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Research Article

The impact of Covid-19 on English language learners: A qualitative case study

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Abstract

Appearing in early 2020, Covid 19 hit the world. It created great fear and anxiety in almost all countries including Turkey. It also caused significant social, cultural and economic changes in societies. One of the sectors experiencing these changes and difficulties in societies is undoubtedly education. Based on this reality, this study aims to reveal to what extent the distance education caused by Covid 19 affects the attitudes of the students of Necmettin Erbakan University School of Foreign Languages towards English learning and their success. The study was carried out synchronously, in which the lecturer and the 19 English Language Teaching preparatory class students were in communication all the time. It was a qualitative study, and semi-structured interview was used as the tool to collect data. The findings were analyzed in depth making use of interpretive analysis. The biggest drawback of on-line learning was found out to be not having the interaction carried out in a physical classroom. The results showed that the switch to on-line learning can seem challenging both for teachers and for students.

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Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as an international concern on 30th January 2020 and a global public health emergency of 2020 as well as a pandemic on 11th March 2020 (Cucinotta & Vanelli, 2020). On the same day, the Turkish Ministry of Health reported the first case in Turkey (Bayram, et al 2020). Certainly, like many other facets of everyday life, COVID-19 has had a critical impact on students, instructors, and educational organizations around the globe (Mailizar, Almanthari, Maulina, & Bruce, 2020). The outbreak caused schools, colleges and universities across the globe to close down their campuses so that students could pursue social distancing measures (Toquero, 2020). Nonetheless, moving smoothly from an environment of traditional education to distance and virtual learning could not happen overnight. This rapid shift is bound to various obstacles and challenges at this point (Crawford, Butler-Henderson, Rudolph, & Glowatz, 2020). However, as nobody knows when this pandemic will clear away fully, educational institutions across the globe settled on to use the already available technical resources to generate online learning material for students of all academic fields (Kaur, 2020).

When Covid-19 struck the world, everything came to a halt. Everyone had to work from home, figure out new ways to entertain themselves and make sure children received the necessary education. This meant educators had to learn how to train their students virtually. They didn't have the chance to learn how to do this effectively. They were embarked upon it in a matter of days. Most probably, they felt like they barely got through to their learners. It was a field that they had never had to pass through. Unfortunately, the situation hasn't altered much. COVID-19 is still uncontrolled, and it doesn't look as if it's going to go off anytime soon. This means teachers are presumably going to face the world of virtual teaching once more. While some countries are shifting to in-person learning, many are still holding forth a virtual option.

Nevertheless, distance education is not a new concept for Turkish society. In Turkey, it is a method used to a certain extent and with some differences for decades. For example, students would then learn only by reading published sources. However, later on, in parallel with the developments and changes in the world, the use of technology in education has become popular (Rennell, 2020). In fact, over time, some institutions using technology for educational purposes started to use it as a competitive tool with other institutions. However, in terms of technological infrastructure and teacher competencies, the number of educational institutions that provide services to students in this sense was already very limited. With the pandemic we encountered in 2020, distance education method had to be applied in all schools throughout the country and therefore the difficulties multiplied. Such a wide-ranging application of course affected students the most. They suddenly began to live between four walls isolated from the social environment, even with no fresh air, only with their electronic devices and without eye contact for a long time.

In such a situation, it is undoubtedly important to establish the necessary conditions to provide the individual with such a level of education. In particular, there is a need to work on teaching methods or learning pathways continuously and to create new alternatives to meet the differing needs and expectations of students in a rapidly changing and developing world. Especially in educational environments, the authorities often make comments on these developments and remind their employees that something new needs to be worked on to catch

up with innovations and keep up with changes. Keeping all this in mind, the study set out to find out how particularly English language learners were affected by the pandemic process and whether there is any change in their attitudes towards learning the language in this study. The sample research study was conducted with the students of Necmettin Erbakan University, School of Foreign Languages English Language Teaching Department.

