Hazırlık Sınıfları için Çevrimiçi Öğrenme Ortamlarında Öğretmenler ve Öğrenciler Tarafından Kameraların Kullanımına Dair Bir Araştırma *

Mehmet ASLAN [1]

Öz

Türkiye'de 2023 yılında meydana gelen Kahramanmaraş depremi binlerce kişinin ölümüyle sonuçlanmış ve tüm ülkeyi yasa boğmuştu. Sonuç olarak ülke çapında zorunlu uzaktan eğitime geçiş yapıldı. Ülke genelinde öğrenciler eğitimlerinin ilk dönemini yüz yüze tamamlarken, ikinci dönemi ise uzaktan eğitim yoluyla gerçekleştirdiler. Bu çalışma, İngilizce hazırlık öğrencilerinin, eğitmen ve öğrenci kameralarının çevrimiçi öğrenme sırasındaki durumu hakkındaki görüşlerini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma, Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinin hazırlık sınıfında öğrenim gören 53 öğrenciye uygulanan açık uçlu anketten elde edilen bulguları sunmaktadır. Sonuçlara göre öğrencilerin yarıya yakını ders sırasında öğretim elemanının kamerasının sürekli açık olması gerektiğini çünkü öğretmenin jest ve mimiklerini görmenin daha profesyonel ve gerçekçi bir sınıf ortamı yaratabileceğini düşünmektedir. Öğrenci kameralarının durumuyla ilgili olarak öğrencilerin büyük bir yüzdesi kendilerine ait odalarının olmaması, utangaçlık, dikkatin dağılması, görünüşleriyle ilgili endişeler gibi nedenlerden dolayı kameralarının kapalı olması gerektiğini ifade etmektedirler. Çalışmada, ciddi bir engel olmadığı sürece öğretmenin kamerasının açık olması gerektiği, öğrencilerin de olası sebepler nedeniyle kameralarını açmaya zorlanmaması gerektiği sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kamera kullanımı, çevrimiçi eğitim, uzaktan eğitim, dil öğrenimi

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A Study on the Utilization of Cameras by Teachers and Students in Online Learning Environments for Preparatory Classes*

Mehmet ASLAN [2]

Abstract

The Kahramanmaraş earthquake that took place in 2023 in Turkey resulted in the deaths of thousands of people and plunged the entire nation into mourning. As a result, the country made a nationwide shift to mandatory distance education. Students across the country completed the first semester of their education face-to-face and the second semester through distance education. This study aims to investigate EFL preparatory students' views about the status of instructors and students' cameras during online learning. The study presents findings gathered from an open-ended questionnaire administered to 53 students enrolled in a preparatory class at a state university in Turkey. According to the results, nearly half of the students believe that the instructor's camera should be on at all times during the lecture because seeing the teacher's gestures and expressions may create a more professional and realistic classroom environment. Regarding the status of student cameras, a large percentage of students agreed that their cameras should be off due to reasons such as lack of privacy, feeling shy, distractions, and concerns about their appearance. The study concludes that a teacher's camera should be on unless there is a serious hindrance, and students should not be forced to turn their cameras on due to potential reasons.

Keywords: Camera utilization, online education, distance learning, language learning

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1. Introduction

The global COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the widespread adoption of distance learning, prompting educational institutions around the world to fully embrace remote learning models (Maatuk et al., 2022). About two years later, when the contagion and impact of the pandemic decreased, a substantial number of these institutions returned to traditional in-person teaching. However, on February 6, 2023, Turkey experienced two strong earthquakes with magnitudes of 7.7 and 7.6 at the same time, resulting in massive death tolls and destruction in Kahramanmaraş and ten other cities. As a result, while the first semester of education in Turkey was conducted face-to-face, the second semester in all schools and higher education was taught with the compulsory distance education method. The significance of technology and electronic gadgets is apparent when courses are offered through distance education (Hakim, 2020). A fast internet connection and a practical computer, laptop, or phone with a high-quality camera are the main advances for a smooth online lesson.

