REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
ÇUKUROVA UNIVERSITY
THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

TURKEY'S MINISTRY OF EDUCATION EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICY IN THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK: EFL TEACHERS' DIGITAL LITERACY AND CONSISTENCY OF DISTANCE ONLINE EDUCATION PROCESS

Emine DEMİR

MASTER OF ARTS

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MASTER OF ARTS

ADANA / 2021

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ÖZET

COVİD-19 SALGININDA TÜRKIYE MİLLİ EĞİTİM BAKANLIĞI'NIN ACİL DURUM EĞİTİM POLİTİKASI: YABANCI DİL ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN DİJİTAL OKURYAZARLIĞI VE UZAKTAN EĞİTİM SÜRECİNE UYUMLULUKLARI

Emine DEMİR

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı
Danışman: Prof. Dr. Yonca ÖZKAN
Ağustos 2021, 153 Sayfa

Devam eden COVID-19 pandemisinin küresel olarak yayılması, eğitim sistemleri de dâhil olmak üzere yaşamın tüm alanlarında önemli değişikliklere neden oldu. Devam eden salgının eğitim sistemlerine yansımaları, K-12 seviyesinden yükseköğretim seviyesine kadar tüm okulların evrensel olarak kapatılmasıyla başlamıştır. Pandemi, bazılarının zaten çeşitli yönlerden zarar görmüş olabileceği, eğitim sisteminin çıktılarını ve uzaktan çevrimiçi eğitime katılım konusunu geniş çapta etkiledi. Geleneksel öğrenmeden çevrimiçi uzaktan öğrenmeye hızlı geçiş nedeniyle, salgın milyonlarca öğrenciyi olumsuz olarak etkiledi ve öğrencilerin öğrenme açığı bu süreçte arttı. Bu sürecin başlangıcında, planlama için yeterli zaman ve kesin bilgi olmadığı için ne öğretmenler ne de öğrenciler dijital eğitime hazırdı. Bu durumlar değerlendirildiğinde, bu çalışmanın temel amacı, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin dijital okuryazarlıklarını ve dijital araçları kullanma deneyimlerini, özellikle Türkiye'deki ulusal eğitim web sitesi olan EIN (Eğitim Bilişim Ağı) platformunun kullanılabilirliğini araştırmaktır. Çevrimiçi materyallerin kullanımı, çevrimiçi değerlendirme ve geribildirimin etkinliği ve devlet okullarında İngilizce derslerinde süreç boyunca öğretmen-öğrenci etkileşiminin nasıl gerçekleştiğini araştırmaktır. Bu çalışma, karma bir araştırma tasarımı benimsemiştir. Çevrimiçi Likert ölçeğinde bir anket aracılığıyla toplanan nicel verilerin katılımcıları, Kahramanmaraş'ta MEB'e (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı) bağlı okullarda görev yapan 121 İngilizce öğretmenidir ve nitel veriler 12 İngilizce öğretmeni ile çevrimiçi yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla elde edilmiştir. Uzaktan çevrimiçi eğitim boyunca öğretmenlerin deneyimleri ve

uygulamaları, bu sürecin zorlukları ve güçlü yönleri ile çevrimiçi öğretimin etkinliği ve uygulanabilirliği araştırılmıştır. Bu amaçla elde edilen veriler SPSS 25.0 ve tematik analiz yöntemleri kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin dijital araçları öğretime entegre etme konusunda kendilerini yetkin hissettiklerini; canlı yayınlanan dersler sırasında internet bağlantısı sorunlarının olduğunu ve EBA platformunun COVID-19 hastalığı salgını sırasında öğretimin iyi bir bileşeni olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu çalışma, İngilizce öğretimi ve müfredatının gelecekteki sorgulanması için önemli çıkarımlar sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: COVID-19'un eğitim üzerindeki etkileri, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin dijital okuryazarlığı, uzaktan çevrimiçi dil eğitimi, canlı yayınlanan dersler, dijital değerlendirme ve geri bildirim

ABSTRACT

TURKEY'S MINISTRY OF EDUCATION EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICY IN THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK: EFL TEACHERS' DIGITAL LITERACY AND CONSISTENCY OF DISTANCE ONLINE EDUCATION PROCESS

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The global overspread of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has caused pivotal changes in all spheres of life, including education systems that resulted in universal school closures from K-12 to tertiary level. The pandemic is broadly progressing on attending and running the education systems' outputs that some of them might already be damaged in several aspects. The outbreak has affected millions of students, which the learning gap among them has widened because of the swift shift from traditional learning to online distance learning. Neither teachers nor students were ready for digital education due to inadequate time to plan and precise information. Within the given context, the primary purpose of the current study is to investigate the digital literacy of Turkish EFL teachers and their experiences in using digital tools, particularly the EIN (Educational Informatics Network) platform, which is the national educational website in Turkey, the availability of online material, the efficacy of online assessment and feedback, and how teacher-student interaction occurred during the process in English classes at state schools. The study is adopted a mixed research design. The participants of the quantitative data, which was gathered through an online Likert-scale questionnaire, were 121 EFL teachers of MoNE (Ministry of National Education) who work in Kahramanmaraş, and qualitative data were obtained through online semi-structured interviews with 12 EFL teachers. It was investigated the practices, challenges, and strengths of distance online education and the efficacy and feasibility of online teaching. The data obtained for this aim were analyzed through SPSS 25.0 and thematic analysis. The findings indicate that EFL teachers felt competent in integrating digital

tools into teaching; the internet connection problems were challenging during the live-streamed classes, and the EIN platform was a good component of instruction during the COVID-19 disease outbreak. This study presents significant implications for the future inquiry of EFL teaching and curriculum.

Keywords: COVID-19 effects on education, digital literacy of EFL teachers, distance online language education, live-streamed lessons, digital assessment, and feedback

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

ABBREVIATIONS

CEIT: Computer Education and Instructional Technologies

CK: Content Knowledge

COVID – 19: Coronavirus Disease 2019

EBA: Educational and Informatics Network

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EIN: Educational Informatics Network

ELT: English Language Teaching

EU: European Union

FATIH: Increasing Opportunities and Improvement of Technology Movement

HEC: Higher Education Council

ICT: Informatics and Communication Technology

MoNE: Ministry of National Education

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PK: Pedagogical Knowledge

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

TRT: Turkish Radio and Television Corporation

TPACK: Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge

TK: Technological Knowledge

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WHO: World Health Organization

LIST OF TABLES

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

LIST OF APPENDICES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to introduce the basics of the study. In this regard, the background of the study, statement of the problem, the significance of the study, aim of the study, research questions, limitations, and the key terms will be presented.

1.2. Background of the Study

The world has witnessed the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (abbreviated COVID-19) as an infectious plague after being first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China (Alhumaid et al., 2020; Auger et al., 2020; Baloran, 2020; Zhong et al., 2020 among others). The disease has rapidly evolved into an international emergency (Jarvis et al., 2020; Zang et al., 2020). Afterward, it has been acknowledged as a public health urgency crisis of global concern in January 2020 by WHO (World Health Organization) (WHO, 2020a). Because of the threat scale, WHO declared it as a "pandemic" on the 11th of March (WHO, 2020b). The coronavirus disease is extremely contiguous in that the number of infected people is briskly rising throughout the world (Di Gennaro et al., 2020; Sarwar et al., 2020; Waris et al., 2020). Many people worldwide have been infected in 222 countries, areas, and territories, with nearly 82 million confirmed cases and resulting in approximately two million confirmed deaths as of January 1, 2021 (WHO, 2021). Its most prevalent symptoms are severe acute respiratory syndromes such as fever, dry cough, weakness, and transmission from person to person through direct or close contact or air droplets (Repici et al., 2020). As Schleicher (2020) asserts that "As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, so do the risks we face." (p.4). In this current COVID-19 outbreak, to prevent transmission and ease the burden on the health care system, social distancing policies are established.

It has potentially turned out one of the greatest threats of our lifetime and caused pivotal changes in all spheres of life, including health systems, economic, social, and psychological facets of everyday life (Alea et al., 2020). Education systems are no exclusive as well. With the intention of mitigating the velocity and transmission of the coronavirus disease and reducing physical contact, the world has now been witnessing

the most extended widespread school closures (Azevedo et al., 2020; Setiawan et al., 2020). Based on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) statistical data, the nationwide school closures in 150 countries have already kept more than 1.19 billion students out of schools, accounting for 68% of the world's total enrolled learners (UNESCO, 2020a). In response to school closures, digital technologies have provided stop-gap facilities throughout the rapid rise of the COVID-19 pandemic (Schleicher, 2020); and it is highly recommended to use distance education platforms that offer open usage for educators to utilize remotely and to restrain the interruption of teaching and learning (UNESCO, 2020d).

Considering the given circumstances, the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has developed emergency policies to limit the suspension of educational affairs among many other countries. In the first place, a coronavirus disease science advisory committee was established by Turkey's Ministry of Health (Yücesoy-Özkan et al., 2020). In accordance with the science advisory committee's decisions, the entire K-12 schools (from kindergarten to 12th grade) were temporarily closed down on March 16, 2020 (MoH, 2020; MoNE, 2020a). In line with the rapidly growing number of cases, the suspension of schools was extended until June 19, 2020 (MoNE, 2020a). At present, as of January 2021, the schools have still closed until February 15, 2021, by virtue of the predicted conditions (MoNE, 2020b).

Regarding the long-lasting school closures, an extended distance education environment with the integration of digital tools has been promptly and effectively developed by MoNE in order to restrain the emerging loss of learning (Gobbi et al., 2020; Ozcan et al., 2020; Ozer, 2020; Yücesoy-Özkan et al., 2020). Additionally, the MoNE has adopted a variety of action policies to deliver distance education as a lifeline of this current process. The EBA/ EIN (Education Informatics Network) platform as a primary source and national television channel TRT – EBA TV (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation) work collaboratively since the very beginning of the pandemic. The EIN is an online social education platform proposed by the Directorate General of Innovation and Technologies, basically to students and teachers at no cost (Aktay & Keskin, 2016). The EIN portal presents a significant number of resources, apart from offering recorded videos of lessons and the coursebooks used in the lesson, in many different scopes such as online access to the libraries all around the country, different cultural activities, and games, self-improvement tasks and videos as well. Moreover, the EIN platform was enriched with the infrastructure of the Zoom Meeting application to promote live-

streamed classes.

In consideration of the given conditions, this pandemic has brought swift and immediate changes to the common teaching and learning experiences; nevertheless, the outcomes of this present switch have remained unclear. In relation to this, this study aims to explore the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers' of the Ministry of Education in Turkey' experiences in using the digital tools and the EIN platform and the opportunities and obstacles of this unexpected process during the COVID-19 outbreak in Turkey.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly a profound impact on education by affecting the millions of children and institutions from kindergarten to higher education all across the globe. In the process of a child's growth, improvement, and overall welfare, schools make a significant contribution (Auger et al., 2020). All students, teachers, administrators, and parents around the globe have experienced the domino effects of this current crisis with the school closures as quarantine procedures are being regulated to slow down the transmission of the global epidemic (Škorić, Glasnović, & Petrak, 2020). In this respect, digital platforms and online meeting applications have become the leading solution as educational institutions are immediately moving from traditional face-to-face classrooms to distance teaching. In a condition where the students are not enabled to attend the school, the choice is to switch from traditional to online education (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020).

This unprecedented swift shift to digital teaching has brought along numerous changes. Teaching and learning at home confinement have shaped the education process for both learners and teachers. Recent decades have witnessed the arising of information and communication technologies (ICT). On the other hand, despite the increasing significance and continuous spread of digital tools, educators have never been conscious, alert, and open to using them in their teaching. The confident and dynamic role of emerging technologies in education has not endured as a concealed idea now (Soomro et al., 2020). It has been realized that it is indisputably vital to use technology in education to bridge the gap inequity gap and empower the teaching process. There have been many studies conducted on the usage of technology in education. It is understood that countries need to include ICT in their strategic plans (Wardhani et al., 2018). More studies have

been conducting on the integration of ICT into education (Bullock, 2011; Gu, Zhu & Guo, 2013; McGee & Diaz, 2005; Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Toledo, 2005; Tondeur, Van Keer, Van Braak & Valcke, 2008; Vanderlinde & Van Braak, 2010; Wang & Woo, 2007, as cited in Ozerbas & Erdoğan, 2016).

Nevertheless, the benefits of online technologies are evident; there is still ambiguity and disagreement about teaching online, implications of the teaching environment, its effects on learning/teaching, and strengths and weaknesses of online teaching, notably during the current crisis. In other respects, occurred loss of learning, the workload of teachers and students, being inexperienced of using online tools and consistency of remote teaching and learning, the complex environment at home and readiness level of learners and teachers need to be identified and redefined to have a common sense on effects of pandemic disease on language education. Additionally, few studies have been conducted to explore the usage and the influences of the EIN platform on language teaching. The access of authentic materials via the platform, the availability of materials out of the class, the efficacy of online assessment and digital feedback, how students manage with the EIN need to be addressed as well.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The outbreak of the COVID-19 disease has so extensively impacted education systems that the learning gap among students has widened. The entire K-12 schools have had to swiftly shift from face-to-face learning to remote learning that neither teachers nor students were ready for due to inadequate planning and price information. The access to the appropriate digital tools such as smartphones, tablets, or computers to ensure the adaptation of distance education and preparation of online platforms to deliver the live-stream courses have increased the burden on teachers. The MoNE has quickly decided to present distance education via the EIN platform, EBA-TV channel, live-streamed courses developed in Zoom, and using digital sources. However, despite using the EIN platform as a fundamental tool, there have been handicaps such as teachers' and students' access to the Internet and digital literacy to use it efficiently, to name but a few.

In the literature, some fundamental studies are seen over-analyzing the EIN platform and proceeding of distance education, especially for higher education. However, since this epidemic is an upcoming and disruptive situation which hampering the continuity of the teaching and learning process, there has been conducted quite limited

research upon how efficiently language teachers and learners manage the process, to what extent they benefit from the EIN platform, and its facilities, what both positive and negative outcomes of the outbreak have been on language learning and teaching, and primarily in what form behaviors and the success of learners and teachers altered during this process. Regarding the given conditions, this presented study aims to explore the language teaching methods, teachers' management of the noted pandemic process; required skills to teach online, the differences between schooling and digital teaching, and the vague impacts of this pandemic on language teaching with the hope of extending the scope of future inquiry and teaching.

1.5. Research Questions

Current COVID-19 has demonstrated that it is essential to enliven the national education systems with the aids of digital tools. However, given that this pandemic has brought swift and immediate changes to the common teaching and learning techniques, it is unclear to what extent language learning and teaching outcomes have been affected by this present switch. Therefore, this study was carried out in order to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. How effectively did EFL teachers of the Ministry of Education in Turkey use the digital tools and Education Information Network during the distance education process in the COVID-19 outbreak?
    a. What are their perceptions regarding the usefulness of such a mode of teaching?
    b. What are the difficulties they faced in developing and teaching online materials?
2. What kind of teaching strategies did EFL teachers of the Ministry of Education in Turkey utilize during online classes?
    a. What type of modifications did they have to adapt while teaching online?
    b. How did they perform instruction while teaching online?
3. What type of assessment did EFL teachers of the Ministry of Education in Turkey perform while giving feedback to their students during online classes?
    a. Which tools did they use to evaluate the learning outcomes?

b. How do they evaluate such assessment tools during the outbreak?