On-line education

Distance education first emerged in the United States in the 1800s when tutors and pupils at the University of Chicago, being at different places, attempted to connect through correspondence programs. Many years later during World War I, the advancement of radio as a communication medium, opened the door for using that technology for distance learning in many different schools such as School of the Air set up in Wisconsin in the 1920s (Mclsaac & Gunawardena, 1996). When television became popular in the 1950s, visual instruction became feasible for the first time between instructors and learners who were at very different locations. As the technology of computer and emailing revived in the 1970s and 1980s, distance education started to widen significantly. The preliminary totally on-line course was presented in 1981, and in the following year, the first on-line program was founded by the Western Behavior Sciences Institute (Harasim, 2000). The first on-line undergraduate and graduate classes were commenced by different universities and schools in the mid-1980s. In the late 1980s, because of a shortcoming of teachers on math, science, foreign languages, etc., some K-12 schools switched to commercial courses presented through the then-new satellite technology, which mainly promoted still faster growth of distance education (Mclsaac & Gunawardena, 1996).

The emergence of the World-Wide Web (WWW) in 1991 was a mighty accelerator for taking distance education forward, making it a milestone in the rapid distribution and development of online teaching and learning. Maloney-Krichmar and Abras (2003) indicated that WWW originated the wide-spread usage of web sites and the improvement of online community groups promoted by web pages and diverse forms of communications software (p.4). Thenceforward, schools and universities around the world have offered both online courses and total degree programs online, too (Wallace, 2003). However, when the Covid 19 pandemic struck, just like any other sector, the field of education took its share. As regards to UNESCO, all schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) were shut down in 185 countries on 1 April 2020, affecting 1 542 412 000 students, which makes up 89.4% of overall registered learners. On the first days of May, a few countries in which declining numbers of cases and deaths were experienced, began to lift lockdown measures. On 7 May, however, these institutions (HEIs) were yet already enclosed in 177 countries, effecting 1 268 164 088 students, composing 72.4% of overall registered learners. These numbers continued to increase over time and the governments of the countries started to take stricter health measures. On the other hand, in order to overcome the problems and uncertainties caused by COVID 19, educators started talking more and discussing new teaching methods or learning modalities, where

individual learning is encouraged and technology is used to the maximum as well as face-to-face and distance education.

While the world was in this condition, taking a look at the example of Turkey with over 68 thousand schools, 18 million students, 1 million 117,000 teachers, over 200 universities, 8 million university students and 174 thousand academic staff, it is easily understood that the problems caused by Covid 19 in the education sector were quite high. In order to find a solution to the problems, as in other sectors, MoNE officials, taking into account the opinions and suggestions of the health sciences board, decided to shift to distance education instead of face-to-face in almost all schools around the country. This obligatory transformation from the conventional method to the unsolved puzzle at the time was a mystery to be solved for many teachers and students. Distant learning was a process they had to get used to as soon as possible. This new method for some could be carried out in two ways.

In an online environment, interactions between students and teachers can occur synchronously or asynchronously, either way, the feedback from students and the perceived success of online learning frequently depends on the positive nature of these interactions (Picciano, 2002). Linked with these interactions is the perceived benefit of improved student learning (Davies & Graff, 2005). That is, students' success in distance education largely depends on their healthy communication with their teachers and their natural interaction with them.

Context of the study

The School of Foreign Languages was established with the decision of the Higher Education Council dated 14.07.2010 and numbered 6005, affiliated to the Rectorate of Necmettin Erbakan University and offer both compulsory and optional (elective) foreign languages education including German, English and Arabic for all faculties, colleges and vocational schools within the University in accordance with Article 5/i of the Higher Education Law No.2547. The school is located in Necmettin Erbakan University Meram campus and has a total of 24 faculty members, including five assistant professors and 19 lecturers. The school offers a one-year intensive language program that allows new students to use their language skills efficiently and effectively at the levels recommended by the European Council Common Language Regulation during their academic studies and post-graduation business life.

The main purpose of the School of Foreign Languages is to enable students studying at Necmettin Erbakan University to use all the resources related to their academic studies effectively and to use the foreign language they have studied in their social lives by communicating in writing and orally. The school takes into account the need for continuous self-evaluation and renewal in order to better meet the needs of students, and works in this context. A School of Foreign Languages Library was established in the school, and efforts to establish a digital library are continuing to increase the speaking skills of the students. The school has switched to web-based exam system in 2019, and the exams are carried out digitally with 200 computers in the laboratories until the pandemic process. In addition, English, German, French, Arabic and Persian courses are opened to provide language training to the students and staff.