Although there are many important issues related to distance education, one of the most critical is the status of teachers' and students' cameras during synchronous online lessons. The status of teachers' and students' cameras as on or off significantly affects the efficiency of the lesson. Some studies reveal that turning on video cameras increases students' involvement and interaction contributing to a better understanding of the lesson (Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė et al., 2022; Castelli & Sarvary, 2020). In a study involving eighty-two first-year undergraduate and doctoral students regarding their opinions on the use of video cameras in synchronous online instruction by Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė et al. (2022), respondents reported that "the video camera is associated with better communication, self-awareness, better information reception, understanding, student engagement during the session, collaboration, feedback, accountability, and academic integrity" (p. 6). In addition, Castelli and Sarvary (2020) claimed that the most obvious advantage of using a camera during an online lesson is being able to communicate through nonverbal indicators like smiles, frowns, head nods, looks of uncertainty, and bored expressions. Although, the social presence theory (Short et al., 1976) emphasizes the importance of interaction, gestures, and facial expressions for a real and educative classroom environment, instructors (Kozar, 2016) and students (Sevy-Biloon, 2022; Castelli & Sarvary, 2020) are generally reluctant and hesitant to turn on their cameras during an online lesson.

Searching for the reasons for off-cameras, the researcher discovered that there has been an ongoing debate in the literature about whether the cameras of the teacher and students should be on or off and what the reasons for on or off cameras are. To contribute literature, besides

including EFL students' views about the welcome status of the teacher' and students' cameras, this study aims to investigate the reasons why EFL preparatory students do not generally turn on their cameras during an online lesson at higher education.

The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What are the perspectives of EFL preparatory class students about the status of the teacher's camera during an online course at higher education?

2. What are the perspectives of EFL preparatory class students about the status of the students' cameras during an online course at higher education?

2. Literature Review

With the advent of COVID-19, the number of courses offered through online media has increased rapidly. The degree of learner participation, the effectiveness of online collaboration, and student satisfaction with online courses have all been linked to social presence (Lakin, 2005). The idea of social presence, the extent to which an individual is viewed as *real* in mediated communication (Gunawardena, 1995), has been studied in connection to the fineness of the online learning environment. While social presence theory has not been clearly and definitively defined (Rettie, 2003), Gunawardena (1995) characterizes it as the degree to which individuals are perceived as 'real' in computer-mediated communication. Teachers and students can see one another when they activate their cameras during a video conference. When the camera is on, students may watch peers and teachers on the screen, which allows for synchronous engagement, similar to learning in a traditional face-to-face classroom. Nonverbal signs that teachers and students exchange, such as smiles, frowns, head nods, and indications of uncertainty, boredom, and fatigue, can help pupils learn better (Zhang et. al., 2024).

It is common knowledge that during video conferences, particularly while the camera is on, social interaction between students and teachers as well as between students and students is essential to enhancing students' social presence (Alim et al., 2023; Castelli & Sarvary, 2021). Positive student experiences in virtual learning settings are strongly correlated with high social presence (Cobb, 2009), and according to research by Alim et al. (2023), activating cameras was one of the key elements that positively predicted students' involvement and academic achievement. However, when instructors and students use their cameras, it could also be a distraction because of their visual presence, causing an attentional split between the course topics and the video images (Lauricella et al., 2022). As a result, their visual presence during

video conferences may have both beneficial and detrimental social consequences on students' learning. These two factors need to be evenly distributed to improve students' learning.

The number of studies related to the status of teachers' cameras during an online lesson is quite limited because, in an online instructional setting, it is commonly expected that the teacher's camera should remain on as their gestures and facial expressions play a significant role in enhancing the comprehensibility of the lesson (Castelli & Sarvary, 2021). Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė et al. (2022) stated that the circumstances for a better comprehension of the phenomena during the session are created by seeing the teacher's interpretation and watching the change in facial expressions. However, some studies have reported that there exists resistance among instructors to turning on their cameras. Kozar (2016) asserted that lecturers are reluctant to turn on their cameras during virtual courses because they do not want to reveal their private lives and are overly concerned about their appearance while lecturing in front of a camera. Additionally, he noted that the instructors expressed that teaching with their cameras on leads to exhaustion.