1.6. Significance of the Study

"These are unprecedented times," says Rose (p.1, 2020) as pointing through the impacts of the novel coronavirus epidemic on the world as Rose (2020) states that the profound influences of coronavirus disease may eventually alter the learners' future. Through the process, all learners and teachers have encountered an uncommon form of learning and teaching; and they have intimately experienced the reflections of the pandemic on their education. Wang et al. (2020) have asserted that schools and educators at all levels have made enormous efforts to enable online lessons and present them through TV broadcasts and the internet in record time. On the other hand, despite all attempts of educators to ensure the maintenance of teaching, students have primarily trusted in their own facilities during distance education employing the Internet and television broadcast. In other respects, teachers have been forced to adjust their teaching methods and refresh pedagogical knowledge for which they may not have received training (Schleicher, 2020). Additionally, amendments in instructional time, the unplanned transition from classrooms to virtual settings, the Internet connection problems, assessing the students' learning outcomes, and provide constructive feedback in an online platform can be referred to as presumable challenges ahead.

Following an initial week of complete closure, distance education was launched on the EIN platform for all K-12 level students in Turkey (OECD, 2020) (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development). Approximately 1 million teachers have used the EIN platform to reach their students during the COVID-19 outbreak in Turkey. For the welfare of society, distance education has been inclusively improved through technological tools and different platforms as well. In common with other areas; language teaching and learning have reached a different dimension throughout this process.

Therefore, this study's target is to (1) investigate what sort of changes have happened while the digital teaching process, (2) how language teachers have reformulated their teaching in comparison to their prior techniques, methods, and approaches, (3) which language skills have affected most in this forced outbreak, (4) how teachers and learners have managed distance and online education process, (5) what the strengths and shortcomings of digital teaching are, (6) how language teachers have achieved to assess and give feedback to their students and finally, (7) what the

overall impacts of COVID-19 outbreak on the digital English language teaching. Above all, this study will be a vital source of information for developing and planning the future language learning process since there is a noticeable lack of data concerning the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on education.

1.7. Limitations

The world has presently been experiencing an epidemic of COVID-19 disease. It is quite a recent subject in all areas of life. Correspondingly, investigating its impacts has taken great attention from the researchers. Significantly, the effects of novel coronavirus on education have focused on educators since the pandemic has caused a distinctive teaching and learning method. At this point, measuring the effects of an ambiguous process may drive the results to be temporary. However, it can be managed by attaining the most probable number of participants and utilizing triangulation of data collection tools.

1.8. Key Terms

Digital teaching: In this study, digital teaching was used to describe teaching English on digital platforms. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, live-streamed classes were developed for digital teaching.

Assessment: Assessment has been an inseparable part of education since it provides information about the teaching and education process by evaluating the learning outcomes.

E-learning: In this digitalized world, there are numerous ways to continue learning. In this study, the term e-learning was utilized to express learning a subject on the internet with the help of digital tools and platforms.

EBA (EIN in English): The EBA platform is the national educational website of Turkey. In this research, the efficacy of the EBA platform was investigated and used to represent the digital educational platform.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL): The term refers that English is taught in a country where English is not a mother tongue or second language but is a foreign language such as Turkey.

EFL Teacher: The expression refers to the teachers who teach English in a country where English is not a mother tongue or second language but a foreign language such as Turkey.

Ministry of National Education (MoNE): Ministry of National Education is the governmental head of the public and private educational system of the Republic of Turkey.

Distance online education: The expression was utilized because many schools and educational institutions started to use e-learning tools for live-streamed lessons as a solution to COVID- 19 disease outbreak to reach out to students from a distance.

ICT: The significant growth of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) reshaped the education systems. It was used in the study to express the usage of information and communication technologies in lessons.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to provide information about the effects of COVID-19 on education systems, the management theories to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic across the globe. Also, educational technology, foreign language teaching, distance online education, and teacher education in Turkey will be discussed in detail.

2.2. The Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic

The overspread of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, which was first detected in China and spread around the planet, has infected nearly thirty-four million confirmed cases in 213 countries and territories worldwide October 1, 2020 (Worldometer, 2020). Since the beginning, the disease has drastically circulated globally, and each continent has ultimately been impacted besides Antarctica (Chakraborty & Maity, 2020). Because of the scale of the threat, it is declared as a "pandemic" by the World Health Organization (WHO) on the 11th of March. It has potentially turned out one of the greatest threats of our lifetime, and it has been seen as "the worst public health crisis of the 21st century" (Hung et al., 2020, p. 2). It has exceptionally quickly influenced every aspect of human life: not only on health and education systems of governments; social, economic, political, academic dimensions as well; literally, no spheres of everyday life have stand unconcerned (Hung et al., 2020).

As a result of the pandemic scale and its intense expansion, all states and government officials have strived to take immediate steps to prevent transmission of the disease. In the absence of vaccines and antivirals, implementation of physical distancing policies, hygiene rules: cleaning hands, covering coughs and sneeze, wearing masks, staying at home except for essential works to avoid crowded places have been adopted to mitigate the infection of disease (Abdollahi et al., 2020; Esposito & Principi, 2020; OECD, 2020; WHO, 2020). These precautions are also followed by applying several restrictions, such as the shutdown of educational institutions, cafes, pubs, gyms, sports facilities, and other leisure or business-related places (Jarvis et al., 2020). Indubitably, these precautions and constraints have affected societies in a various sense. Authorities

worldwide have been trying to appraise or estimate the short-term and the long-term impacts of it; however, it is difficult to point out the ingrained effects of it on teaching and learning (Tran et al., 2020).

2.2.1. Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Education

The unprecedented coronavirus disease ravages the world in several respects. With the exception of the exponential growth of the COVID-19 disease all across the world, pandemics are seen not only as solemn health distress but also stimulate destructive socio-economic and political dilemmas in the affected districts (Chakraborty & Marty, 2020). Without a doubt, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely struck the education systems of countries. Up until now, there is the unavailability of medically affirmed anti-viral drugs or vaccines to fight against coronavirus disease (Auger et al., 2020; Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Setiawan, 2020). Consequently, governments have formulated nonpharmaceutical solutions to ease the pandemic's burdens, such as temporary lockdowns. Without any doubt, the state of emergency will have outcomes in the near and distant future. The probable and ultimate consequences are given below.

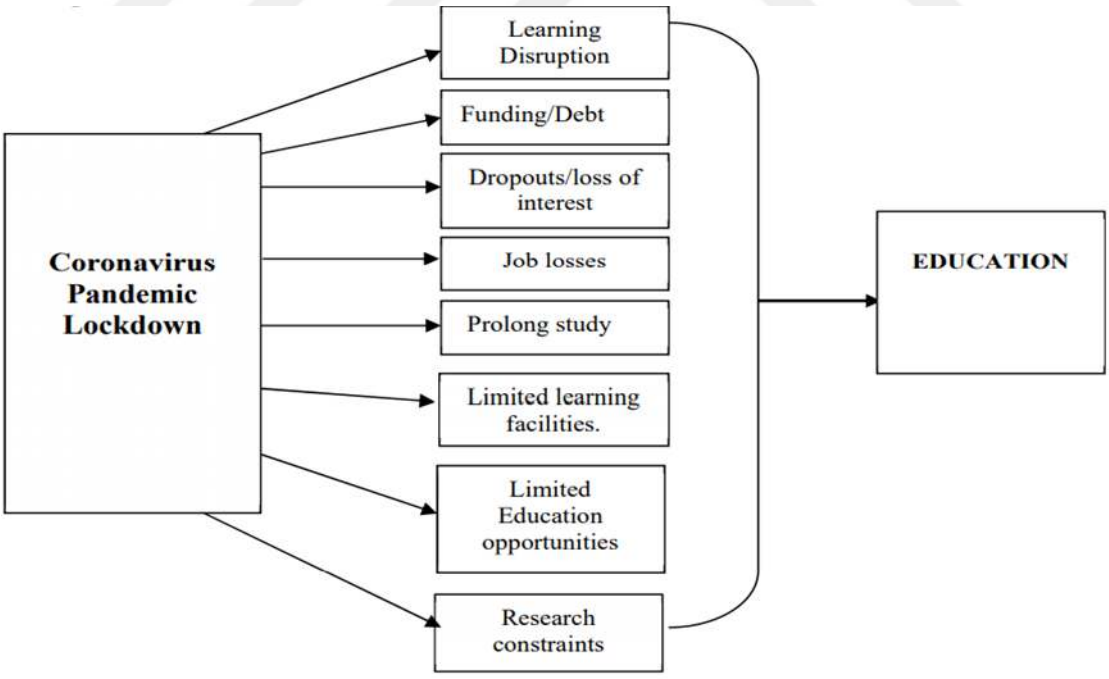


Figure 1. Hypothetical outcomes of the current measures on education

Note. Hypothetical outcomes of the current measures on education was depicted by Onyema et al., 2020

In an attempt to restrain the transmission of the disease, since it is infected through droplets and close contacts, nationwide school closure has been ordered in many states as an immediate precaution to slow down the infection of the disease. In conformity with UNESCO, approximately 188 countries have closed educational institutions, and several other countries have approved regional or local closures (Lancker & Parolin, 2020; UNESCO, 2020a). According to the UNICEF report, it has been estimated that nearly 1.5 billion students, which represent 80% of children worldwide, have been affected by school closures (UNICEF, 2020). Therefore, it is significantly vital for societies to take immediate preventions to proceed with educational needs through adaptive and transformative policies. Across the countries around the world, it has uprisen as a supreme challenge to regulate the strategies for maintaining educational activities due to the deficiency of a predefined guidebook for this epidemic (Reimers et al., 2020). Shortly afterward, the proclamation of the epidemic, the WHO has released handbooks and up-to-date information to reduce the spread of the disease, and many countries have subsequently established further measures as well (Onyema et al., 2020).

2.2.2. The World's Education Management Theories for the COVID-19 Pandemic

Coronavirus disease has been globally expanding as a threatening concern to every facet of society, including education systems. The pandemic is broadly progressing on attending and running the education systems' outputs that some of them might already be damaged in several aspects (García & Weiss, 2020). The present crisis preserves its solemn and precarious position in many respects regarding the calamities experienced in recent history. However, it is foreseeable from the former health emergencies as of the Ebola plague that the education systems will presumably be the most distressing matter with reduced learning results and broad dropout levels (Azzi-Huck & Shmis, 2020).

In an attempt to mitigate its influence on currently continuing living, many countries applied strict measures in concordance with the updated benchmarks released by WHO to curb the growth of the disease. Universal reactions to the COVID-19 are varied from country to country jointly with an associated frame all over the world. Several highlighted examples will be pursued.

After the COVID-19 disease with the devastating impacts and calamitous consequences initially identified in Wuhan City, China, authorities immediately searched for a remedy for this imperious disease. At the very same time the research on how to

cease the infection and to enforce the strict isolation measures such as the lockdown of the cities and to shut down the schools was proceeding, the Chinese government started a series of emergency management schemes in responding to the outbreak (McAleer, 2020; Viner et al.,2020; Zhang et al., 2020). The Chinese Ministry of Education initiated an emergency policy entitled "Suspending Classes Without Stopping Learning" to maintain education facilities with large-scale online teaching activities while schools were offline. This campaign aims to diverge the resources into a rich, available, eligible excellence context for full use of entire students across the country under the support of the mu-class platform, which is an open teaching and learning platform that allows users to conduct many courses online (Ding, 2016), and free access of virtual simulation of practical resources (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2020a). Additionally, in other respects, the government managed to lead the community to be conscious about the epidemic with the great emphasis on the knowledge of epidemic prevention through lifetime education lessons, public security education, and intellectual health education (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China 2020b). Sustaining effective, timely, and judicious measures, the Chinese government has now reopened the schools in most parts of the country with the "Learning Never Stops" campaign (UNESCO, 2020b).

The United States has become the universal peak point with 11 million confirmed cases amidst the most affected countries side of the globe. It went the deadliest, with 254 thousand deaths across the country (Johns Hopkins University of Medicine, 2020). As in many other countries, schools were closed, planned examinations and tests were canceled as a primary precaution in the United States. Early in the spring of 2020, the coronavirus striking the first peak, nearly all over the 55 million students under the age of 18 affected by the virus by staying at home confinement and ensuing with the absence of school facilities such as group works, team games, swimming pools and play areas (Garcia & Weiss, 2020). It is apprehensible that the teaching and learning facilities were interrupted and disrupted this year, and it will continue in the 2020-2021 education year.

Many countries worldwide have promoted a growing number of solutions throughout the pandemic to maintain the education process. Azorin attributed that the COVID-19 outbreak has also been regarded as an opportunity to reevaluate the education system and reconsider what is truly essential for all (2020). In Spain, the learning and teaching activities immediately turned to online and distant education because of the sharp increase in the infectious case of nearly 100 million patients per day. However, the

Spanish government also implemented rigid and extended lockdowns to declare a state of emergency (Varea & Gonzalez-Calvo, 2020).

As a consequence of the remarked circumstances, so many countries had to comply with collaborative solutions for the maintenance of education; primarily, adopting digital tools and taking the benefits of technology as a sole alternative to traditional education (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Romer & Jamieson, 2020; Tejedor et al., 2020). Besides, in plenty of other countries with a vast number of cases, such as Italy, India, Brazil, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, Argentina and Germany, distance and digital education became a top solution due to school closures. As Harris (2020) identifies, "In this global lockdown, education has been rebooted as a home-based, technology-enabled, remote activity with zero physical contact" (p.1). According to UNESCO (2020c), as of the 15th of July, the date of schools' reopen may be discussed under the own circumstances of each country; the number of children affected by the school closures worldwide is presented in *Figure 2* below.

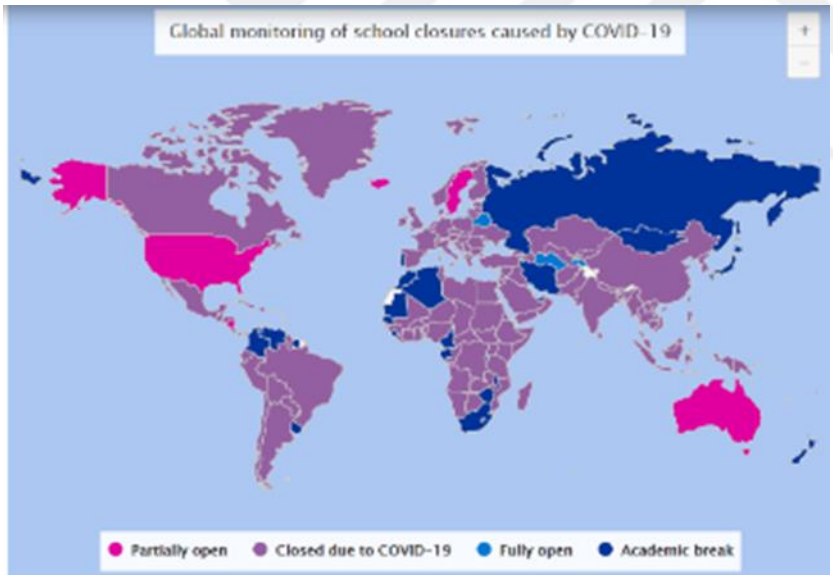


Figure 2. Global school closures

Note. The number of children affected by school closures globally is shown in the world map (https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse)

2.2.3. The Concept of Language Teaching in the COVID-19 Outbreak

Today's young generation has been born into a digitally surrounded world (Iivari et al., 2020). In essence, the younger generation's life, learning, sharing, expressing themselves, and personal opinions are thoroughly embedded with digital technology.

Prensky (2011) predefines today's children as "digital natives" (p.1). When it is attended with numbers by a broadband review site's research, it gives an insight into how exceedingly people spend their time on the screen. In addition to the prospective digital growth, the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak has prompted the use of digital tools for the sake of staying connected and acknowledged, purchasing food and other stuff, and teaching and learning as well.