The school aims to enable students to effectively develop the target language in their business and social circles throughout their academic work and to provide them with the

necessary knowledge, skills and confidence. As the School of Foreign Languages, our goal is to use contemporary approaches and methods in foreign language education to enable our students to communicate in a foreign language such as English, German and Arabic in written and verbal form and carry out their academic work. To this end, we offer a highly qualified foreign language training that meets the needs of our students in their advanced professional and social lives with an innovative and dynamic teaching staff. Our vision as the School of Foreign Languages is: We aim to maximize our mission and ensure that our university is in an effective position at the national level by teaching foreign languages in line with the academic, scientific, and pedagogical goals of our university. This way, students can understand different cultures, think critically, and benefit from the foreign language in their academic, professional and social lives. (<http://www.neu.ydyo.gov.tr>)

Baring the information stated above in mind, the purpose of the study was to find answers to the following research questions:

1. How effective is on-line education in Turkey from university students' perspectives?
2. What are the challenges and obstacles of on-line education faced by university students in Turkey?

Methodology

This study was carried out synchronously, in which the lecturer and the students were in communication all the time with 19 English Language Teaching Preparatory Class students studying at Necmettin Erbakan University. It was a study implemented following a 10-week process of on-line education in the first semester of the 2020/2021 academic year. All the students who participated in the study were currently attending online courses. The study was qualitative and semi-structured interview was used as the tool to collect data.

Procedure

2020/2021 academic year started its education for Necmettin Erbakan University Preparatory class students via on-line just like all grades in Turkey. At the beginning of the term both the students and the teachers knew very little about how the procedure was to continue. Let alone the lessons, the materials, assessment and registers were all a mystery. As the puzzle got solved gradually, the marathon started. The students mentioned above had 30 hours of on-line synchronous English classes a week giving 6 hours a day. Virtual classes were formed by distant learning coordinators and not more than 30 students were placed in the classes. Due to the large number of students, the classes had to be divided into 2 shifts. The first shift started at 8.00 am in the morning and continued until 1.40 pm. The second shift started at 2.00 pm and finished at 7.40 pm. Unlike other departments that allocate 20 minutes for each lesson, foreign language school preparatory classes took 40 minutes for each lesson. The interview questions directed to the students at the end of the 10-week on-line education process were:

1. As Covid -19 Pandemic students, what are the advantages and disadvantages of on-line education?

2. What are the differences between face to face and face to screen learning? Which one would you prefer, why?
3. How did this circumstance affect your education life?
4. How do you feel about learning during lockdown? (technical, monetary, motivation, etc.)
5. What kind of problems did you have during courses?
6. Any other thought or feeling you would like to add, your ideas and opinions for the future?

These interview questions were applied via video calling to the 19 students attending English Language Teaching Preparatory class and their answers were documented. For each question the interviewees were required to think deeply and give real, sincere replies. The last question was not primarily within the interview questions, however upon necessity, was added and directed to all the students.

Population and sampling

The analysis of qualitative data, such as text data from interview documents, is termed as Qualitative Analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1984). It mainly counts on the researcher's analytical, critical and integrative abilities besides personal knowledge of the social context where the data is collected. What is emphasized in qualitative analysis is "sense making" or figuring out a phenomenon, instead of projection or explanation. A mindset which is innovative, creative, inquisitive and investigative is essential for qualitative analysis.

Based on the above mentioned literature the study was put through with 19 Preparatory class students attending English Language Teaching Department of Necmettin Erbakan University in Konya. The students were 11 females and 8 males. In terms of sampling, convenience sampling, in which the participants are chosen based on their relative ease of access, was used (Wiederman, 1999). The 19 students were not told about the research being carried out during the on-line courses. Thereafter, they were informed about the research process in detail.