As for whether students' cameras should be on or off, researching with 69 undergraduate EFL students, Sevy-Biloon (2021) reported that nearly 90% of the students did not turn on their cameras during online sessions, and the same scenario was observed in numerous other circumstances (Tonsmann 2014; Castelli and Sarvary, 2020; Cranfield et al., 2021; Meishar-Tal and Forkosh-Baruch, 2022). According to the study of Sevy-Biloon (2021), reasons such as not having a working camera, poor internet connection, being preoccupied with other activities, anxiety about appearance, lack of confidence in their knowledge, fear of making a mistake, being engaged in other responsibilities like work, cooking, or caring for younger siblings or children were indicated. Students reveal a variety of justifications for not turning on their video cameras. In a study conducted with 312 undergraduate students, Castelli and Sarvary (2020) identified several reasons preventing students from turning on their video cameras during synchronous virtual learning sessions. According to the results of their study, 41% of students indicated concern over their appearance, 26% expressed unease over other students' visibility, 22% expressed problems related to the internet, and 17% hesitated about their physical locations. After the study, the researchers stated that they were highly cautious against forcing students to switch on their video cameras in class, even though some teachers may feel compelled to do so, expressing many more particular and delicate reasons why students choose not to turn on their cameras. In Costa's study (2020), technical difficulties, being unable to

access a private space, and feeling ashamed of their living arrangements were indicated as some of the reasons for off cameras.

Tobi et al. (2021) identified several barriers to students switching on their cameras during virtual classes in Malaysia, including poor internet connection, lack of internet data, societal norms, discomfort with peer scrutiny, and the need to appear presentable. Bedenlier et al. (2021) found that the rationale for turning off cameras during the COVID-19 pandemic was only minimally related to technical difficulties, and was partly due to privacy concerns and personal discomfort. Privacy concerns emerged as the primary barrier to students turning on their cameras, as highlighted by Meishar-Tal & Forkosh-Baruch (2022) and Rajab & Soheib (2021). Meishar-Tal & Forkosh-Baruch (2022) proposed a potential solution to alleviate higher education students' concerns about privacy invasions, suggesting that in online synchronous platforms, participants could use a backdrop to conceal their precise locations and, thereby, safeguard their privacy to some extent. In a study conducted by Williams and Pica-Smith (2022), the researchers investigated 95 teachers' and 257 undergraduate students' opinions about the situation of the cameras in an online lesson. In general, students reported their preferences on whether or not to use cameras, noting how this choice either enhanced or hindered their engagement, and they appreciated the ability to exercise their agency. On the contrary, instructors declared that when student cameras were off, it was depressing and demoralizing, causing increased feelings of loneliness and disconnection for teachers. They generally believed that camera use was crucial and essential for creating a sense of community in the classroom and evaluating the engagement of students, their participation, and their comprehension of class material. Freshmen (N = 314) who had recently completed a 12-week academic term of fully synchronous virtual English lessons at a college in Thailand were the focus of a study conducted by Waluyo and Wangdi (2023). Their research revealed two primary findings: first, that foreign language learners tended to avoid using cameras during synchronous internet classes, and second, that various factors such as classroom dynamics, fatigue, concerns about physical appearance, unrelated physical activity, distracting behaviours, and technical issues contributed to students keeping their cameras turned off.

As a result, there is no definitive conclusion regarding the use of cameras by teachers and students. However, it appears that teachers should keep their cameras on as much as possible, and educators expect students to turn their cameras on to create an optimal educational environment. Nevertheless, students are reluctant to do so for various reasons, such as a lack of

private space, technical difficulties, or feelings of shyness. Further research is needed to clarify this situation and develop a more useful consensus.