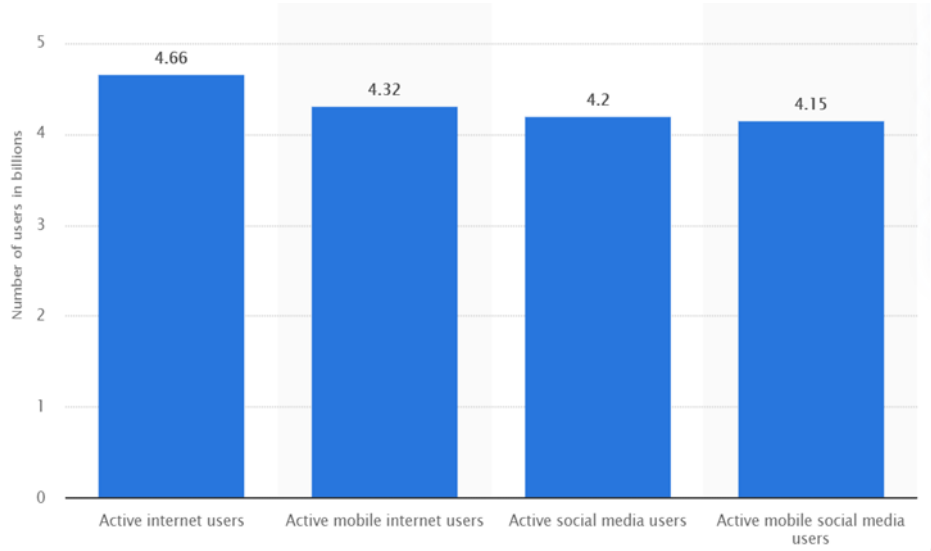


Figure 3. The Growth of Digital Users by Years

Note. As of January 2021, there were 4.66 billion active internet users worldwide - 59.5 percent of the global population. Of this total, 92.6 percent (4.32 billion) accessed the internet via mobile devices. (https://www.statista.com/statistics/617136/digital-population-worldwide/)

COVID-19 has globally illustrated, among other concerns, the problem of handling school lessons and learning processes. In this digital age, during a worldwide pandemic, educational institutions have attained technology as the primary support in this concern (Ferri et al., 2020). Integrating the technology cannot be regarded as a brand-new idea; however, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, learning tasks which traditionally carried out in the classroom by the face-to-face method have been shifted to the online learning system (Allo, 2020; Ferri et al., 2020; Gruber & Bauer, 2020; MacIntyre, Gregersen & Mercer, 2020; Valverde-Berrocoso, 2020). Clark and Mayer (2016) identified "online learning as an instruction delivered on a digital device that is intended to support learning" (p.7) while Rodrigues et al. (2019) indicate that "e-learning as an innovative web-based system based on digital technologies and other forms of educational materials whose primary goal is to provide students with a personalized,

learner-centered, open, enjoyable, and interactive learning environment supporting and enhancing the learning processes" (p. 95). Each country has proposed various digital infrastructures in this sense throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to resume learning and teaching activities. Language lessons can be regarded as one of the significant classes at schools as part of actual life itself. In this regard, according to the European Commission database (Eurostat), ninety-eight percent of European students learn English since the English language has evolved into a universal lingua franca as the most spoken and learned language with non-native speakers of the language outnumbering its native speakers (Crystal, 2003; Deniz, Özkan & Bayyurt, 2016; Hülmbauer, Böhringer & Seidlhofer, 2008; Seidlhofer, 2005). In this respect, in the current modern and globalized world, English and technology can be regarded as two conjointly distinct facets of the social and political transformer (Cephe & Balçıkanlı, 2012).

Preceding studies over language teaching and learning indicate that the usage of digital tools and the internet is seen as the most pleasing way to teach and learn a language for providing an interactive and authentic environment (Wang, 2005). For the last thirty years, the integration of technology in ELT (English Language Teaching) has undergone a shift from the early initiation of CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) through technology-enhanced language learning to the current focus on ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) to facilitate international connection and education (Dudeney & Hockly, 2012). Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak has unexpectedly disposed of language teachers and learners to study online with insufficient preparation and technological tools for distance learning under unfamiliar and challenging circumstances (Shin, 2020). As a result, language teachers have been compelled to adopt their techniques, styles, and assessment criteria throughout this emergency remote teaching process through synchronous and asynchronous methods and educational applications. These sudden and obliged changes have encountered many language teachers to face challenges in establishing technical skills and ensuring pedagogical sources while adopting actual classes to digital environments (MacIntyre, Gregersen & Mercer, 2020).

One of the most primal concerns of language teachers before the outbreak is to cope with students' access to digital technology and skills to use it appropriately and meaningfully. Today, education systems worldwide are facing weaknesses and inequalities in the digitalization challenge (Valverde-Berrocoso et al., 2020). However, language teachers manage to bridge the inequality gaps among learners led by the digital

divide in many cases. Bates (2020) indicates that the COVID-19 outbreak has revealed the disparities in education systems and the necessity for global and affordable access to the Internet for education.

2.3. Technological Developments in Education

The world has been witnessing an extended usage of technology than ever before. There has been a striking increase in the use of technology from cellphones, speedy access to the Internet, various machines making life easier to becoming increasingly prevalent in education such as interactive whiteboards, digital books and concepts, and other technological devices for teaching and learning (Dudeney & Hockly, 2016). Today's children are born with and surrounded by digital technologies that their lives are devoted to digital devices of the era; digital games and videos, digital applications for listening to music- reading books- seeing a movie, smartphones, to name a few (Prensky, 2001). Prensky (2001) defines today's children as "digital natives" (p. 1) that the generation is born into the digital age and grown-up utilizing technological tools and the Internet in a manner in which they feel more comfortable in the digital world.

The rapid improvement of technology has changed not merely everyday life, but technology is now an utterly integral part of educational concepts. Digital or electronic technologies have evolved into an inseparable regular life component and inextricably intertwined with educational notions (Cho, Mansfield & Claughton, 2020; Halverson & Smith, 2009). At the core of extensive use of digital technologies, commitment to digital literacies, to use them wisely and efficiently to an interchange of ideas, to transmit of knowledge, to address resources, to form a social association in educational, working, personal and social disposal can be regarded as an ability in this current era (Dudeney, Hockly & Pegrum, 2013). When considering recent developments in technology, it is not solely the digital technology making a person wiser but rather a collaboration of the human mind and the effective use of digital tools (Prensky, 2009).

When all these are considered, the concepts of *educational* or *instructional technology* have emerged. Januszewski and Molenda define *educational technology* as a research and ethical practice of enhancing learning and enriching outcome through producing, utilizing, and addressing suitable technological processes and sources (2013). In parallel with AECT's (The Association for Educational Communications and Technology) definition, Reiser indicates *instructional technology* as a systematized

avenue of organizing, carrying out, and assessing the entire progress for learning and teaching (1987).

Educational technology offers numerous opportunities to today's children to learn at their own pace and access worldwide knowledge. In this respect, instructional technology has been adopted in many institutions to support teaching materials such as smartboards, computers, projectors, and digital tools. These opportunities have led teachers to implement student-centered and constructivist approaches to promote critical thinking, independent and lifelong learning (Bol & Garner, 2011; Damary, Markova & Pryadilina, 2017)

2.3.1. Technology in the Concept of Distance Education

The recent decades have witnessed a sharp increase in educational technologies' implementation in classroom settings on account of rapid technological developments. Beyond the scope, in a company with the latest evolutions in the field, delivering education has undergone evident changes. With technology integration, being available "anytime, anyplace" and having increased flexibility for learning has contributed to growing the sense of "distributed learning" as a broad-base term (Stella & Gnanam, 2004, p. 143). All over the globe, distance education has gained acceptance concerning providing a significant number of learners for flexible, adaptable, independent, eligible, and relatively cheaper usage (Kwapong, 2009; Viberg & Grönlund, 2015). In this regard, distance education has been diversely labeled in various countries, such as *distance learning, open education, blended learning,* and *flexible learning* (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2015).

Distance education can be regarded as institutional or regular education where the learning group is isolated and digital telecommunications networks are utilized to interconnect learners, resources, and instructors (Schlosser & Simonson, 2009). Distance education has enhanced in line with the changes in technology. Therefore, most institutions have embraced the massive use of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) tools and facilities offered by technology to deliver advanced distance education in recent years (Davis et al., 2019).

Additionally, as regards the ongoing developments in technologies, educational technologies have brought innovation to information access. It has been used more and more by educators and learners since 1960 as a vast source of visual and audial materials

and tutor support to enable sufficient, adequate, and high-quality teaching (Kulik & Kulik, 1991). Learners worldwide have excessively started to adopt supportive digital facilities for their personal development and achievement in learning, such as e-books, e-conference, e-learning activities, online concerts, and online videos. With the improvement of current educational technologies, learners can also immediately access many digital sources, books, and various materials during the distance education process (Gambo et al., 2017).

2.3.2. Educational Technology in Turkey

There has never been anything that educators concurrently draw global attention to more than the Internet (Owston, 1997). Technology has become a prominent component of societies (Kucuk et al., 2013). With the integration of technological tools into education, learning has proceeded to a new dimension. Hackbarth clarified the effects of technology on instruction; in contrast, these procedures posed radical challenges to learning and teaching; they also reinforced the instruction to become unique, coherent, attainable, and provident (1996). Considering the latest technologies have provided substantial benefits to learners to improve advanced skills and develop self-oriented instruction (Kosakowski, 1998), many countries have targeted enriching their education systems to benefit instructional technologies with differential possessions (Dijk & Hacker, 2003). MoNE has attached great magnitude to incorporating educational technology into classrooms since the 1930s (Akkoyunlu, 2014).

The implementation of instructional technologies in education was first set up with the initiation of the ‘Specialized Commission on Computer Education at Secondary Schools’ by the MoNE in 1984. In the process till the 1990s, supplying computers, improvement of the software, and in-service training of instructors working at general and vocational secondary schools completed. Further developments in the context of “Project on the Development of National Education” were administered with the help of the World Bank to introduce computer-assisted learning, establish computer laboratories, and ensure the prevalence of computer usage until the beginning of the 2000s (OECD, 2005).

A new era was established with the ‘Catching the Era in Education 2000 Project’. The project’s primary goal was to create an environment for the primary school students to get twenty-first-century skills (Yılmaz, 2011). Educational technologies have advanced

in time, and it led the distance education concept to emerge in 1974. Thus, distance education was adopted as an idea of the continuation of education and expanded on the foundation of Anadolu University's Open Education Faculty in Eskişehir and the support of MoNE within the scope of the 'Development Plan' (Akkoyunlu, 2014).

Attempts to blend technology and education accelerated across the world with the ever-growing use of educational technologies, and achievements and virtues of these technologies (Adıgüzel, Gürbulak & Sarıçayır, 2011). In this regard, a project entitled the 'Movement of Enhancing Opportunities and Improving Technology (FATIH)' developed in 2010 with the cooperation of MoNE and Ministry of Transportation in the scope of 'Vision 2023 Certificate of Strategy' to enhance the achievement rank of students and assure the efficacy of technology usage in classrooms (Akıncı, Kurtoğlu & Seferoğlu, 2012; Kızılet & Özmen, 2017). As a complement to FATIH Project, the EBA/EIN platform was developed. The platform encompasses more than 1700 curriculum-based courses and over 40.000 fruitful, productive and interactive content such as reading books, games and animated cartoons (FATIH Project, 2021).

2.3.3. The Emerging Need of Educational Technology during the COVID-19 Outbreak

Amidst a global crisis driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, technological challenges have significantly aroused in educational institutions in order to fulfill the emergent need for the transition from face-to-face instruction to digital education (Bates, 2020; Hodges et al., 2020; Jandric, 2020; Rapanta et al., 2020). Under these circumstances, educators from all settings and levels have had to arrange and deliver their courses at home, bringing all the challenges along, mainly in the absence of adequate technical help (Hodges et al., 2020). Moreover, as Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, and Bond further attributed to the issue, the COVID-19 pandemic has discriminated the online education and emergency remote teaching in terms of used strategies, formerly planned and preparation, class size, and allocated time (2020).

Instructors teaching online pay regard to an equilibrium of a blend of activities and tasks that encourage and foster students' motivation, on the other hand, to ensure the availability of knowledge and accurate information (Fisher & Baird, 2005). In an effort to attain this, teachers are demanded to gain new missions and proficiencies in the concept of online teaching (Guasch, Alvarez & Espasa, 2010). The changing roles of the teacher

have been on the scope of educational research to follow the developments in teaching contexts (Baran, Correia & Thompson, 2011).

Regarding the current crisis and the proceeding changes over the role of teachers and the concepts of teaching, principles developed during the pandemic require considering the design of the teaching environment to ensure adjustable, appropriate, and self-oriented content (Hodges et al., 2020). Furthermore, despite the range of threats entailing extended educational recession, online exclusion, the inadequacy of online management, and boosted physiological challenges (Drane, Vernon & O'Shea, 2020). UNESCO (2020e) has released recommendations to mass school closures to strategize remote online education including:

- Explore the readiness and decide on high-tech and appropriate digital tools.
- Ensure the attainability of distance teaching platforms for all.
- Secure the privacy and safety of data.
- Give priority to solutions to negotiate on physiological challenges before education.
- Arrange and pay attention to the schedule of the distance education program.
- Establish rules for distance education and observe students' learning progress.
- Keep a legible timing to provide sustainability on student's self-regulation skills.

In the light of this information, development of social media application, creating a digital community, supplying personal support to each student via digital platforms, enlivening online courses to become energetic, enthusiastic, and interactional, also offering technical support to students with various applications and educational platforms worldwide such as Zoom, Google products, Microsoft teams have provided a remedy to online distance education throughout the novel coronavirus disease (Dhawan, 2020).

2.3.4. Digital Divide Occurred in the COVID-19 Outbreak

The significant growth of information and communications technology (ICT) is profoundly interweaving today in all facets of communities that they continuously propound an increase in participation of individuals into social, financial, educational,

and political spheres of everyday life with a tremendous acquiescence by the whole (Cruz-Jesus, Vicente, Bacao & Oliveira, 2016; Nishijima, Ivanauskas & Sarti, 2017; Soomro et al., 2020). ICTs enormously contribute to the improvement of societies (Wardhani, Dugis, & Saad, 2018); furthermore, in developing countries, including Turkey, they play a significant role in achieving United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) objectives (United Nations, 2021). Therefore, the integration of ICTs into educational curriculums and programs has been drawn significant interest from countries all over the world (Wardhani et al., 2018).

However, this 'techno-enthusiasm' has caused growing concerns over the feasible disruptive effects of the information era that social disparities in the same line, social groups with the rising "digital divide" between societies (Iivari, Sharma & Ventä-Olkkonen, 2020; Kawinkoonlasate, 2000; Rogers, 2016; Selwyn, 2004). The digital divide has emerged as a convenient notion to utter the ever-presented gap between disadvantaged individuals in attaining these technologies to their lives and being a part of the digital era concerning their facilities to penetrate the digital technology (Chen & Wellman, 2004; Cullen, 2001). The digital divide signifies the subdivision of a community, including the class who enjoys the opportunity to adequate access to ICTs and those who have no or little access to digital tools and the Internet (Soomro et al., 2020). Although education systems have undergone revelatory digital transformation within the given context, which is a process aspiring necessary changes through the association of information and communication technologies (Vial, 2019), the digital divide still exists among learners (Iivari, Sharma & Ventä-Olkkonen, 2020).

The world has once faced the already existing digital divides among learners with the proposed across-the-board school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Du Preez & Le Grange, 2020). Penetrating the usage of the Internet and digital technologies, especially in developing countries in which access to these facilities is either inexistent or poor for years (Perrin, 2019). However, it has never been as severely detrimental as throughout the COVID-19 pandemic when being connected online has become obligatory for many people (Lai & Widmar, 2020). The digital divide has been considered a severe challenge for students who academically fall behind during the ongoing crisis regarding Internet access, speed, and inadequate technological resources to engage in online education (Lourenco & Tasimi, 2020).