Data collection

In this study, in order to collect data semi structured interview was utilized. Here, the interview type chosen at the beginning was structured, however a question asked to one of the interviewees upon necessity changed the data collection tool to semi-structured in which all the interviewees (in this case students) were asked the same open-ended question at the end of the 10-week research application procedure. Within this process, five (plus 1 added later) pre-prepared guiding questions were directed to the students following the 10-week on-line synchronous education period. All the students were told about the research being applied and were given the questions in advance. The following day, each student was video called by the researcher and the answers were transcribed. The responses of the students were carefully written down by the researcher so as to analyze later on.

Data analysis

Stake (1995) illustrates analysis as a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compositions, and interpreting our first impressions. As the study is qualitative,

Interpretive Analysis was used to analyze the data gathered from the semi-structured interview results. The gathered data was separated and conceptually categorized into meaningful chunks. These parts can sometimes be a word, a sentence, a paragraph or even a whole page of data (Yıldırım and Simsek, 2013). Through a very long process and with an in-depth attention, these categories were analyzed and the results found were interpreted for each participant.

Findings

According to the students' answers, the below stated issues emerged and these were descriptively analyzed.

Reduced Expenses

In terms of the positive sides of on-line learning, the top answer was reduced expenses. 6 students talked about how their spending lessened during the distant learning. They needed no money to get along, no rent for houses or dormitories, no bus or tram fees. Some of the responses of the students were as:

'It's economical for all.'

'Many of our expenses have been reduced (Book, travel costs, etc).'

'It's a big opportunity for those whose houses are far from the school. Moreover, there are some economic advantages as well. For example, we can eat food at home, so we don't pay for food.'

Comfortable Home Environment

The second top answer for the advantages of on-line learning was that students felt themselves much more comfortable and cozy in their living environment. 4 students stated that their rooms at home were more relieved than hard classroom chairs and uncomfortable cold desks. A few answers were:

'I think the biggest advantage of on-line education is that we can attend our lessons on cold winter days from our warm houses and we can go to our school with just a computer or a mobile phone from our desk without travelling in the cold.'

'I am attending my lesson from my room. This is more comfortable for me.'

'The first advantage is that we don't have to take our books with us all the time, the second is that we have actually more freedom than we could have in the classroom.'

Technological Opportunities

Another advantage considered by the students was the technological opportunities that on-line education offers. 3 students talked about how easier it was to meet new techniques and access different kinds of activities through on-line learning. Some said:

'And with on-line education, we are seeing different learning techniques. Our teacher sends us interesting photos and videos and this is funny and educational.'

'Secondly, some activities can be done easier. For example, listening activities and sharing screen to show contents like books and videos is easy.'

'Using visual and audio elements of learning has become more effective in on-line education.'

Replay Benefit

It seemed like students also enjoyed the replay feasibility of the synchronous lessons. 2 students said that the lessons could be watched again when requested which seemed to be an advantage. Their original sentences were as:

'As long as there are internet and technological tools, lessons can be listened to anywhere at any time. Lessons were easily entered at the desired time.'

'Because there is a registration system in on-line education, it can be listened to again at any time.'

Less Tiring

Some students thought that in this way they were less tired. They expressed their feelings like:

'First of all, we don't need to travel to school. It's a big opportunity for those whose houses are far from the school.'

'I think the biggest advantage of on-line education is that we can attend our lessons on cold winter days from our warm houses and we can go to our school with just a computer or a mobile phone from our desk without travelling in the cold.'

Apart from these responses, some students indicated that they did not spend time on buses or minibuses to go to school which saved them time and that this system helped introverted students to participate more. An answer that stepped forward and lit a bulb in the researchers mind was about the physically disabled students. A student mentioned how practical on-line education was for the handicapped students. They had the comfort of joining the lessons at home with no difficulty.

Technical Problems

The biggest problem for the students attending synchronous on-line education was the technical problems. 10 students stated that they had serious difficulty during the process. They could not participate in the classes due to systematic and technical problems. Some of their responses were as:

'Due to some technical problems the lessons can be delayed or canceled and the continuity of the lessons depend only on a power cut or an internet failure and in some rural areas, connectivity problems and internet access can be difficult.'

'Internet disconnection is one of the most common situations. The internet is constantly cut off during the courses.'

'We may encounter some obstacles such as system errors affecting when participating or during lessons.'