3. Methodology

Design of the Study

This study employed a phenomenological approach to ascertain the views of the EFL preparatory students on the issue of the camera status of the instructors and students in an online lesson. Phenomenological research is a sort of qualitative approach that focuses on participants' experiences and the meanings they are assigned to (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Subjects

The subjects of the study were chosen by applying the purposeful sampling model. The participants in this study were 53 students at a state university who were enrolled in English preparatory courses during the 2022–2023 academic year. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 22 and included 48 female and 5 male students. The reason for the low number of male students participating in the study is that the majority of the students registered that year were female. Therefore, the numerical gap between the genders of participants is a limitation of this study. Due to the earthquake, participants had to complete the first term through face-to-face instruction and the second through the required distance learning.

Data Collection Tools and Data Analysis

Data were collected electronically via a Google Form open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire items were revised and adapted based on feedback from three experts to ensure validity. Before the administration of the questionnaire, subjects were informed about voluntary participation, and they were told that the data would be used only for this study. Thematic analysis, a qualitative method for data mining and theme identification (Braun & Clarke, 2006), was applied.

The analysis process involved the following steps:

Familiarization with the data: In the course of this work, the researcher read and re-read the responses of the participants and became acquainted with the content.

Defining and naming themes: The researcher explored the inner selves of the popular themes and gave them appropriate names.

Reviewing and refining themes: The researcher went through themes and checked to be sure they represented intended data before finalization.

4. Findings

This section presents the analysis of the respondents' answers to the survey and the results of two research questions.

What are the perspectives of preparatory class students about the status of the teacher's camera during an online course at higher education?

In this study, students studying English as a foreign language for 24 hours a week were asked for their opinions about the status of the teacher's camera during a compulsory online lesson. As Figure 1 shows, while 47.17% of the students stated that the teacher's camera should be on, 47.17% argued that this situation is not necessary for the understanding of the lesson. Only 5.66 percent of the students expressed that the teacher's camera should be off.
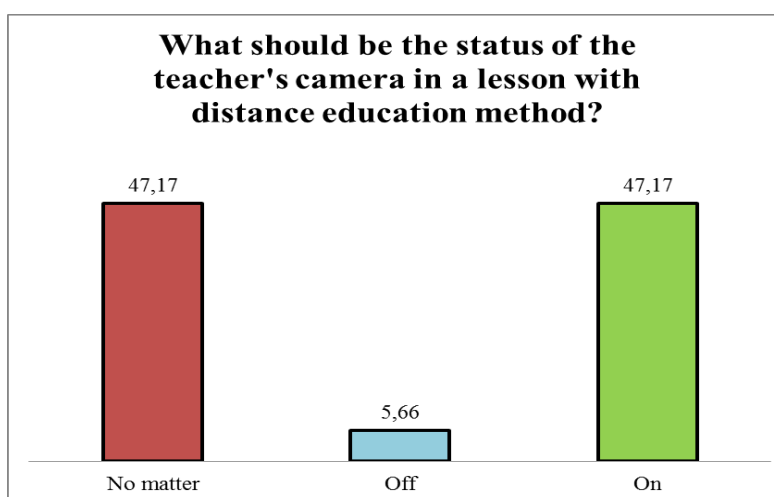
Figure 1. *The Results of Students' Preferences for the Status of the Teacher's Camera*

The students' perceptions of the teacher's camera status were examined, and the underlying rationales for on-camera were subjected to thematic analysis.

Table 1. Reasons for on-cameras

Reasons for on-cameras	
Themes	Percentages
Feeling a real and more motivating classroom environment	54.5
Seeing the teacher's gestures and facial expressions	22.7
More professional and organized courses	22.7

As displayed in Table 1, 54.5% of the students asserted that when the teacher's camera is on, they feel a real and more motivating classroom environment compared to off-camera lessons. 22.7% of the participants revealed the importance of seeing the teacher's gestures and facial

expressions to learn beneficially, and the rest (22.7%) remarked that if the teacher's camera is on, lessons are handled more professionally and in a more organized manner.