Considering the conducted researches in Turkey, there are prominent differences between ages, gender, and rural areas regarding the adaption rate of ICTs and Internet

usage. The Turkish government has offered various solutions and made considerable investments to narrow the digital gap among residents (Acılar, 2011). However, when remarking the digital divide as a matter of access and as handicaps for the Internet connection (Kennedy, Wellman & Klement, 2003), the dearth of skills and motivation to use ICTs is also counted as an issue in Turkey (Yıldız, 2010). Reckoning the return of the COVID-19 pandemic, inequalities in getting access to ICTs has become more evident than ever in Turkey; therefore, the principle of equal opportunity in education has been violated because of the digital disparity in a forced distance online education process (Sezgin & Fırat, 2020).

2.4. The Role of English as a Global Language

Of the 7,117 living languages worldwide (Ethnologue, 2020), the English language is the most extensively spoken and used (Broughton, Brumfit, Pincas & Wilde, 2002; Northrup, 2013). The English language has been considered a world language for over 150 years. Approximately 1,5 billion people have spoken English either as a first or second language worldwide (Hurn, 2009). This indicates nearly 20% of the earth's population out of 7,5 billion inhabitants. English serves the universal and premier language of science, medicine, technology, business, and education (Galloway & Rose, 2015). Crystal (2003) states *universal language* as a language accomplishes a genuinely global status when it gains a proper place that is recognized in any country.

Regarding its international status and users, *Figure 4* shows the countries where English is used as a first and official language in green color. The countries which English is used as a lingua franca, which is defined as communication in English between speakers with different first languages is showed in yellow-colored in a world map (House, 1999; Seidlhofer, 2005). English has represented a major key in business matters, commercial affairs, scientific research, pharmacy, transportation, and the internet, to address a few. Additionally, it has been utilized ever-increasingly to connect the East and the West and the North and the South (Rao, 2019). Therefore, as Crystal further indicates, the world has become exceedingly interconnected that non-native speakers of English are outnumbered the native speakers of it (2003).

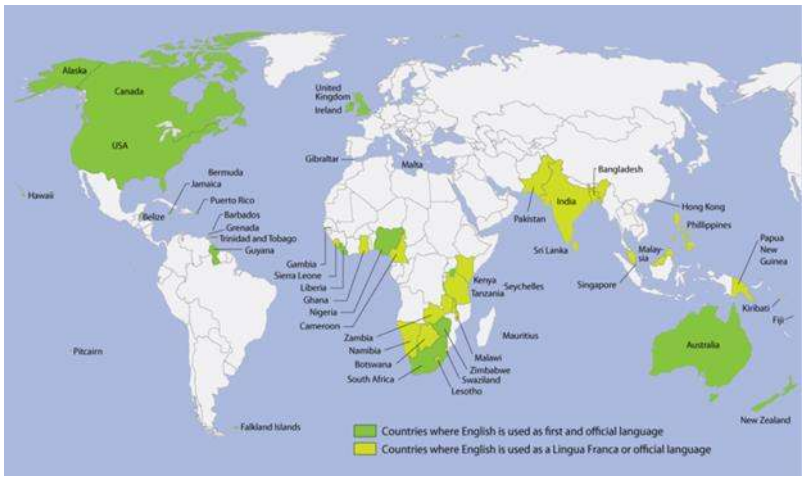


Figure 4. Geography of English-speaking countries

Note. English-speaking countries are depicted on a world map. (https://sites.google.com/site/withflyingcoloursherrera/home/maps)

There has been conducted numerous studies to accredit English a global status and coin a term for it, namely; *General English* (Ahulu, 1977), *International Language (*Kachru, 1983), *World Standard English* (McArthur, 1987), *English as a Global Language* (Crystal, 1997), *English as a Lingua Franca* (Gnutzmann, 2000; House, 1999; Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2001), *World English (*Brutt-Griffler, 2002). Kachru (1985) developed a *concentric model* for grouping the varieties of English in the world. He created a diagram (see *Figure 5*) to indicate countries where English used as mother tongue generates the *Inner Circle* which is also defined as *Standard English* (SE) by Jenkins (2007); the *Outer Circle* is indicated as the countries in which *English* is used *as a second language* (ESL) especially the colonies of USA and UK; finally, the *Expanding Circle* is specified as countries where *English* is taught *as a foreign language* (EFL). Turkey is counted among the *Expanding Circle* countries.

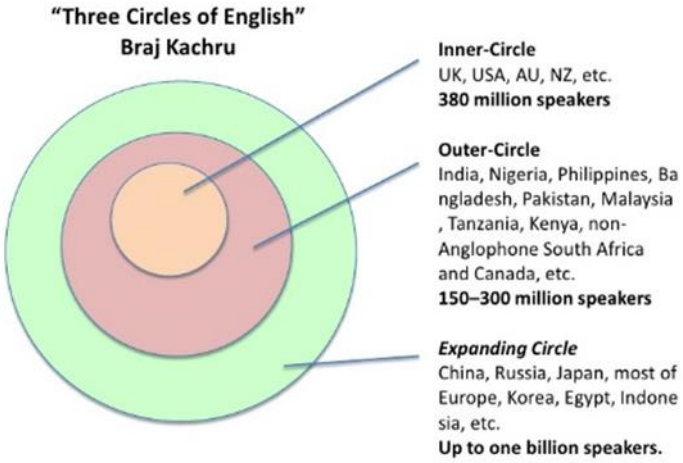


Figure 5. Kachru's concentric circles of English
Note. Adapted from Kachru, 1985

In this regard, it is mostly agreed that English has achieved its global status and played a leading role in the development of countries all around the world (Akbari, 2015). Of perceived importance and purpose, there have been established various techniques, methods, and approaches to teach, conceptualize and develop English both in ESL countries and EFL countries (Seidlhofer, 2004). Undeniably, the above-mentioned English varieties and their usage in cross-cultural discourses put the language one of the most challenging to teach. Yet, it is the most rewarding and encouraging to learn for allowing its learners' pragmatic sensitivity and access to a broader range of information (McKay, 2018).

2.4.1. Teaching English as a Foreign Language

The switching role of English in education has presently overpowered its function as being taught in the EFL context (Maxom, 2010). English is the most extensively taught language that over one billion learners worldwide are the world's preeminent lingua franca (McKay, 2012). Mainly, EFL is defined in the extensive literature as the English language taught or learned in a country where the official or first language is different from English (Braine, 2014; Broughton et al., 2002; Ma, 2015). In this respect, educators and administrators have converged English language teaching curriculums to answer this upward trend for learning English in their countries. In order to meet the emerging need

of learning English and establishing a suitable pedagogic view, following objectives and curriculum designs developed through time (McKay, 2003; Nunan, 1991):

- Given attention to communicate through in the target language,
- Bringing authentic culture and material to the learning environment,
- Provision to learners for having opportunities to not only engage in the language but also be active in the learning process,
- Improvement of an individual achievement also fostering classroom learning,
- Encouraging learners to promote using the target language outside the classroom.

Teaching in an EFL context is distinguished from teaching ESL in some scopes, such as using the target language, teachers' and students' proficiency level, grammatical rules, and lexical development (McKay, 2018). Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei attempted to explore learner awareness of making mistakes in ESL learners in the USA and EFL learners in Italy and Hungary to investigate the impacts of target language context upon learning with 543 participants. The results indicated that ESL learners presented significant differences in pragmatic sensitivity since they encountered cross-cultural interactions when EFL learners got higher scores in grammatical awareness items (1998). Schauer (2006) pointed out that learning context plays a crucial role in promoting language learners' linguistic consciousness. Additionally, Longcope remarked that it is not only the environment where a learner is presented but also the learner's interaction with the environment; and the provided comprehensible input eventually influences the output (2009). When these points are regarded, it is substantial to understand the major disparities. Therefore, Table 1 is adapted from McKay (2018) to understand the distinct features in an ESL context and an EFL context.

Table 1.

A Comparison of ESL and EFL Learning Contexts

ESL Context	EFL Context
• Learning takes place in an English-speaking environment.	• Learning takes place in a non-English speaking environment.
• Students need to acquire English to use in the immediate social context.	• There is little opportunity to use English in the immediate social context.
• There is not a shared L1 to use in the classroom.	• There is a shared L1 to use in the classroom.

Note. Adapted from McKay (2018)

Learning English increases the chances for an individual to have a business, traveling, education, and even a better life (see, e.g., Crystal, 1997). In addition, many governments chose to teach English because it is helpful to follow recent developments in technology, scientific resources published mainly in English for global affairs, and answer the demands of the advanced technological era, which requires clever use of the Internet (Akbari, 2015; Liton, 2012). In order to achieve these goals, various approaches, methods, and techniques have been developed and discussed in the extensive literature. Furthermore, using authentic materials such as reading text, creating lifelike concepts to use English has become prominent, and its noticed effects upon language development are essential for acquiring language skills (Hwang, 2005). In this regard, EFL programs need to be designed to bring a learner-oriented, encouraging realistic environment to the setting, to be culturally impartial, allow learners to communicate through both local and international matters, support learners to draw a frame for gaining a new identity in the target language and establish a cross-cultural sensitivity and appreciation (Alptekin, 1984).

2.4.2. Approaches, Methods and Techniques in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Today, there is an emerging need to insert into the globally growing world where information and communication technologies and foreign language education emphasize more than some former (Renau, 2016). Although language teaching has a broad

background, establishing language teaching approaches, materials and methods have been constituted in the early twentieth century (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Fauzati (2008) asserts that language teaching methods resemble fashion since they are created, utilized, and displaced. He further states that this refers to language teaching executives' essence that they have always given priority to teach a foreign language with more and more efficient teaching approaches. In the first place, the denotations of *approach*, *method*, and *technique* are needed to be genuinely understood to perceive the improvements in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

There are researches in the literature to coin these three overlapping terms (Burnham, 1992). Anthony attempted to explain them by establishing a hierarchic relationship (1963) (see *Figure 6*). *The approach* consists of assumptions that refer to the *natural language, teaching, and learning* as an umbrella term; it deals with how and what to teach. *The method* is considered a*n all-inclusive plan* for structured language implementation grounded on the selected approach; it concerns procedural manner. *Techniques* refer to *the specified activities* under the ground of correspondent method and approach; it is associated with achieving a particular objective (Anthony, 1963; Setiyadi, 2020).

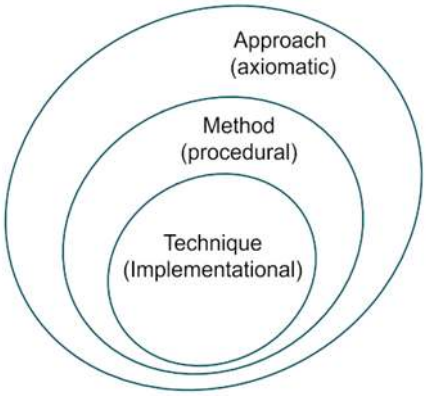


Figure 6. Edward Anthony's three dimensions

Note. Edward Anthony's three-dimension for technique, method, and approach are given. (https://www.newroutes.com.br/ingles/techniques-methods-and-approaches)

Before the latest advancement, there were mainly two kinds of accepted approaches: one concentrated on language used for communication; the other concentrated on *analyzing the language* for learning grammatical rules (Celce-Murcia, 2001). However, in light of TEFL's current developments and trends, ten teaching approaches have become prominent (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013) (see *Table 2*). Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013) elaborated on approaches and methods, their

usage, implementation techniques, teachers' and students' role in detailed in their study. It is broadly discussed that methods and approaches have been adopted in different parts of the world but not implemented equally in the classroom. To illustrate, *Grammar Translation Method* has endured for years; also *Direct Method* has been utilized for specific purposes worldwide.

Additionally, various approaches and methods have been given significance from time to time. For instance, in the 1950s and 1960s, *the Audio-Lingual Method* was imminent; in contrast, inventive methods emerged in the later 1970s and 1980s, such as *Silent Way, Community Language Learning, Total Physical Response, Suggestopedia, and the Natural Approach.* Moreover, in the 1980s, *the Communicative Approach* became prominent; in the 2000s and so far, changes in TEFL have been addressed with regard to the advanced technological developments, planning learning strategies appealing to different bits of intelligence (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013).

McDonough and Shaw (1993) remark that developing these methods and approaches with the appropriate techniques in the curriculum are influenced by the role of English in the local setting, teachers' role in the classroom, management and administration attitude, accessible time and reachable sources, the number of students and socio-cultural surroundings. Modern language teaching approaches are stranded in the premise that the setting should provide learners as many chances as possible to establish comprehensible input, productive output, interaction, and negotiation of issues in the target language (Wilkerson, 2008). For so many years, it has been discussed which approach or method is the best for TEFL. With all the attempts to find it for decades, language educators have reached an agreement upon becoming eclectic (González Moncada, 2006). Language teachers are needed to be attentive to decide what works in their peculiar setting (Brown, 1994). It can be concluded that there is no single method or approach to teaching; what matters in these abundant procedures is to make intelligent choices for instructional needs (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

Table 2.

Comparison of Different Methods and Approaches

Method or Approach	Techniques
• Grammar-Translation Method	Translation of a literary passage, antonym-synonym, cognates, memorization
• Direct Method	Filling the blank activities, dictation, map drawing, reading aloud, paragraph writing
• Audio-Lingual Method	Dialogue memorization, backward build-up drill, repetition drill, chain drill
• The Silent Way	Sound-colored charts, teacher's silence, peer correction, rods, Fidel charts
• Suggestopedia	Peripheral learning, choosing a new identity, role play
• Community Language Learning	Recording student conversation, transcription, human-computer
• Total Physical Response	Using commands, role reversal, action sequence,
• Communicative Language Teaching	Authentic materials, scrambled sentences, language games, picture strip stories
• Content-Based Instruction	Dictogloss, graphic organizers, process writing, dialogue journals
• Task-Based Language Teaching	Information-gap, opinion-gap, reasoning-gap activities, focused and unfocused tasks.

Note. Adapted from Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2013)

2.4.3. Technology Use in Foreign Language Teaching

Information communication technology (ICT) has revolutionized language learning and teaching and the setting in which language is acquired, and the components of the language learning environment (Young, 2003). In order to enrich the learning environment and strengthen students' literacy in the target language in and out of the classroom, innovative educational strategies have emerged in recent decades (Sagnak &

Baran, 2021), such as *computer-assisted learning* (Thomas, Reinders & Warschauer, 2012), *flipped or inverted classrooms* (Lage & Platt, 2000), *massive open online courses* (Daniel, 2012), *blended learning* (Sharma & Barrett, 2008), *mobile learning* (Brown & Green, 2012).

The advent of the Internet has provoked pivotal changes in English language teaching practice (Güler & Özkan, 2018; Warschauer, 1996). The Internet allows learners to discover authentic language resources with global access to international sources even by directly communicating with native English speakers (Yang & Chen, 2007). Learners further have chances to deepen their understanding of the target culture and gain new perspectives on the international views (Hockly, 2015). The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) introduced the implementation of "5Cs" that refer to *communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities* in foreign language learning (Yang & Chen, 2007, p. 2). World Wide Web tools and digital resources foster the cultivation of the five Cs in foreign language learning. However, teachers give credit to the essential, knowledgeable, and subsequently safe technologies with an extended range of materials in their classrooms (Vanderplank, 2010). As it is broadly discussed in the extensive literature, the impacts of technology-enhanced language education have confidently grown that it can foster interaction, decrease the level of anxiety, enhance conversation, improve critical thinking skills, increase motivation, allow learners to progress at their own speed and level and obtain instant and subjective feedback (Hoven, 1999; Warschauer, 1995; Yang, 2001).