'Firstly, the biggest problem here is the internet connection. I knew the internet in Turkey isn't satisfying but it could be repaired. Moreover, there are some hard ware problems too. Sometimes we can not communicate with each other because of microphone issues.'

Health Problems

The second highly ranked issue about distant learning was the health problems students encountered in front of the screen. 6 students talked about their different kind of aches due to sitting long hours with no movement in front of their computers. A few answers were like:

'Having 6 hour lessons isn't too much but because of the online lessons sitting in front of the table during 6 hours make me really exhausted at the end of the day.'

'The other disadvantage is our health. Nearly all students use telephone, computer and tablet to enter the lesson and of course this affects our physical and mental health. For example, my eyes are always red and puffy because of spending so much time with the telephone.'

'However less tiring it is, it is tiring. Although it may seem less tiring, it is actually tiring. Especially we suffer from eye strain because of looking at the screen. As we are constantly sitting, we have backache too.'

'Sitting at in front of the computer or looking at the screen for hours causes many health problems such as weakness, low back and neck pain, headaches.'

Focus Problem

One fourth of the students stated that they had concentration problem while looking at the screen. 5 students told the researcher that they had difficulty in focusing on the lesson due to the atmosphere. Some replies were:

'It is very difficult to focus on the lesson on the computer screen. This makes the lessons inefficient.'

'One of the most important disadvantages of on-line education is the inability to focus. Since we can not make eye contact with the teachers and our classmates, we can not focus on the lesson.'

'Audio from any device can distract us and bring us about to move away from the classroom.'

Financial Problems

The last disadvantage students talked about was the monetary issue. 3 students said that this process was not quite easy for the students who were not on an equal basis. Some of their speeches were as:

'It is very difficult for those who do not have a computer or internet access at home.'

'Some students suffer because they don't have any technological devices or internet to join the lessons. As a result they fall behind their friends and the education process.'

'And I think the most important thing is we can't enjoy university and unfortunately not everyone's home has internet. This is the biggest problem.'

Face to Face Education

When the students were asked the difference and to make a choice between on-line and face to face education, the majority said that they would definitely prefer face to face

education. 11 students talked about how efficient the traditional way of learning is with interaction and eye contact both with their teachers and their classmates. Some answers were as:

'Face-to-face education is much more effective and reasonable. Classroom environment encourages students to be more effective. It is easier to focus on the lesson. Your attention can be easily distracted in face to screen learning.'

'Students can see their teachers. They can make eye contact with their teacher.'

'It is very important to make eye contact with the teacher in face-to-face education. Thus, communication becomes more effective. However, face to screen learning does not have such an opportunity. We had the opportunity to socialize more in face-to-face learning. In face-to-face learning, any question could be discussed by listening to everyone's thoughts. However, this cannot be done in face to screen learning.'

'Face-to-face education is much easier than on-line education. Since people see each other in face-to-face education, they communicate much more easily.'

Limited Student Involvement

Students thought that in face-to-face education, they could be involved at any time and communicate with their teachers, but in on-line education, this was very limited. 4 students indicated that student involvement was quite low during distant learning. A few responses were:

'In face-to-face education, we can be involved at any time and communicate with our teachers, but in on-line education, this is very limited and only possible when there is a teacher who knows how to behave. Otherwise, unfortunately it turns into a live lesson video on YouTube.'

'Since people see each other in face-to-face education, they communicate much more easily. But it is very difficult to speak in on-line education, even attend classes. When we don't speak, we can be seen as not attending the lesson, but actually this is not so.'

No Eye Contact

For some students the most important thing for communication was eye contact. 3 students talked about how they felt themselves in mid-air with no eyes to look at and no face to see. Some replies were like:

'I definitely prefer face-to-face learning. Because eye contact is important to me. Courses were more efficient.'

'Face to face learning is more effective than face to screen learning. We can see our teacher and I think eye contact is important. We can't do this now.'

No Internet Connection

When the students were asked about the differences between face to face and on-line education, another point they emphasized was that they would need no technological gadgets or internet connection in the traditional method, however on-line was fundamentally based on technology. 3 students said:

'Face to screen learning is more related technology. We are using technology now.'

'I have some problems for example, I get disconnected, my microphone doesn't work, I can't attend the lesson, etc.'