Feeling a real and more motivating classroom environment

According to students, who claim that the teacher's camera should be on, if the camera is on, a real classroom environment is created, thus students feel more motivated.

> It should be open because I think that in this way, the student participates more actively and the lesson is more effective (S 33).

> Actually, the teacher's camera being turned off does not cause much of a problem, but if it is on, I think students will concentrate better on the lesson as if they were face to face (S 30).

> I think the teacher's camera should be on because it is more efficient and more formal. It increases the student's attention to the lesson. It creates a bit of a classroom atmosphere (S 43).

Seeing the teacher's gestures and facial expressions

According to the students' expressions, when the students see the teacher's gestures and facial expressions, they can understand the lesson better and take the lesson more seriously.

> I think it should be open because seeing the instructor's facial expressions and body language while the teacher is speaking attracts my attention and gives me the feeling of talking face-to-face (S 35).

> The teacher's camera should be on because gestures and facial expressions are of great importance to be effective on the other side (S 26).

> I think that seeing the teacher's gestures and facial expressions towards our questions and answers will encourage the students to attend the lesson more (S 31).

More professional and organized courses

To make the lesson more formal and organized, students state that the teacher's camera should be on so that they can take the lesson more seriously.

> It should be open because the student should see the teacher's reactions and how he or she explains the subject. The student does not take a course seriously when the teacher's camera is off (S 16).

> I think the teacher's camera should be on to take the lesson more seriously (S 25).

47.17% of the respondents emphasized that it should be the teacher's decision, arguing that students' comprehension of the lesson is not affected by whether the teacher chooses to turn their camera on or off during lecturing. Generally speaking, such students could be characterized as either disinterested in the course material or highly motivated and eager to learn in any given situation.

I think it is a situation that should be left entirely to the teacher because every teacher has their unique teaching method: some dominate the class with their tone of voice, some with body language (S 53).

I think we should leave the decision to the teacher; maybe the teacher's home environment is not organized either (S 44).

It doesn't matter. Being open or closed will not have any effect on listening to the lesson. However, this situation may differ for each student (S 42).

It doesn't matter if the camera is on or off. It is enough for the teacher to be active. We do not need to see the teacher's face (S 45).

5.6% of students believe that the teacher's camera should be turned off because the teaching space may not always be suitable and it may cause distractions.

It should be closed because the teacher's surroundings and living environment may not be suitable at that moment (S 51).

It should be off because the teacher, like the student, may not be suitable in all circumstances (S 32).

The teacher's camera should be off because it is enough for us to hear and understand (S 39).

What are the perspectives of preparatory class students about the status of the students' cameras during an online course at higher education?

As Figure 2 shows, regarding the status of students' cameras in compulsory synchronous online courses, 7.55% of the students argued that cameras should be on while 92.45% stated that cameras should be off, presenting different reasons.
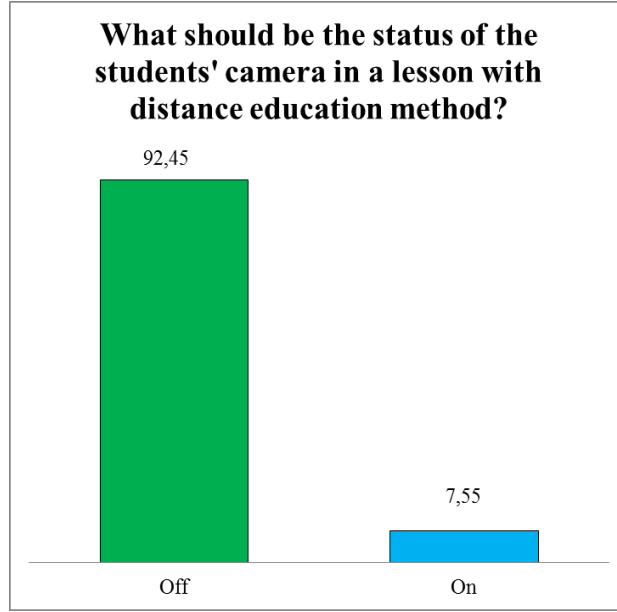
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Figure 2. *The Results of Students' Preferences of the Status of Students' Cameras*