Technology and foreign language education have no longer isolated terms but are referred to conjointly (Singhal, 1997). Singhal (1997) also discussed several benefits of integrating technology into the learning environment, especially applications that offer practical and easy use, such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation mentor, digital worksheets, writing, reading, listening, and speaking programs. These available software programs and digital tools are further accepted as motivators and facilitators of language learning to make it more appealing (Blake, 1987; Chun & Brandl, 1992). Considering the development of educational technology and its integration into foreign language classrooms, it is inferred that as a remarkable context for offering real experiences of targeted culture and an instrument that enables learners to regulate themselves and take responsibility for their own learning and fully engage in the process (Egbert & Hanson-Smith, 1999; Furstenberg, 1997; Hampel, 2006).

2.4.4. E-learning Platforms for Foreign Language Education

Globalization and digital tools have entirely converted the contexts, contents, and usage of foreign languages (Chun, Kern & Smith, 2016; Kern, 2014). Concerning expand usage of computers and technology-enhanced activities in language classrooms, the network and Internet-based classes not only offer various modes of information such as visual, audio, verbal, and textual but also enable learners to engage in productive and creative tasks to experience language with *synchronous* and *asynchronous* ways such as films, videos, pictures, pedagogical sources, texts for both communication and addressing information (Chun & Plass, 2000; Hampel, 2006; Kern, 2014). Nowadays, video-conference calls, emails, chat forums, online meetings, seminars, conferences, social networking sites, extensively multiuser online games, collaborative writing and editing, and multimodal productive tools have furnished new social meeting platforms and new perspectives to foreign language teaching and learning (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009). These opportunities offer communities innovative ways to reach authentic linguistic patterns and communicate in culturally sensitive domains thanks to social media and the Internet (Byram, 2009; Kessler, 2017). Li (2005) stated that real-like and interactive settings are considered the foremost way to learn a language.

With the advent of digital technologies, different terms have emerged for providing learning beyond the classrooms; the concept of *e-learning* is accounted among terms (Jašková, 2014; Kahiigi et al., 2008). A multitude of definitions for e-learning prevails in the literature (Tavangarian et al., 2004). Sangrà, Vlachopoulos, and Cabrera (2012) noted various definitions in four dimensions with the detailed investigation of literature: *technology-driven* definitions as it is provided in the E-learning portal (2009) that e-learning is the usage of technology to deliver education; *delivery-system-oriented* definitions as Koohang and Harman (2005) stated that it is the delivery of education through all kinds of electronic tools; *communication-oriented* definitions as González-Videgaray (2007) attributed that e-learning is the usage of ICTs for pedagogical purposes through the web; *educational-paradigm-oriented* definitions referring e-learning as an extensive usage and combination of ICTs, multimedia technologies, computers, network infrastructures in order to enrich the quality of learning with synchronous and asynchronous learning and teaching activities (Aldrich, 2005; Alonso et al., 2005; Ellis, Ginns & Piggott, 2009; Jereb & Šmitek, 2006). Additionally, e-learning platforms are benchmarked with the self-regulation that the real learning actualizes between the

platform and individual that deals with identifying information, contextualizing and making utterances with the existing knowledge, comprehension, skills, and attempts to find time and space for learning (Choy, 2006).

The developments of Web 2.0 tools and the rise of e-learning platforms have also given rise to the language learning communities and markets (Hockly, 2015). Hockly (2015) indicated that websites and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) had attracted a wide array of participants around the world; also, the increasing availability of mobile devices, particularly smartphones, has enabled mobile apps to support language learning to name several *Duolingo*, *iKnowl*, and *Busuu* among the best known. Furthermore, social media platforms or "virtual spaces where people share" (Joosten, 2012, p. 6) and digital technologies such as wikis, blogs, online discussion forums have been noted as a facilitator of teaching considering pedagogical affordances (Sleeman, Lang & Dakich, 2020). These user-friendly platforms have strengthened online communities' conception to use target language through creative, productive, communicative, and socially-constructed interactions with tremendous flexibility and practicality such as *microblogging* (Fewell, 2014).

Another aspect of the growing e-learning tools is that they have become an immediate answer throughout the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak (Karataş & Tuncer, 2020). One of the comprehended benefits of e-learning products is being beyond time and location (Biasutti, Frate & Concina, 2019) that in the time of closure of schools and prohibited gatherings all over the world caused by the pandemic (Valverde-Berrocoso et al., 2020). Kurzweil further attributed that the future of e-learning platforms will interestingly be transformed till the year 2029 that human-to-human communication will be replaced with human-to-machine interaction through virtual practices (2000).

2.4.5. Foreign Language Education in Turkey

English has lost its national identity and gained a global status (Fishman, 2006). It has been broadly taught to obtain global knowledge and enrich international communication worldwide (Alagozlu, 2012). Almost every community worldwide encounters the English language *in the global village* (Widdowson, 2003, p. 2). Widdowson (2003) defined seven categories to determine a language significance: *international*, *liberary*, *national*, *recreational*, *educational*, *cultural*, *vocational* importance. With regard to the appreciated importance of English considering these

points, *Figure 7* demonstrates the countries where English is taught mandatory and optional. In the map, 142 countries in blue indicate that English is a part of national education policy and 41 countries in yellow point that English is offered as an elective subject.

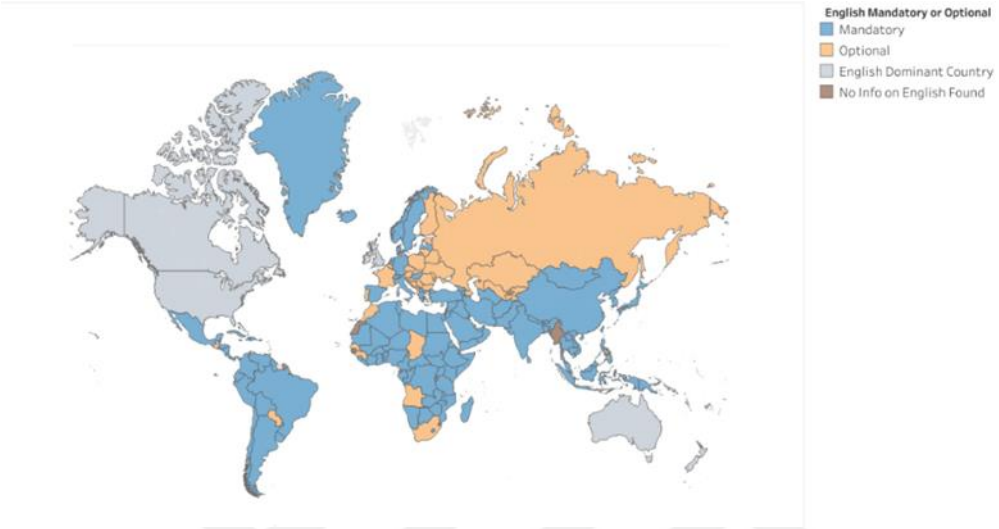


Figure 7. Global English education policy

Note. Global English education policies of the countries are shown on the world map. (https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/global-english-education/countries-in-which-english-is-mandatory-or-optional-subject.html)

There have been devoted considerable efforts to teach EFL in recent centuries in Turkey in which English is taught as a Foreign Language (Alagozlu, 2012). English was introduced in the Turkish education system in the late 1850s, called *The Tanzimat Period,* when Westernization movements initiated (Kırkgöz, 2005). However, evolutionary developments in teaching EFL in Turkey occurred in the 19th century with the achievements of *the Republican of Turkey* (Solak, 2014).

Especially in the last 15 years, the EFL education program has undergone substantial changes (Gürsoy, Korkmaz & Damar, 2013). *The 1997 Education Reform* brought dramatic changes and improvements in the Turkish education system, particularly considering teaching English (Bayyurt, 2006; Saricoban, 2012; Solak & Bayar, 2015). The reform is indicated as *The Ministry of Education Development Project*, which extended mandatory education from five to eight years. With this shift, MoNE also aimed to increase learners' motivation and exposure to English longer than before with the decision to introduce English from the fourth grade. The primary purposes of MoNE are to create an environment for young learners to raise awareness and positive behaviors

in English, enhance learners' enthusiasm and motivation for language learning and establish meaningful context to engage in English (Saricoban, 2012). The Improvements covered course hours, language learning materials, textbooks, and assessments from traditional product-based works to performance-based practices through portfolios (Gürsoy, Korkmaz & Damar, 2013).

In addition to these efforts, another pivotal shift represented in 2012 with the transition to the 4+4+4 education system. With this reform, mandatory education was extended from eight to 12 years. It is decided that the introduction of English required to start in 2nd grades parallel to integration of EU (European Union) principals into education policy in consideration of lower affective filter of young learners to learn a language (Gürsoy, Korkmaz & Damar, 2013). With respect to these developments in English Language Teaching (ELT) policies, it is mainly targeted to keep up with the European language education system and bring innovations and new educational norms into ELT and the assessment system (Kirkgoz, 2007). Moreover, the paramount purpose of Turkish education policies of foreign language teaching is to educate individuals in fundamental literacy skills such as reading and writing, listening, and speaking, enabling them to communicate in the target language (Bayyurt, 2006). English has become a prominent part of the Turkish education system. A number of movements, such as in the revision of the curriculum, teaching methods, teacher education, and the assessment procedure, have been facilitated by the government, which led to notable developments (Saricoban, 2012).

2.5. Turkey's Ministry of National Education Emergency Management Policies for the COVID-19 Pandemic

The world has been revolving in such vast, swift and remarkable changes in a short time due to the novel coronavirus disease. Primarily, education systems that have significantly grown during the last 50 years for all grades are now facing the most significant challenge ever (Daniel, 2020). In a situation students are not attainable to learn in a classroom setting, the inevitable solution is to promote remote and online teaching in virtual environments to reinforce the delivery of instruction in the COVID-19 outbreak (Mulenga & Marban, 2020; Naciri et al., 2020; Sintema, 2020; Tria, 2020). Like many other governments, with 19,559,437 enrolled students from primary to high school (MoNE, 2019), Turkey's emergency management policy for education, immediately after

the closures of schools, has been to adopt several moves such as developing digital platforms and collaborating with the TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation) TV channel concerning the continuation of proper delivery of teaching.

In the first place, country-wide distance education was adopted to replace formal face-to-face education for all educational stakeholders (Yucesoy-Ozkan et al., 2020; Ozer, 2020). Distance education is highly effective for enabling students and teachers to meet synchronously and asynchronously in a comfortable, flexible and affordable way (Arthur-Nyarko, Agyei & Armah, 2020; Davies, 1978; Davis et al., 2019). Arthur-Nyarko, Agyei and Armah (2020) devoted themselves to explaining synchronous meetings as occurring "in *real-time* or with students simultaneously present" whereas asynchronous sessions as happening "in *delayed time* or with students participating at different times" (p. 36). MoNE decided to promote distance education on its online platform – EIN. The EIN is a digital educational platform originated by MoNE and open to service since the 2011-2012 academic year (Ozer, 2020). Additional information on the EIN platform will be preserved in the next section.

Educational television programs have played a crucial role in reaching out to all students as a teaching tool in distance education. The six educational channels have been initiated for learners' service with the collaboration of TRT and MoNE in the form of TRT-EBA TV. The MoNE has utilized TRT-EBA TV as a secondary means for distance education by developing separate channels for primary, secondary, and high school students (Yucesoy-Ozkan et al., 2020). Students have paid attention to the broadcast flow and the schedule to be informed about the timing of the courses and follow the broadcast. In *Figure 8* on the next page, an example of the broadcast flow is given.

EBA-TV Primary School — April, 20-24

Grade	Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1st Grade	09:00 a.m.	Turkish	Science	Turkish	The Celebration of the National Sovereignty and Children's Day	Turkish
	09:30 a.m.	Math	Math	Math		Science
2nd Grade	10:00 a.m.	Turkish	Science	Turkish		English
	10:30 a.m.	Math	Math	Math		Science
3rd Grade	11:00 a.m.	Turkish	Science	Turkish		English
	11:30 a.m.	Math	Science	Math		Turkish
4th Grade	12:00 p.m.	Turkish	Social Sciences	Turkish		Social Sciences
	12:30 p.m.	Math	Science	Math		Science
Support	01:00 p.m.	Turkish	Math	Turkish		Turkish
Turkish for Refugees	01:30 p.m.	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish		Turkish
Special Education	02:00 p.m.	Information	Math	Science		Cognitive Skills
Parents Zone	08:00 p.m.					

EBA-TV Secondary School — April, 20-24

Grade	Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5th Grade	09:00 a.m.	Turkish	Social Science	English	The Celebration of the National Sovereignty and Children's Day	English
	09:30 a.m.	Math	Science	Math		Science
6th Grade	10:00 a.m.	Turkish	Social Science	English		English
	10:30 a.m.	Math	Science	Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge		Science
7th Grade	11:00 a.m.	Turkish	Social Science	English		Math
	11:30 a.m.	Math	Science	Math		Science
8th Grade	12:00 p.m.	Turkish	Revolution History	English		English
	12:30 p.m.	Math	Science	Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge		Science
Religious Secondary School	01:00 p.m.	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic		The Holy Qur'an
Turkish for Refugees	01:30 p.m.	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish		Turkish
Special Education	02:00 p.m.	Information	Math	Science		Turkish
Parents Zone	08:00 p.m.					

EBA-TV High School — April, 20-24

Grade	Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9th Grade	09:00 a.m.	Turkish Language and Literature	History	Turkish Language and Literature	The Celebration of the National Sovereignty and Children's Day	Geography
	09:30 a.m.	Math	Chemistry	Math		English
	10:00 a.m.	Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge				
10th Grade	10:00 a.m.		History	Turkish Language and Literature		Geography
	10:30 a.m.	Turkish Language and Literature	Chemistry	Math		Philosophy
	11:00 a.m.	Math	Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge			English
11th Grade	11:00 a.m.			Turkish Language and Literature		
	11:30 a.m.	Turkish Language and Literature	History	Math		Geography
	12:00 p.m.	Math	Chemistry			Philosophy
	12:30 p.m.		Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge			English
12th Grade	12:00 p.m.			Turkish Language and Literature		
	12:30 p.m.	Turkish Language and Literature		Math		
	01:00 p.m.	Math	Revolution History	Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge		Geography
	01:30 p.m.		Chemistry			English
All Grades	01:30 p.m.	Time to Exercise		Time to Exercise		

Figure 8. Sample Broadcast of TRT-EBA TV for Primary, Secondary, and High Schools *Note*. Adapted from Yucesoy-Ozkan et al. (2020)

TRT-EBA TV has produced "a total of 2,516 hours broadcast on 93 subjects in 10 different studios in Ankara and Istanbul using 674 teachers (681 hours for primary schools, 770 hours for secondary schools, and 1,065 hours for high schools)" (Yücesoy-Ozkan et al., 2020, p. 41). Besides the main courses taught in the curriculum, extracurricular activities and contents, to name the themes partaking: art, folk dance, guidance and counseling, sport, science, have taken an essential part in reinforcing the COVID-19 outbreak process educational and psychological manner.

Regarding the risks that the world increasingly faced day by day, they impacted students' lives in a number of ways. They had to take liability for their own learning, explore more about how they learn and what exactly they need as reinforcement (Anderson, 2020; Chang & Satako, 2020). When it is considered as a whole process, it has appeared that schools are not merely a space for general knowledge but for developing social skills. Therefore, MoNE put in all efforts to reduce the ravaging influences of the COVID-19 outbreak on students' formal education and social development (Bozkurt, 2020; Can, 2020; Ozer, 2020).