'Face to face doesn't need internet connection or technological tools or devices but face to screen learning consists of these. Every student doesn't have these so it is compelling for them.'

Inappropriate Home Environment

Some students stated that not all had equal conditions and that many of them could be living in a crowded house with noise everywhere or no fair opportunities like net connection or technological devices. 2 answers were in this way:

'Some students can not attend classes because they live in a crowded house.'

'On the other hand some families can be crowded so the student can't find a convenient place to listen the classes and attend them. They can't open their microphone in fear of her/his friends and teacher will hear the sounds coming from the back.'

One last thing a student mentioned here was upon the superiority of on-line education. As mainly students mentioned about the handicaps of it, this answer was recognized as significant. She said that limited equipment was used in face-to-face learning, but screen learning had a wider area of technology usage.

No Feeling of University Life

The third question directed to the students in the interview was about in what ways this circumstance affected their education life. 8 out 19 said that they did not feel like a university student. They would have wanted a university life. Their answers were like:

'I was bored from this city so I studied really hard to pass the university exam and finally I did. I would study and I would see different places. But now this circumstance handicapped me unfortunately.'

'I passed the university exam but it was odd because I never went to university and I am wondering what's it like.'

'I'm like in a parallel universe where everyone lives with laptops. I don't feel like I've started college, but I feel like I've fallen into a new habitual life.'

Adaptation Problems

About one third of the students talked about adaptation problems to the new learning style. 8 of them stated that they had trouble in understanding the lessons. Some of their original words were as:

'I can't study well in my lessons either. Living in constant fear of death is very bad and hard for me.'

'I'm not hardworking as before, I cannot give much importance to the lessons; I always prefer to spend time with my family. This situation makes me sad, I feel like there aren't classes and I see that my English is starting to get bad.'

'After the Corona Virus entered our lives, our lives suddenly changed and of course it also affected our education lives. At first I had some difficulties in getting used to on-line lessons as I was used to going to school and also my IT skills were not good but over time I kept up with everything.'

One last thing a student mentioned about this question was again about the advantage of this process. He said that staying at home offered more free time for activities like watching movies, reading books and developing his English skills.

Decreased Motivation During Lockdown

The fourth question of the interview had quite precise answers. 17 students out of 19 talked about how this epidemic made them down day by day. They said that they started to feel stressed and tired. Some replies were as follows:

'I was very bad at motivation during the lockdown. I wanted to go out and walk, but I couldn't because of the curfew. Being in the same house overwhelmed me all the time. Hearing bad things from the news every day made it worse.'

'Our lives have been severely restricted by the curfew. We started doing the same things every day. We started to get education without ever going to school, which decreases interest after a while. It was really difficult to start classes without being in the school environment. Sometimes I don't feel like a student of this school.'

'I think this is the most positive situation in my new life because I can't leave the house anymore and I don't spend much money. Also, I have a lot of free time and I'm tired of fun events such as watching movies, TV shows or reading books. Now I'm more interested in doing scientific research and watching videos that can improve me.'

'Motivation is actually something I lost a long time ago. I can't motivate myself, and even the things I used to be overly happy don't make me happy anymore. My life goes on not by desire, but by necessity.'

Less Expenses

2 students here indicated that the lockdown could be considered as a positive thing in terms of decreased expenditures. The two answers were:

'We don't have to spend extra money. This situation makes me feel real bad except for financially. This makes me happy.'

'There are no expenses like eating out, transportation, so we can easily save money. It's a financial advantage.'

Connection Problems

The next question aimed at learning the kind of problems students had during the on-line courses. A very large number stated that they had connection problems. 14 students were fed up of disconnection. Some said:

'The most important problem is connection problems. Sometimes we lose connection or go out of power. These problems prevent us from attending the classes.'

'It is a huge problem for us to follow the lesson because of connection problems and internet problems.'

'One of the situations where I have the most difficulty is the internet and the power cut off.'

Systematic Problems

System problems were the second top answer for the kind of problems students faced during the lockdown obligatory on-line education. 9 students complained about how the system bothered them with its problems. A few answers were:

'The application that we use in the course constantly pushes the teacher away and the teacher's voice doesn't come to us.'