7.55% of students who think cameras should be turned on asserted that being on-camera would help students concentrate better on the lesson because they would not be preoccupied with other things and would be able to pay attention

> *The students' cameras should be on because when the cameras are on, the students will not ignore the lesson (S 42).*

> *I think it would be better if the students' cameras were on. The student becomes more focused on the lesson (S 19).*

92.45% of the participants citing various reasons argued that students' cameras should be off. As Figure 3 depicts a sizable portion (83.3%) of these students stated that not having a private space is the primary reason for not turning on their cameras. Students may occasionally be required to attend classes outside, or they may have large families but few rooms or shared rooms. Following this, in very small percentages, follow embarrassment, distractions, and worries about their appearance on camera.
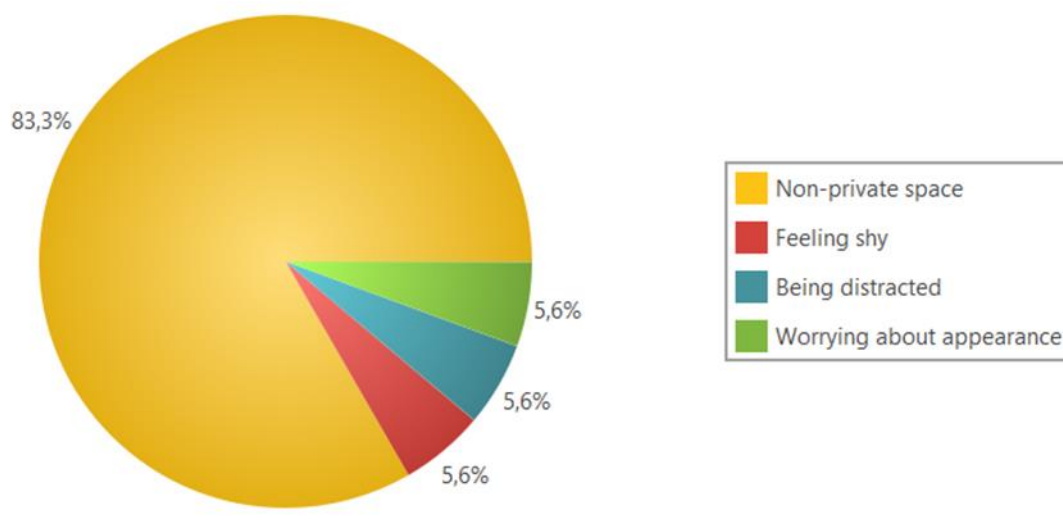
Figure 3. *The Reasons for Students' On-Camera*

Non-private Space

In some parts of Turkey, families are crowded and financially poor, so the number of individuals with private rooms is not very high. As this is the case, when more than one person shares the same room, it becomes very difficult to turn on the camera during online classes.

> *I don't think turning on the camera is possible due to the intensity of our lesson hours because we can attend classes anytime and anywhere, and our environment is not always suitable for on-cameras (S 50).*

> *The cameras should be closed because the environment may not be available at that moment, sometimes it is difficult to find even a quiet place, and sometimes we are in our pyjamas without being ready for the course or doing our hair, we can be sleepy, and the house can be messy (S 41).*

> *It is more convenient to be closed; after all, we are not at school, and not everyone may have a quiet room at home where they can attend class. The space is not suitable for classes, so I don't think it is appropriate to have the camera on at home (S 36).*

Feeling Shy

Shyness is a significant barrier to language acquisition, which partially explains why children tend to acquire languages more rapidly than adults (Krashen, 1992). Some students reported that they feel more confident in online education compared to face-to-face learning, as the camera is off, and they do not feel observed.