2.5.1. Educational Informatics Network (EIN/EBA)

Throughout the global crisis, countries offered many resources to enhance students' interaction and educational development when they are unable to continue the school due to the pandemic with radio and TV broadcasts and mainly through the online instructional resources and digital platforms, which have become the most common way of delivering education to reach students (Schleicher, 2020; Schleicher & Reimers, 2020). Digital tools and online platforms ranged from educational facilities enabling students to discover topics in formalized learning platforms and proceed at their own pace to virtual meeting platforms to contact teachers (Schleicher, 2020). Besides, as a part of communities' education for people to become autonomous, creative, productive, scientifically attentive, and self-dependent individuals, technological reforms have been advocated (Karanfil, 2021). In this regard, the EBA/EIN platform has become the primary national resource for the maintenance of education in the time of the COVID-19 epidemic outbreak, with the newly added facilities to ensure ongoing synchronous (online) and asynchronous (offline) learning (Karanfil, 2021).

An effective change in technological strategy in Turkey has been put into practice with the *Project e-Transformation Turkey* and *Vision 2023 Certificate of Strategy* (Akıncı, Kurtoğlu & Seferoğlu, 2012). In the framework of these projects, *FATIH Project* was initiated as a significant move towards technology integration to education that the EIN platform is the main component (Kızılet & Özmen, 2017). Therefore, the prime objectives of the FATIH Project are (FATIH Project, 2021):

- Providing Hardware and Software Infrastructure,
- Providing and Managing the Educational e-Content,

- Efficient Internet Technology (IT) Use in Curriculum,
- In-service Training for Teachers,
- Ensuring the Conscious, Safe, Manageable, and Measurable Use of Its function.

In line with the second aim that is *Providing and Managing the Educational e-Content*, the EIN platform was formed by the General Directorate of Innovation and Educational Technologies in order to facilitate students' engagement in learning through technological contents and in use since 2011-2012 academic year (Karanfil, 2021; Ozer,2020). The EIN platform consists of different portals and main modules such as *Courses, Library, Lists, Assignments, Reports, Professional Development, Groups, Student e-Portfolios, Personal Files, The EIN Resources, Questions and Exams, News, Cyber Security Portal, Language Learning Portal, Scoring and Achievement System in the EIN, The EIN Mobile Applications, and EBA Watch&Learn* (Kurnaz, 2020) (for further details see eba.gov.tr). *Figure 9* shows that the EIN Homepage demonstrates that contents are listed in the left column for a teacher user. A wide array of instructional e-content can be reachable in the EIN platform, such as lessons, e-books, videos, simulations/animations, questions, experiments, resources in audio, video, text, and picture formats (Gacanoğlu & Nakiboğlu, 2019). Moreover, besides the contents prepared by experts and professionals, the EIN platform is also enriched with native and international educational portals such as *Vitamin*, *Morpha Campus*, *Khan Academy*, *Colorado* (Çakmak & Taşkıran, 2017).

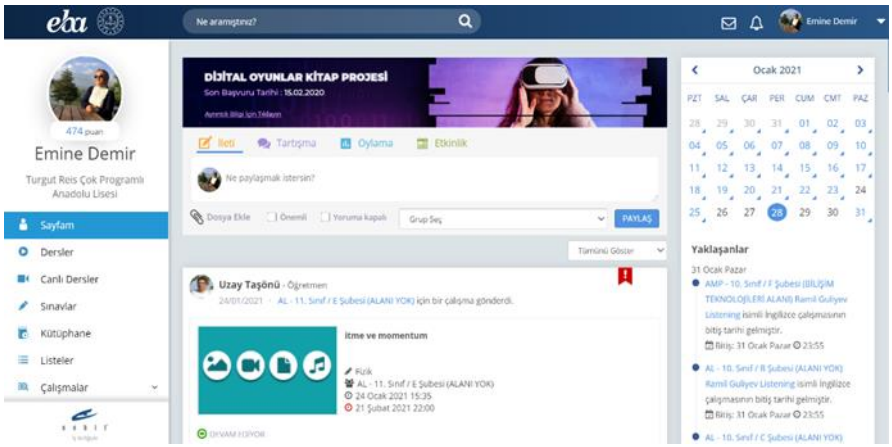


Figure 9. EIN Mainpage

Note. The main page of the EIN platform in teacher access of the researcher
Source: EBA, 2021

In the EBA/EIN platform, it is at the service of all K-12 learners with more than 1,700 courses and more than 40,000 substantial, reliable, and interactive content, videos or interactive narratives, exercises, summaries, infographics, project documents, content specific to teachers, over 5,000 books and approximately 240,000 questions are presented to teachers and students (MoNE, 2020b). At the beginning of the pandemic, schools were shut down for two weeks, and the academic calendar of the MoNE was regenerated for the preparation for distance online education (Akbulut, Şahin & Esen, 2020). MoNe launched distance online instruction for all K-12 schools from kindergarten to high school (MoNE, 2020a). For this reason, the EIN platform has been updated with the addition of an online lesson feature. Before this addition, students were only enabled to watch recorded videos according to their course selection, and teachers were only able to upload contents asynchronously. However, teachers obtained opportunities to arrange live-streamed lessons with their students according to the weekly program that school administrators assigned them (Akbulut, Şahin & Esen, 2020).

The EBA platform can be reached anytime and anyplace on its official website or by using its application. Each user has his/her personal account and password to sign into the personalized webpage. The EBA platform has become the most clicked educational website worldwide, considering the internet traffic occurred 1 October 2020. During the COVID-19 outbreak, it is the leading platform on which virtual education is proceeding. The platform was clicked 1.2 billion times by the seven million active students and more than a billion active teachers. *The EIN Assistant,* an artificial intelligence developed for

providing support, especially during distance online education, answered more than 10 million questions (MoNE, 2021; Yucesoy-Ozkan et al., 2020).

Many other studies in the literature that investigated the effects of the EIN platform on teaching indicated that the EIN has a positive influence on students' cognitive development, social interactions, enthusiasm about learning, and increasing academic success by providing more effective, authentic, original, and constructive content (Aktay & Keskin, 2016; Keleş, Öksüz & Bahçekapılı, 2013; Koçak, 2013; Öztan, 2012). In addition, teachers' and students' effective use of this platform is needed to be considered and investigated before the pandemic hit and while it is expanding (OECD, 2020). With respect to the other studies which were conducted to explore student's and teacher's perceptions on using the EIN and indicated several problems and shortcomings in using such as slowly opening videos, eye-straining content, and usability of the platform (Pala, Arslan & Özdinç, 2017; Tüysüz & Çimen, 2016).

2.5.2. Live-streamed Lessons on EIN/EBA and The Role of Interaction

Distance education with the assistance of ICTs has posed many promises and opportunities to the education sector (Valentine, 2002). Distance education tools allow learners and teachers to meet screen-to-screen in virtual settings ascribed as non-traditional (Fresen, 2018). Digital technologies have been globally utilized to enhance teaching and learning since there has been a transition from traditional education to more learner-centered and interactive models (Davis et al., 2019). Before the ongoing crisis, classrooms have already been enriched with the technological tools to effectively use for strengthening learning in an effort to be in line with world educational standards and national development goals in Turkey (Bayar, Kurt & Haşıloğlu, 2018). Additionally, all kind of educational institutions, educators, teachers, and trainers have started to seek ways to deliver instruction on online platforms in order to prevent a complete loss in learning after recovering from a sudden shock of the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020 (de Oliveira Dias, Lopes & Teles, 2020).

In this regard, in addition to the broadcasts on EBA-TV for all K-12 learners and a wide array of e-content on the EIN/EBA portal, live-streamed lessons have commonly been prepared in Turkey to keep learners engaged in education. Live-streamed classes were precisely operated through the EIN platform (Yucesoy-Ozkan et al., 2020). Since March 2020, live-streamed lessons served 49 million 768 thousand course hours apart

from the EIN platform, other virtual meeting applications such as *Zoom*, *Google Hangouts*, *Google Meet*, *Adopt Connect*, *and Skype* use (MoNE, 2020b; Yucesoy-Ozkan et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, evidently, there are no ICTs or digital tools replaced with the live communication between learners and teachers no matter how developed and cutting-edge technology they possess (Damary, Markova & Pryadilina, 2017). Considering the significance of interaction in educational environments and the new normal for teaching and learning in online settings, Anderson (2003) articulated a theoretical basis for describing the three more common kinds of interactions in virtual environments, demonstrated in *Figure 10*.

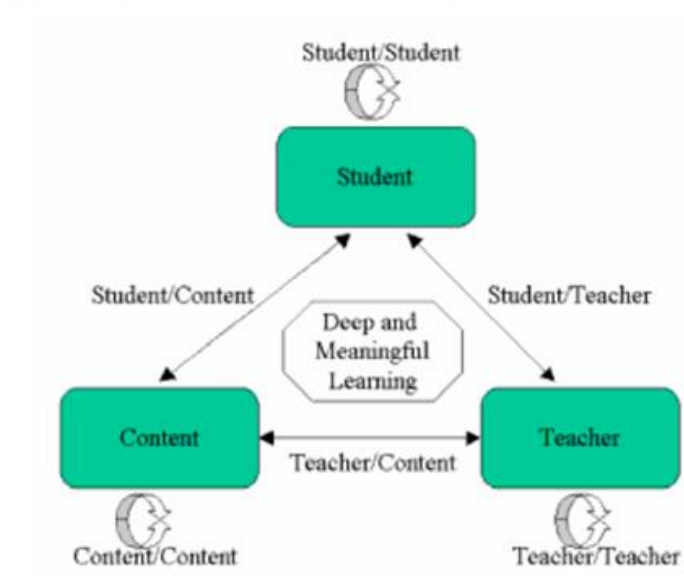


Figure 10. Modes of Interaction in Distance Education
Note. Adapted from Anderson and Garrison (1998)

In this scope, one of the current study aims is to explore how and to what extent these interactions took place in English language classes and how EFL teachers managed to create opportunities to increase the student to student, student to teacher, student to content interactions during COVID-19 outbreak.

2.5.3. Electronic Resources and Educational Support

MoNE developed and immediately put into service a significant number of actions and resources to support distance online education (Ozer, 2020). Additional electronic

sources offering digital content such as open-access portable documents of all textbooks for all courses and levels for teachers, students, and parents were among these actions. These documents and extra materials could be downloaded from the EIN platform. In addition to digital contents, books, booklets, test books, and worksheets were prepared and reached out to the students at different levels all across the country. Mostly, for the eighth and 12th-grade students supposed to take the national exam for the entrance of Anatolian and science high schools and universities, there was much academical support, such as worksheets consisting of 1,000 questions per month (MoNE, 2019). Besides, games are considered an efficient way of enhancing learning (see, e.g., Lee et al., 2004; Randel et al., 1992). For this reason, MoNE initiated a digital educational game application named *Tabii* for secondary school students to offer students to revise previous topics and solve tests in Turkish, mathematics, social studies, and science classes (Yucesoy-Ozkan et al., 2020).

Moreover, with the exceeding number of infected cases during the pandemic, considerations on health problems, concerns about educational regression, financial issues, and ambiguity for the future have generated stress throughout the societies (WHO, 2020). MoNE established a psycho-social line to support students and parents in overcoming mental health and wealth (for further details http://orgm.meb.gov.tr/psikososyaldijitaldestek). Professionals in mental well-being, noticing the distressful nature of current conditions, provided no-cost materials involved mostly pictures, stories, and cartoons for parents and students through sharing these on social media in an attempt to avoid misinformation and help them to continue their lives under lockdown (Öğütlü, 2020).

The wide-ranging use of digital technologies in education has opened up remote foreign language learning (see, e.g., Chen, Freeman & Balakrishnan, 2019). In order to achieve increased productivity in foreign language learning during distance education, *English Activity Guide*s for primary and secondary school students from second grade to eighth grade, including books, modules, activities, and audio files, were published. The guide consists of 70 fascicules and seven books, entitled *Communicative Supplementary Materials for English Language Teachers and Students*, containing 1642 pages as well as audio files. Within the scope of *Vision 2023 Certificate of Strategy*, this guide aimed to enhance students' 21st-century skills, help them communicate in the target language, and encourage them to consider language as a part of life through learner-centered and skill-based activities with interdisciplinary approaches (MoNE, 2021). *Figure 4* provides

sample activities from the *Communicative Supplementary Materials for English Language Teachers and Students* for eight-grades.

Figure 11. *Sample Pages from the Communicative Supplementary Materials for English Language Teachers and Students*

Note. The pictures were taken from the interactive books that MoNE developed for English teachers and students (https://tegm.meb.gov.tr/)

2.6. EFL Teacher Education in Turkey: A Technological Aspect

English has become the most commonly taught foreign language in Turkey since the 1950s (Sert, 2010), regarding its global status and highly accepted position as a crucial element of international development (Ahmadi & Reza, 2018). Teaching English has taken a great deal of interest in today's globalized world and has become a worthwhile education field (Coşkun & Daloğlu, 2010). Turkey's latest policy has made it obligatory to learn the English language at all K-12 institutions (Mahalingappa & Polat, 2013). In this concern, how to teach English has aroused as a broadly discussed topic in the literature to ensure proficiency in language learning (Al-Hazmi, 2003). When teaching English problems are considered, it has seen that they are highly connected with the teachers of English-related issues (Coşkun & Daloğlu, 2010). It has recently become evident because of the vital changes in education that teacher education programs are not sufficiently efficient to provide prudent teachers for the realities of the classroom environment (Öztürk & Aydın, 2019).

On the other hand, digital technologies have grown as an indispensable component of language classrooms, and language teachers are accepted as pivotal players in providing technologies for materials and activities to build more meaningful learning in their classrooms (Aşık et al., 2019). It is considered that updated technologies offer a lifelong consistency to language learning much more attainable and enthusiastic than before with the growing usage of technology in education (Kucuk et al., 2013; Kukulska-Hulme, Lee & Norris, 2017). In Turkey, educational technology developments were initiated with the foundation of Computer Education and Instructional Technologies (CEIT) departments in 1998 to raise prospective teachers of information technologies at institutions of MoNE (Durak et al., 2018). The necessity to increase English language proficiency has been in the scope of language policy and planning addressing the quality of English language teacher education programs (Dang, Nguyen & Le, 2013). Dang, Nguyen, and Le (2013) address that teachers are the key motivators of the teaching and learning process. In this process, it is significant to take advantage of digital technologies to provide high-quality language education with adequate access to valuable technologies offering limitless sources and materials for successful and encouraged cooperative learning for students (Becker, 2000; Bull & Ma, 2001; Harmer, 2007; Shin & Kang, 2018).

In this regard, albeit the given attention to English language teaching with appropriate educational technologies, there has still been a significant insufficiency in integrating technology into language education in the language teacher education programs. Regarding deficient principals in teacher education programs, future language teachers who graduated from these programs with little or no technological pedagogic knowledge has failed to incorporate digital tools into teaching settings because of the inadequate necessary skills and techniques (Aşık et al., 2019; Hubbard, 2008).

2.6.1. Pre-Service EFL Teacher Education Regarding Digital Literacy

Pre-service language teacher education is mainly referred to as training that language teachers receive before becoming professionals (Ülgü & Er, 2016). Teacher education programs offer proper knowledge, skills, and techniques to teach efficiently in virtual teaching environments (Crandall, 2000; Hubbard & Levy, 2006). The Higher Education Council (HEC) administered prospective teachers' education in Turkey, responsible for all higher education institutions' organization, planning, and policies

(Coşkun & Daloğlu, 2010). English language teachers are trained in the education faculties of universities. According to higher education institutions' strategies, the overall education program entails four or five years of training interchangeably implementing one year intensive English preparatory program. HEC is set a standard and obligatory curriculum for language teacher education to be implemented in these faculties all around the country (Karakaş, 2012).