'This may be a systematic connection problem or a computer-related audio problem. I'm sure if we could see our professors and teach face to face everything would be much better.'

One student also claimed that sometimes the smart phone or the computer broke down.

The Desire To Start School

The last question that the students were expected to answer was their thoughts and feelings they would like to add and their opinions, ideas about the future. Here, 11 students said they expected the quarantine to end as soon as possible and so that they could start school. Some answers were like:

'I hope we can do face to face education as soon as possible.'

'Actually, I have no idea. I just want to say something: I hope we get back to our normal educational life and daily life.'

'I hope the pandemic process will end as soon as possible and we will have everything we miss. In the new academic year, I hope we meet face to face with our friends and teachers and we do lessons efficiently.'

'I hope that virus will end, we'll come back to school and we'll live our lives.'

No Complete Expression

Students here reported that they could not fully express themselves in on-line lessons. 5 students said:

'For example, when we see our friends and teachers in the classroom, our willingness and motivation to study increases. But the people we can communicate face to face on quarantine days are only our families. Therefore, we cannot share our troubles and problems with our friends and teachers.'

'I find it quite tiring actually. We can not express ourselves fully in my opinion, socialization is very low.'

'I could be much better in class; I feel that I can not express myself the way I really want.'

The different ideas which came from students were also transcribed. Each and every answer was valued. One student claimed if shopping malls, markets and all kinds of social areas are open, schools should be opened too. Another one said that people will fight more epidemics

as a result of harming the world. One more statement here was that he better understood the value of living and the value of his loved ones.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to find out how affective on-line education is from university students' perspectives besides the challenges and obstacles faced by English Language Department Preparatory class students at Necmettin Erbakan University School of Foreign Languages.. The problem which was the starting point of the study was the obligatory shift to digital learning due to Covid 19 and the continuing complaints and comments of the students throughout the 10-week on-line courses.

This study of student perceptions of on-line education approves that student experiences vary. For the majority of students, their experience is negative and they frequently indicate that this method of learning hinders their learning. Majority of the interviewed higher education students have doubts about online/digital learning. Lack of access to internet facilities, lack of actual interaction and communication with classmates and lecturers besides technological, health and financial problems were among the top challenges faced by higher education students of the above mentioned University. The sudden transition from traditional classrooms to online learning ended up in a completely different learning experience for students. As also reported in Adnan M. & Anwar K. 2020, some students in question unfortunately did not have any technological devices to pursue their education on-line or access to high speed or reliable internet services.

The research also demonstrated additional challenges faced by students like limited student involvement, inappropriate home environment and focus problems. Interviewees also reported that traditional classroom learning was much more effective as set against to online learning or distance education.

One of the less discussed areas of on-line education also mentioned within the study is the necessity of motivation. In conventional classes, students often actively participate in activities due to their face-to-face engagement with the lecturer and class mates. Most of the students stated that learning in the traditional classroom was more motivating than screen learning. To provide an effective and productive on-line program, students should not only be in on how to master the fast-paced online classes but they also need to possess a sound computer and technological skills to be able to learn from on-line lectures. Some students mentioned that they did not know how to do certain activities or moves on the computer.

Looking back on the literature, some points also showed similarity with Kemp, N. & Grieve, R. 2014 in terms of more engagement and immediate feedback in face-to-face education. Some similar answers from the study were:

'I think that discussion face to face really allows you to think more deeply and bounce ideas of other people. Writing it online, felt like your answers had to be more formal and exact, whereas in class discussion I felt you could really bounce more possible ideas off each other before coming to a conclusion.'

'You are able to directly discuss with tutor and peers and therefore directly receive feedback for your questions and others questions.'

However, to some extent, face to screen learning was preferred by some students. Especially under the circumstances of the pandemic, home learning via on-line was a remedy

for some. They considered themselves safe and also thought that on-line education was not that bad. They felt free peaceful at home, moreover an introverted student claimed that she was much better in this way than in the classroom atmosphere with many faces looking at her.

On the other side, owing to the rich resources of the educational institution, on-line classes were immediately initiated by the Rectorate. School of Foreign Languages, in this case the institution in research, had already started web-based exams in 2019 and was quite successful in carrying them out. This situation in specific was observed to help the lecturers in preparing and holding the examinations.

