remark on potential technical problems to be experienced during online lessons as they do not feel capable of coping with such technical problems. Given this situation, PELTs seem to be motivated to integrate technological tools into their classrooms. Nevertheless, PELTs also worry about their incompetency to cope with technological problems. To simply put, PELTs are even not proficient in the use of smart boards, so their use of certain technological tools does not mean that they can adapt it effectively in EFL classrooms because nowadays a teacher's knowledge of some word processing programs or good use of social media does not guarantee that they can adapt it to their online teaching practices. At this point, there are some similar findings between the current study and Aydin and Börekci (2019) with regard to EFL teachers' insufficient use of technology. Namely, even if EFL teachers use and manage their social media accounts, when they tried to integrate those social platforms into their EFL classrooms, it was found that they had a hard time adapting those platforms into their classes in terms of communication and producing content for their students. Thus, teachers need to gain new technical qualifications to keep themselves up-to-date as well as having the capability of adapting various online tools to their teaching environments Last but not least, the limitation of this study is that the population consisted of only one state university. Hence, it is believed that a similar study with a larger study group encompassing participants from both state and private universities would yield more generalizable and reliable results.

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