Regarding the constructivist and critical theories for English language teacher education programs, student teachers are started to be considered as not empty vessels to be filled with only knowledge and pedagogical skills or passive technicians (Abednia, 2012). Yin (2019) points out that pre-service teachers' progress to become professional includes knowledge and skill demands structure and the restructure of knowledge from diverse sources. Additionally, in recent years with the advent of educational technologies, educators and curriculum developers have extensively started to apply the *Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge* (TPACK) framework used in designing teacher education programs (Koehler & Mishra, 2009; Mishra & Koehler, 2006) that is broadly accepted as a robust framework for defining how well integration of technology in educational settings are achieved (Baran et al., 2019).

It is the intertwined and ultimate framework consisting of *Technological Knowledge* (TK), *Pedagogical Knowledge* (PK), *Content Knowledge* (CK), and subsets consisted of combinations of *Technological Knowledge* and *Pedagogical Knowledge* formed as *Technological Pedagogical Knowledge*, *Pedagogical Knowledge* and *Content Knowledge* developed as *Pedagogical Content Knowledge*, *Technological Knowledge,* and *Content Knowledge* developed as *Technological Content Knowledge* as demonstrated in *Figure 11* on the next page.

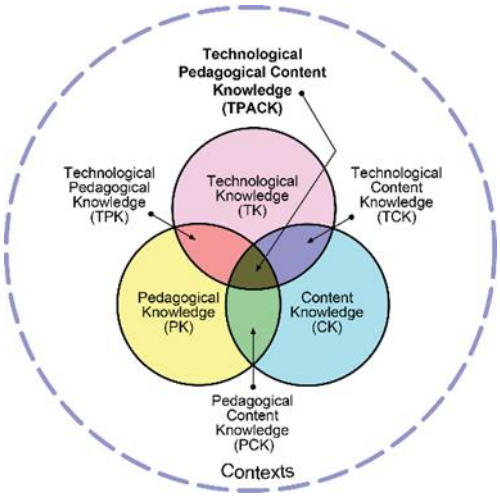


Figure 12. Venn Diagram of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Note. Adapted from Koehler & Mishra (2009)

Current literature suggests that ideas about constituting an *ideal* foreign language education have shifted from sequential and straightforward models to more in-depth and qualified to meet recent developments' needs (Mahalingappa & Polat, 2013). One of the most eloquent concerns is putting inexperienced teachers into the classroom without proper preparation; hence, low-quality teaching and learning occurred (Cross, 1995). Seferoğlu (2006) points out that pre-service teachers establish connections with the course materials and practice in the natural environment that was non-existent in the methodology and pedagogical knowledge within the context of their pre-service teacher education. Therefore, she further states that more micro-teaching practices should be provided. However, university settings have shortcomings in that they are incapable of reflecting the natural teaching environments (Zeichner, 1992). In this regard, language teacher education programs offer *practicum* that enhances chances to combine theory and actual practice in natural classroom settings (Yin, 2019).

2.6.2. Professional Development of In-service EFL Teachers and Digital Literacy

Pre-service education in terms of ICT integration for teaching may be insufficient to enhance efficient digital learning (OECD, 2020). Obviously, the outspreading of the COVID-19 disease has accelerated the usage of ICTs for learning (see, e.g., Masonbrink & Hurley, 2020) that it is no longer optional for teachers to get access to in-service education to update their knowledge and skills in this field (OECD, 2020). The sudden shift in teaching has prompted teachers to use numerous digital instruments and online

platforms that they were not trained nor ready to apply (Khlaif et al., 2020). It has become more evident that teacher proficiency and professional competencies in using digital platforms to enhance instruction are crucial to achievement in distance online education (Gök, 2015; Starkey, 2020). Orhan and Beyhan (2020) asserted that an absence of technological skills and knowledge impacted online education quality, and teachers kept using traditional teaching techniques during the current crisis due to lack of experience.

Gardner, Harlen, and Hayward (2010) asserted that "unless teachers are committed through self-agency to any particular change, the prospects for any successful dissemination and professional learning, leading to its successful practice, are likely to be slim." (p. 134). In this concern, in-service teacher education is broadly regarded as an essential vehicle to promote teacher improvement (Uztosun, 2018). In Turkey, in-service teacher education programs are mostly organized by the General Directorate of Teacher Education and Development Unit of MoNE with private organizations and teacher training centers such as Cambridge English and British Council (Ülgü & Er, 2016; Uztosun, 2018). Uztosun (2018) asserted four classes of in-service teacher education activities: *main activities*, *distant digital activities*, *domestic activities*, and *FATIH* (Increasing Opportunities and Improvement of Technology Movement) *project activities*. In-service teacher education activities provide opportunities for many teachers to facilitate scholarly outputs, enhance technological skills and reduce stress on teachers when planning lessons (Gülbahar & Güven, 2008). Furthermore, teacher professional development activities that can be regarded as the most important money and time investments for a government to make in education are crucial to reinforce their pedagogical knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and autonomy in transformative practice (Aldosemani, 2019).

Within this scope, MoNE has put into action several projects to improve the quality of teaching and support teachers' professional developments during the pandemic. The advanced professional development projects, established within the collaboration of higher education institutions and private organizations credited by UNESCO's National Commission of Turkey, were introduced to teachers online. According to MoNE (2020b), 850 thousand teachers joined the professional development projects and took certificates. In addition to these programs, 500 thousand teachers benefitted from the national and universal distance education programs on the EIN platform. Moreover, through the Teachers' Lounge Project, the MoNE provided opportunities for teachers to meet with various experts from different fields. This project also offered virtual meetings to teachers

from different provinces with the minister of MoNE to discuss the ongoing problems and negotiate ideas online (MoNE, 2020b; Yucesoy-Ozkan, 2020).

2.7. Assessment and Feedback in the Scope of Teaching English as a Foreign Language

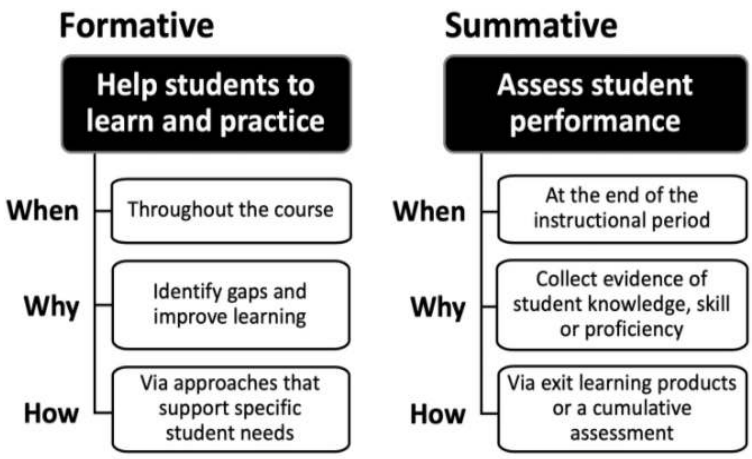
Teaching and assessing learning outcomes are not different sides of a single coin (Dedrinos, 2011), but they are intermingled terms playing a central and significant role in teaching and learning as assessment affects the overall process of education (Baleghizadeh & Masoun, 2013; Cheng, Rogers & Hu, 2004). The assessment describes what students consider as significant, how they allocate their time on learning, how much they study, how engaged they are in the learning process with the understanding of the current situation and shedding light on the future learning (Brown, 2004; Gibbs & Simpson, 2004). Teachers dedicate a significant amount of time to create instruments to support their teaching plan, efficiently answer their students' needs and expectations, and meet the curriculum's requirements (Herrera Mosquera, & Macías, 2015; Klimova, 2015). With respect to the increased essence of assessment, along with the significance of product and process of learning, attention should also be given to what is learned, how efficiently learning takes place, and what the additional skills and requirements are (Paris & Paris, 2001). This paradigm led the *assessment of learning* and *assessment for learning* concepts emerged: assessment of learning is referred to as the *summative assessment,* and assessment for learning is coined with the *formative assessment* (Black, Harrison & Lee, 2003; Watling & Ginsburg, 2019). In other words, it can be exclaimed that assessment is not a chapter evaluation or a formal test but also using different methods to observe the knowledge, skills, and abilities of learners (Purpura, 2016).

Formative assessment is generally associated with the overall judgment to improve the program by collecting data to facilitate students learning, whereas *summative assessment* is mostly referred to as general summing up or *teaching to test,* which takes place at the end of a course in the purpose of certification in contrast with the formative assessment (Black, 1999; McMillan, 2013; Sadler, 1989). Over the years, formative assessment has raised importance in the foreign language education field (Herrera Mosquera & Macías, 2015). This kind of shift to the formative assessment is considered to boost learners' motivation and enthusiasm (Gan & Leung, 2020). Formative assessment is asserted as assessment primarily intends to instruct and enhance learner

performance, not solely to audit it with the teaching and learning activities used to modify instruction by enabling feedback (Black & William, 2009; Wiggins, 1998). A comprehensive assessment approach generally confronts traditional assessment principles (Monib, Karimi & Nijat, 2020). *Table 3* indicates the main differences between formative and summative assessment when, why, and how to implement them in the classroom. McMillan (2013) asserts that even in the best high-stake summative tests, there can be issues about the test validity and reliability that it gives the path to broadly using formative assessment.

Table 3.

Differences between Formative and Summative Assessment



Note. Adapted from McMillan (2013)

Formative assessment is generally attributed to constructive feedback to enhance the learning process (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2005). Formative feedback is defined as information provided to the learner to adjudge his or her ideas about improvement to shape the future of learning (Sadler, 1998; Shute, 2008). Formative feedback is considered a prominent facilitator of learning since it supports learners in the learning process by giving information about the aims and how to achieve these aims (Goldin et al., 2017). In this regard, it is highly suggested to use them together to strengthen students to be self-regulated learners (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2005). Haines (2004) defines approaches such as the feedback sandwich and the interactive approach encouraging self-regulated assessment to provide efficient feedback to students. Irons (2007) points out that formative assessment and feedback should increase motivation, create positive

learning opportunities, encourage interaction between students and teachers, and facilitate students' chances to learn.

2.7.1. Digital Assessment and Feedback

Today, online and distance instruction is most probably the fastest increasing area of education in the world (Simpson, 2013). Growing acceptance for up-to-date educational technologies beyond printed materials or television media to more complex innovative forms of interactive electronic tools over the last decades has brought practical, flexible, and interactive ways for education (Hricko & Howell, 2006). Simpson (2013) asserts that in online and distance instruction contexts, providing support to students that are interchangeably coined as *counseling*, *guidance*, *advice,* or *tuition* is highly essential for motivating students to learn. The opportunity for digital teaching has also brought about new concerns in assessment (Robles & Braathen, 2002). The emergence of digital technologies has been merged with the assessment in online environments unfolding the idea of online formative assessment for distance courses (Baleni, 2015; Macdonald, 2001). Robles & Braathen (2002) indicate that the change in the delivery mode of instruction leads teachers to revise their techniques to demonstrate teaching and learning efficacy.

In online environments, the absence of physical space and in-person interactions between students and teachers leads to diverse strategies to assess learning (Baleni, 2015). Digital tools have opened up new online formative assessment paths to ensure self-centered and reflective learning, such as creating places for peer review by sending the reviews electronically and allowing them to comment and review (Macdonald, 2001). Technological feedback methods are growing among educators since they reinforce the feedback session, delivery, and communication at less cost and time (Denton et al., 2008; Hatziapostolou & Paraskakis, 2010). The term formative e-assessment is attributed to using ICTs to facilitate the iterative method of capturing and reviewing teacher and learner knowledge about student performance and assessing it concerning previous accomplishment and achievement of expected and unintended learning outcomes (Pachler et al., 2010). Online formative assessment can be delivered in written, audio, video formats, or web-based conferences (Leibold & Schwarz, 2015).

Reliability and validity prevail as a major issue in online formative feedback, albeit its interactive and constructive structure (Baleni, 2015). According to Rowe (2004),

there is a significant and persistently asked question whether when a student gets a high score in an online assessment, it means that he or she knows the subject pointing through another critical issue in online teaching sessions.

On the other hand, Chickering and Gamson (1987) described seven principles of learning (p. 2):

- Encourages contacts between students and faculty,
- Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students,
- Uses active learning techniques,
- Gives prompt feedback,
- Emphasizes time on task,
- Communicates high expectations,
- Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

Feedback is accounted for among them. Alvarez, Espasa, and Guasch (2012) identify four types of feedback for the assignments in an online learning environment: *corrective feedback*, *epistemic feedback*, *suggestive feedback*, and *epistemic plus suggestive feedback*. *Corrective feedback* refers to the assignment requirements and sufficiency of the content; *epistemic feedback* is imported as demands for extra explanation and clarification critically; *suggestive feedback* includes suggestions on how to accelerate the learning process and facilitate improvement, revolution, and expansion of ideas; *epistemic plus suggestive feedback* is a sort of combination of prompts and questions for future development and provides advice for improvement (Guasch et al., 2013). The concept of feedback has a pivotal position in online distance education for offering chances to enhance teacher-student relationships and interaction, enhance academic success and improve learning (Leibold & Schwarz, 2015). Constructive feedback includes positive interaction and promotes teaching and learning experience that Leibold and Schwarz (2015) point out helpful suggestions to correct delivery of online feedback, such as addressing learners with their names, providing constant, immediate, and coherent feedback, using a positive language and asking questions to promote critical thinking.

2.7.2. The Emerging Need for Digital Assessment Tools During Distance Online Education in the COVID-19 Outbreak

Robles and Braathen (2002) state that "Online learning is here to stay!". In the time of this ravaging COVID-19 crisis, it has become a solution with expanding acceptance of online learning (Daniel, 2020). As the COVID-19 pandemic has still been continuing worldwide, teachers have faced many challenges in the rapid shift to online teaching because of the absence of face-to-face interactions, social activities, concentration, and efficient technology (Arora & Srinivasan, 2020; Shetty et al., 2020). In the adaptation process of online teaching, they have represented a considerable effort to maintain enhancing students' learning and improvement in the dearth of face-to-face communication (König, Jäger-Biela & Glutsch, 2020). One of the major concerns throughout the pandemic is to hold valid and reliable ways in the forced online distance education process to evaluate the learning outcomes (Elzainy, El Sadik & Al Abdulmonem, 2020). As much research indicates that this swift shift to digital education will lead to long-lasting consequences on teaching and learning, assessment procedures and methods are regarded (see, e.g., Khan & Jawaid, 2020).

Implementing efficient online assessment techniques in online education environments is a significant part of productive teaching and learning (Gaytan & McEwen, 2007). The online formative assessment reflects the essence of online learning and gives more responsibility on students for their own learning by provoking them to discover their capabilities in critical thinking abilities and developing solutions to problems that are considered the main profits of transforming from traditional teaching to online instruction where the teacher is in the position of a facilitator (Elzainy, El Sadik & Al Abdulmonem, 2020). Rahim (2020) develops guidelines that need to be considered before preparing online assessment during the urgent distance teaching in the COVID-19 pandemic, such as regarding the institutional and educator readiness, ensuring alignment of assessment strategies with learning aims, ascertain the differences in students' situations and providing high-quality feedback. Additionally, creating a delicate balance and clear communication with the students regarding the self-regulated competencies and validity of the assessment, encouraging collaboration with a group-based assessment to ensure 21st-century skills including learning and innovation, life and career, and high-order critical thinking skills are mainly suggested to provide a supportive and constructive online assessment (Rahim, 2020)

The COVID-19 pandemic increases the risk of testing errors because assessment should be standardized that is damaged by the rapid shift from traditional to online education in the pandemic (Krach, Paskiewicz & Monk, 2020). Huang et al. (2020) evaluated online assessment in the concept of flexible learning, which is defined as a set of learner-centered educational approaches that offer learners to decide where, when, and how to engage in learning with the range usage of advanced technologies (Lee & McLoughlin, 2010). They indicate that online assessment in flexible learning increases students' development and achievement in learning with the help of *presentat*ions, *research papers*, *team projects*, *peer assessments*, and *e-portfolios*.