From the arguments and views put forward in this research study, it can be understood that on-line education can provide many advantages as well as disadvantages for students. Some students talked about health problems like backache or headache or even obesity, while some students indicated that home environment was quite comfortable for them. Some expressed that they had difficulty in focusing while others liked the replay opportunity. There were also students who felt more free while learning online.

The existing results play a part as a reminder that it is rather simplistic to consider “online learning” as an isolated concept, to be searched on its own or compared wholesale to face-to-face learning. Both methods of education host multiple aspects, and research concentrating on only one particular aspect or combination of aspects might reach very different conclusions from research focusing on another aspect or combination of aspects.

In short, from all these facts, we see that students have a lot to say about the e-learning they are exposed to at the moment. They like technology being blended into their education apart from the internet and systematic problems they come across. In online education, we understand that some students have more personal advantages such as having more free time, working freely, not having economic difficulties and using less manpower. However, it is quite likely that sitting indoors in front of a computer or tablet for a long time may cause physical, social and mental discomfort in students. That is, if online learning continues in this way, students will likely be more unhappy and less willing to learn. Therefore, they would never change the conventional classes to anything in which they are more socialized and have the opportunity to communicate and interact live with the instructor and classmates.

Pedagogical Implications

It is important that the online learning method provides students with some individual advantages such as money savings, free time and less manpower requirement. However, it is more important to have a positive attitude towards learning new things in terms of education. This is what students need first and most.

In this context, the biggest drawback of on-line learning is not having the interaction you carry out in a physical classroom. Some of these interactions are hard to replace, but there are things you can do to communicate with your students. The close proximity of the classroom may not be formed, but the magic of in-person learning can be exploited. There may not be an office anymore, but office hours can still be offered or on-line discussions can be held with the students to make the process much more effective. In addition, both the instructors and the

students must check out their expectations, what were they expecting from on-line education and what they eventually got to. Lessons should also be performed so that they are emotionally satisfying for the students. One of the most important aspects of continuing an on-line course is to gain the attention of the students and then to maintain that engagement, which is a daunting task, even in person. Students should be made as interactive as possible. Creating a sense of community would be rewarding at the very end.

From the opinions put forward and the arguments made, we understand that the sudden transition from face-to-face education to distance education caused by Covid 19 significantly affected students' motivation to learn language. This study also shows us the fact that in the context of integrating technology with education, it is necessary to find new learning areas and to discover new learning ways.

However, despite the classroom and technology have modified, the nature of the student has not. Students will behave as students. No matter if they are children or teenagers, they will act as such whether you are teaching them in-person or online. Baring a good strategy for moderation is key to maintaining the learning experience great. Students of any age may act up at any time, which means moderation of the behaviour needs to be in act in order to make sure the process stays productive. Otherwise, texting inappropriate messages, harassing other students, undermining the teaching, or simply being lost can be inevitable.

Conclusion

It is a well-known fact that every individual has the right to take a good education and that the education received has a significant impact on his or her life. The individual, with the help of his/her education, gains new knowledge, skills and experiences; develops personally, socially and economically; organizes his/her daily life and tries to make life more enjoyable for himself/herself (Rennel, 2013). COVID-19 affected this traditional learning method of academic institutions across the world. The administrations of schools, colleges and universities favoured on-line lectures/classes as an alternative way to sustain education. Although on-line learning is confirming to be helpful in safeguarding students' and faculty's health amid COVID-19 pandemic, however, it is not as efficient as conventional learning. This study aimed to find out the effectiveness of on-line classes for students of higher education. As for this study, most of the students felt that conventional classes were more efficient as compared to on-line learning. Apart from technical and financial issues, students also indicated some other difficulties like lack of interaction with the instructor, response time and absence of traditional classroom socialization besides physical and psychological health problems due to the present education system. It can be clearly understood from the above mentioned findings and impacts that studying from home with the extra affects of quarantine and isolation, often had a depressing impact on the students. Unfortunately, this type of learning is at present difficult, but the uncertainty of the time added, it is becoming extraordinarily hard.

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