> *I think deciding to open or close the camera should depend on the student because sometimes the student may not feel relaxed enough to talk (S 43).*

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I think the camera should be off so that the students can express themselves better (S 39).

Being Distracted

Since the lessons are taught intensively in the preparatory classes, it is difficult for students to attend compulsory distance education classes in a room all day. They may be in different environments at times, and these settings may not be suitable for participating in an online lesson. Some students state that because the environments for attending the lessons vary, events occurring in the background may distract the attention of the instructor or other students if the cameras are on.

> *Students must have their cameras turned off. Our teachers teach in a place where they will not be disturbed; however, unexpected situations may occur as the student receives distance education at home, for example, the constant ringing of the doorbell or someone entering and leaving the room. If the camera is on, in these and similar situations, not only the teacher but also the fellow students become distracted (S 33).*

Worrying about Appearance

Young people place great importance on their appearance, so some students express that they feel more comfortable when the cameras are off during virtual classes. Otherwise, they find it difficult to focus on the lessons, as they are preoccupied with their appearance on camera.

> *It is better to have students' cameras turned off because, in this way, they may not worry about their appearance (S 45).*

> *I think the camera should be closed because if it is on, it can honestly distract me, and I will not be able to focus on the lesson because of thinking of how I look on camera (S 35).*

> *Students' cameras should be closed. While students try to focus on the lesson, they should not think about how they look, and they should be more comfortable so that they can focus on the lesson. (S 52).*

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the findings of the first research question, only 5.66% of the students stated that the teacher's camera should be off, while 47.17% specified its being on, and 47.17% left the decision to the teacher. The results of the current study were analyzed as strongly emphasizing the importance of teachers' social presence, the students consider that, unless there is a valid reason for instructors to turn off their cameras, their cameras should be on. This, students believe, helps them concentrate better by creating a real school environment and allowing them to benefit from the teacher's gestures and emotions. This study, in line with several studies on

this topic (Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė et al., 2022; Williams & Pica-Smith, 2022), indicates that when the teacher's camera is on, it benefits students by creating a more authentic classroom environment. However, according to the results of Kozar's study (2016), instructors contend that the decision should be theirs regarding whether their cameras are on or not, as they may feel fatigued and may not have an appropriate environment. Based on this, we can conclude that the teachers should turn on their cameras unless having obstacles such as fatigue or not being able to find a suitable environment because the teacher's social presence motivates the students and helps them engage better.

Regarding the situation with students' cameras, studies have presented various analyses and results. Some researchers, such as Castelli & Sarvary (2020), contended that making students turn on their cameras would deter them from learning, while others, like Williams & Pica-Smith (2022), asserted that it is essential for students to turn on their cameras for an engaging, motivating, and beneficial lesson. Although several studies (Costa, 2020; Sevy-Biloon, 2021; Waluyo and Wangdi, 2023) have indicated that technical issues are a major reason why students do not turn on their cameras, no students in this study indicated experiencing such problems. According to this research, the main reason why students do not turn on their cameras is the lack of an appropriate study environment (83.3%), which was similarly identified as the primary reason for students keeping their cameras off in the studies conducted by Meishar-Tal & Forkosh-Baruch (2022) and Rajab & Soheib (2021). Similarly, Costa (2020), Sevy-Biloon (2021), Bedenlier et al. (2021), and Waluyo and Wangdi (2023) identified that a lack of private space is a significant reason for students' reluctance to turn on their cameras. Being self-conscious about their appearance was cited as a reason why students did not turn on their cameras in this study by 5.6 percent of participants, and it was stated as the main reason (41 %) in the study conducted by Castelli & Sarvary (2020). Furthermore, other studies (Waluyo & Wangdi, 2023; Sevy-Biloon, 2021; Tobi et al., 2021) have revealed that students, at varying rates, did not turn their cameras on concerning their appearance.

Shyness and timidity are significant barriers to language acquisition (Krashen, 1992), which may account for 5.6 percent of participants' off-camera behavior according to the analysis of this study. Sevy-Biloon (2021) also illustrates how shyness can hinder the willingness of students to activate their cameras. Many participants in the study reported refraining from turning on their cameras due to feelings of embarrassment, a lack of confidence in their knowledge, or a fear of making mistakes. Furthermore, Tobi et al., (2021) focusing on the shyness of students, stated that one reason for students' off-cameras is the discomfort of peer

scrutiny. According to the current study, the potential for distracting both the teacher and peers is another reason why students are reluctant to turn on their cameras. A small percentage of students (5.6%) claimed being distracted and unable to concentrate on the lesson, which is stated in the study of Waluyo and Wangdi (2023). When the cameras are active, the events taking place in the background, especially of students who share the same room with different individuals, may distract the attention of peers and the teacher.

Overall, according to the social presence theory, students learn better through interaction, gestures, and facial expressions as gestures and facial expressions contribute to the comprehension of the subject matter, so both students and teachers should consider keeping their cameras on during online lessons. As the results of this study indicate, students place importance on education in a natural and authentic learning environment; however, having all responsibility on the teachers' shoulders, they believe that the social presence of the teacher is essential for creating a real classroom atmosphere, which can only be achieved if the teacher turns on their camera. While being aware of the importance of social presence for a real classroom environment, students are strongly reluctant to turn on their cameras due to the aforementioned reasons. In an environment where both students' and the teacher's cameras are on, which fosters social presence, lessons are more serious, useful, and fun. In contrast, in a virtual classroom in which the cameras are off, lessons may be less serious, less disciplined, and less effective, as it is unclear whether the student with the camera off is engaged in the lesson. Thus, both teachers and students should be willing to turn on their cameras for a real classroom environment and an educative lesson.

To conclude, the study's findings indicate that nearly half of the participants strongly felt that the teacher's camera should be on because this allows the lessons to be delivered like that of a real classroom environment. The teacher's gestures and facial expressions make the lessons more comprehensible, and the instruction becomes more structured and professional. There were a considerable number of students arguing that the choice of teacher's camera status should be left to the teacher, but only a minority of participants stated that the teacher's camera should be off attributing it to their suitable environment. As for the student camera, a large group of the students stated that students' cameras should be off indicating a reason for not having a study room of their own. A majority of students reported having to share their study environment with siblings, which influenced their reluctance to activate their cameras. Factors such as shyness, concerns about appearance on camera, and potential distractions were also cited as reasons for the reluctance to turn on cameras. By analyzing the use of teachers' and

students' cameras, which are widely utilized in distance education and various online learning formats, this study makes a significant contribution to the existing academic literature.

Implications of Research

Based on the results of this study, the basic recommendation to instructors is that their cameras should be on unless there is a serious problem with keeping them off because students want to feel in a professional classroom environment and get emotional influence from teachers' facial expressions. However, considering the intensity of the course given by the teacher, the decision to activate or deactivate their camera during the course might be left to the teacher. Additionally, although lessons may be more engaging with students' cameras on, they should not be forced to turn on their cameras due to valid reasons, like lack of a private space or distraction owing to background events. On the other hand, students should make an effort to turn on their cameras, as they are part of the educational system and should actively contribute to their learning.

Limitations and Suggestion

The limited number of male participants in this study presents a notable constraint. Furthermore, the scope of this study is confined to the perspectives of students enrolled in the EFL preparatory class, thereby impeding the generalizability of the findings to the broader higher education context. To enhance the applicability of the results to higher education, it is necessary to conduct studies involving a more diverse participant pool from various academic departments. Notably, while there is a prevailing belief that teachers should have their cameras on to facilitate clear communication of their non-verbal cues, it is essential to address the unresolved issues linked to this practice. For instance, in the context of teachers delivering six hours of online instruction on specific days during compulsory schooling, the question of whether their cameras should be consistently on warrants careful consideration. To navigate this complexity, it is crucial to make studies engaging both teachers' and students' views concerning the appropriateness of maintaining teacher cameras turned on throughout the lessons.

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