2.7.3. Assessment and Feedback in the Context of EFL in Turkey

In Turkey, the education programs are extensively exam-oriented. The practices of teachers, students, and even institutions are evaluated with students' achievements on various exams. Despite the significance of high-stake exams in Turkey, few studies in the literature discover EFL teachers' practices and perceptions upon assessment (Hatipoğlu, 2016).

According to Ünaldı (2016), despite the shift from traditional assessment to learner-centered alternative assessment, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) principles, which mainly address learner autonomy and related issues, are not thoroughly embraced in the Turkish educational context. Also, Öz (2014) asserted that EFL teachers' perception over assessment for learning in an EFL setting considerably diverge from their practices, particularly monitoring their language students' performance throughout the course. Önalan and Esim (2020) aimed to explore primary and secondary EFL teachers' perceptions on assessment and the use of assessment in EFL classrooms. The study results identified that although EFL teachers held a positive attitude toward the assessment and its use, some stated several issues about student involvement in the assessment process. Besides, regarding the significance of teacher knowledge, awareness, and skill development in assessment, improvements in teacher education programs and in-service professional development activities are indicated in the study.

Önalan and Karagül (2018) attempted to investigate EFL teachers' beliefs and practices under four main domains: *formative assessment*, *summative assessment*, *self-assessment of students*, and *assessment to improve teachers' instruction* in their study.

The results indicated that EFL teachers were more willing to use formative assessment in their classes; however, the summative assessment was prioritized in the Turkish educational system, albeit the tendency of EFL teachers towards formative assessment upon others.

Furthermore, throughout the COVID-19 crisis, national examinations, which are relatively significant in the Turkish context, were canceled. Students were not obliged to face-to-face exams. In general, mostly homework, projects, and portfolios were used to grade students. Additionally, all students enrolled in K-12 schools were evaluated through online assessment techniques (Yucesoy-Ozkan et al., 2020).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter is devoted to introducing and explaining the rationale behind the study regarding the research design of the study, research context, and data analysis process. The data collection procedure, data collection tools, and sampling method used to determine participants will be preserved to provide methodological details.

3.2. Research Design

The prime aim of the current research is to investigate the EFL teachers' digital literacy and the usage of digital tools, the evaluation of the EIN platform, and to provide insights into the experiences in the process of quick shift from face-to-face teaching to online teaching as a consequence of the noval coronavirus outbreak. To identify the impacts of teaching a language in an online environment in terms of the implementation process, required skills to teach online, the differences between face-to-face teaching and online teaching, the overall impact of this pandemic on language teaching; the study constitutes the explanatory sequential design of the mixed-method research design strategies.

Mixed-methods research aims to strengthen the study in contribution to present in-depth clarification and explanation of relationships among variables and enable researchers to collect and examine substantially more and various sorts of data compared to the use of an approach alone (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). It has been acknowledged the usability of the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in research and employing which data collection tool and data analysis method are demanded identifying the research questions within the study (Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Morse, 2010; Tashakkori & Teddie, 2010).

Furthermore, Creswell (2012) introduced and classified mixed-method research designs considering the priority, sequence, conformity of the data collection tools, and the data analysis procedure. Priority signifies the determination of which approach, quantitative or qualitative, a researcher will heavily focus on during the study's data collection and analysis procedure (Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006). Specifically, the

explanatory sequential design requires two-phase data collection and analysis in a sequence; and priority is given to the quantitative data. Ivankova, Creswell and Stick (2006) further explain that while implementing the explanatory sequential design, "A researcher collects and analyzes the quantitative (numeric) data; the qualitative (text) data are collected and analyzed second in the sequence and help explain, or elaborate on, the quantitative results obtained in the first phase." (p. 5). In this design, the two phases are interdependently associated with each other by initially leading the participants' determination and establishment of interview questions, further picturing the final discussion with a comprehensive interpretation of both phases together (Clark, Creswell, Green & Shope, 2008). This design can be represented in *Figure 12* below.

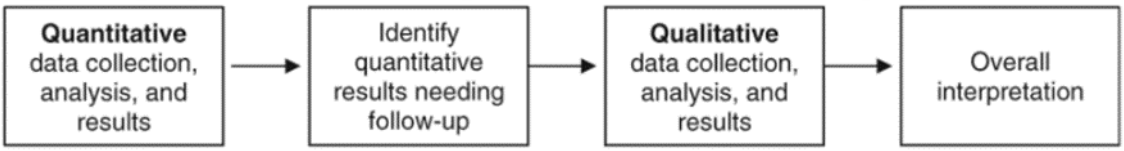


Figure 13. Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design
Note. Adapted from Clark, Creswell, Green & Shope (2008)

The purpose of the study is to identify to what extent EFL teachers attribute to the continuing of the teaching and learning in the COVID-19 outbreak while the administers attempting the ease of the infection. In an attempt to discover and reflect the experiences, challenges, problems, and perceptions of EFL teachers in online teaching, both qualitative and quantitative data collection approaches were generated by the researcher. In the first phase of the study, an online five-point Likert-scale questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data since questionnaires are the most efficiently and usefully developed and applied way of data collection design for being straightforward in terms of development, standardization of questions, analysis of answers (Gillham, 2008).

In the second phase of the study, semi-structured online interviews were used to gather qualitative data. The semi-structured interviews were used to acquire a broader sense of understanding and highly elaborate upon the quantitative data. Semi-structured interviews are well compatible for exploring participants' perceptions, beliefs, and ideas concerning complicated and occasionally sensitive issues and provide probing for more information and clarification of answers (Barribal & While, 1994). Also, teachers are asked to fill self-assessment forms just after the end of the teaching session so as to obtain their reflection on their teaching.

In this regard, this study was carried out in order to seek answers to three research questions. Triangulation of the data, which is defined by Denzin (1978) as "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (p. 291), enabled to strengthen the reliability of the data collection tools by enhancing our understanding with new and more profound aspects to emerge (Jick, 1979). In Table 4, data collection instruments and data analysis procedures corresponding to the research questions are given.

Table 4.

Research Procedure

Research questions	***Sampling Technique***	***Research tools***	***Analysis tools***
1. How effectively did EFL teachers of the Ministry of Education in Turkey use the digital tools and Education Information Network during the distance education process in the COVID-19 outbreak?	Convenience Sampling	Online Likert-scale Questionnaire	*SPSS 25.0*
	Purposive Sampling	Semi-structured Interview	Thematic analysis
2. What kind of teaching strategies did EFL teachers of the Ministry of Education in Turkey utilize during online classes?	Convenience Sampling	Online Likert-scale Questionnaire	*SPSS 25.0*
	Purposive Sampling	Semi-structured Interview	Thematic analysis
3. What type of assessment did EFL teachers of the Ministry of Education in Turkey perform while giving feedback to their students during online classes?	Convenience Sampling	Online Likert-scale Questionnaire	*SPSS 25.0*
	Purposive Sampling	Semi-structured Interview	Thematic analysis

3.3. Data Collection Tools

In the current study, regarding the research questions, various data collection tools were utilized to ensure the triangulation of data that enabled the study to become more reliable and valid. Quantitative data was collected through an online Likert-scale questionnaire, and qualitative data was gathered from online semi-structured interviews.

3.3.1. Questionnaire

The first COVID-19 case was appeared in China in December 2019 and quickly turned into a pandemic that spread all across the globe. It was so unprecedented and unpredictable that almost all spheres of life were forced to change immediately. Similarly, the educational and social sciences were unready for a promising start to distance online education, and there was relatively restricted research in the literature over online language teaching concerning such a pandemic. Thus, these circumstances led the researcher to do an extensive and in-depth review of the literature to develop an appropriate data collection tool for online language education in the time of the COVID-19 disease.

The questionnaire is a broadly used and practical tool for gathering survey data, delivering organized, frequently numerical data, being able to be applied without the presence of the researcher, and often being relatively straightforward to analyze (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009; Wilson & McLean, 1994). In addition, it is noted that the questionnaire offers a very effective means for researchers to collect a great deal of data in a short period at a low cost (McKay, 2006).

In this study, a three-section questionnaire was adapted and designed through a detailed search in the literature. In accordance with the research questions, four main sections emerged. At the beginning of the questionnaire, the information consisting of the aim of the research and for what reasons the data would be used was presented with a consent form that showed voluntarily participating in the study. In the first section, demographic information of the participants was gathered. In the second section, *Engagement and Comfort with Technology*, ten questions were developed based on Weerakanto's (2019) study with necessary permission considering teachers' TPACK knowledge (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge). In the third section, which is *Experiences in Online Learning Practices during the COVID-19 Outbreak*, 22 questions were adapted and reformulated based on Korkmaz and Toroman's (2020) study with necessary permission aiming at giving insights into the strengths and the weaknesses of distance online education and teachers' experiences during the rapid rise of the COVID-19 disease. In the last section, *The EBA/EIN Platform and Online Teaching*, 16 questions were developed based on Kurnaz's (2020) thesis study with the necessary permission to evaluate how helpful and valuable the platform was during the noted

pandemic. At the end of the questionnaire, an open-ended question was asked to gather further comments and suggestions (see Appendix 1).

As some of the items were adapted and a new questionnaire was generated through the related studies in the literature, the questionnaire scale was introduced to evaluation and inquisition of two statisticians and three experts who work as professors at language education and teaching departments in different universities. Experts were invited to present their comments on whether the items in the questionnaire fulfill the requirements of the part to which they belonged. Some items were reformulated, changed, revised, or removed in accordance with the experts' opinions and suggestions.

When the final version of the questionnaire was decided after a detailed and attentive work, a pilot study was conducted with a representative sample of the population. A pilot study has various benefits, primarily to enhance the reliability, validity, and feasibility of the questionnaire (Morrison 1993; Oppenheim 1992; Wilson & McLean 1994, p.47 as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002, p. 341):

- to check the clarity of the questionnaire items, instructions, and layout
- to eliminate ambiguities or difficulties in wording
- to gain feedback on the type of question and its format (e.g., rating scale, multiple-choice, open, closed, etc.)
- to identify omissions, redundant and irrelevant items

The number of participants in the pilot study was fifteen EFL teachers of MoNE except for the study sample in order to ascertain how properly research questions were addressed in the questionnaire. Regarding the participants' opinions and suggestions, necessary adjustments were made. Reversed items are added into the sections in order to restrain the response bias since reversed items are known as any individual tendency to answer the questions independently from the basis of the item (Suárez Álvarez et al., 2018). Also, instructions are added into each section to present evident confusion. Obligatory and optional items were decided and redesigned to offer an easy-to-complete questionnaire. Finally, when all the arrangements were made, Cronbach's Alpha value which refers to a test reliability technique was calculated and found as .77. Therefore, the final version of the questionnaire was developed digitally as google forms because of the ongoing pandemic to have an error-free, easily comprehensible, consistent, and reliable

tool to collect the targeted data. A five-point scale was designed as *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neutral*, *agree*, and *strongly agree*. A number from 1 to 5 for each answer was respectively allocated. In conclusion, the questionnaire included 48 Likert-scale items and a final open-ended question for further comments.

Also, a part of the data and the findings gathered through the piloting study was presented at an international conference.

3.3.2. Semi-structured Interview

An interview is considered the most significant data collection technique in qualitative research. It is a significant way for researchers to explore what the participant has in mind, what s/he thinks, or how s/he feels about something (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Interviews can serve various aims, and questions can be organized to find out different reasons. To illustrate, in this research, semi-structured interview questions were originated to obtain information about teachers' *opinions* and *attitudes* about online language teaching (McKay, 2006, p. 51). In qualitative research, semi-structured interviews are frequently best implemented toward the end of the study for obtaining information and helping to identify variables and relationships (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Kvale (2008) indicated some essential characteristic of research interviews such as engaging, comprehending, and clarifying main factors in the life of the world of the participant, using a shared language to collect and comprehend the qualitative data, emphasizing specific perspectives and themes directly and having a positive attitude and enriching experience for the participants. Therefore, the interviewer as a researcher attempts to pursue in-depth information over the subject. Also, adding follow-up questions to particular responses implicated in the questionnaire to further inquiry and delving into broader understanding.

Also, semi-structured interviews are designed as verbal interchanges that elicit information from the participant through questions asked by an interviewee (Longhurst, 2003). The readily-prepared questions in this type of interview are designated to offer guidance, and when it is necessitated, additional questions can be asked for more clarification and elaboration on the topic.

In this research, semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 2) were conducted to gather in-depth data from 12 EFL teachers (eight females and four males) who participated in the questionnaire and volunteered to participate in the interview. The

participant EFL teachers for the interview were chosen by purposive sampling since the researcher determined to identify teachers' distinct ideas from different teaching levels. For this reason, four primary school, four secondary school, and four high-school EFL teachers were selected to be interviewed in this study. In the interview, ten questions were developed in advance after the analysis of the quantitative data. The items in the interview were designed with the guidance of academicians and experts.

When the final questions were determined, and sampling was generated, the researcher reached the participants via telephone. Before conducting the interview, the researcher clarified the relevant terms in detail and clarified that the interviewers could feel comfortable asking any further questions during the interview. Although all the participants were English teachers and had enough proficiency in answering all the questions in English, the interview was conducted in Turkish, which was the mother tongue of all the participants. Therefore, it was perceived that the participants would feel more relaxed to describe their ideas in their mother language. To collect qualitative data, digital tools and online meetings were set up and scheduled according to the most appropriate time for the participants and the researcher. The researcher conducted the interview using different digital channels such as *Zoom*, *Google Meet*, *Hang Out,* or phone calls according to the participants' choice. The interviews were recorded for the descriptive analysis after taking the consent of all the participants, and each of the interviews nearly lasted 25-30 minutes.

3.4. Participants and Sampling

Participants of the quantitative phase of the study were EFL teachers of MoNE who actively work at different schools in Kahramanmaraş and teach English for different proficiency levels. Therefore, the data were collected in the 2020-2021 education year. The study population is composed of 806 who work in the primary, secondary, and high schools in the city center and its districts. The data indicating the total number of the EFL teachers who work in Kahramanmaraş was obtained from the Provincial Directorate for National Education through official channels via e-mail (see Appendix 3). Therefore, 121 participants voluntarily took part in the research by completing the online questionnaire prepared via the digital Google Forms platform after the official administrators took the necessary permission.

While selecting the participants of the quantitative phase of the research, a convenience sampling method was used. The convenience sampling method is one of the non-probability sampling techniques, and it eases the process of implementing to a large group in a specific period of time (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002; Dörnyei, 2007; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Thus, the study reached the EFL teachers who were willingly available to attain the research. Additionally, 12 EFL teacher participants were selected for the qualitative phase of the study through purposive sampling, which is also called judgment sampling, including a deliberate selection of the participants in terms of some qualities the participants possess. Purposive sampling is a nonrandom technique that lets the researcher determine what is desired to be known and reach particular people who will better be able to help the study (Bernard, 2002; Dörnyei, 2007; Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). In this regard, in order to draw a better picture in the results and have an equally distributed understanding, the researcher reached four primary schools EFL teachers, four secondary school EFL teachers, and four high school EFL teachers who were volunteered to participate in the study.

The frequency (f) and percentage (%) statistical distribution of the participants of the quantitative phase of the study demographic information variables such as gender, age, educational status, teaching levels, year(s) of job experience, and weekly teaching hours are shown in Table 5 presented below.

Table 5.

Participant EFL Teachers' Profile of the Study

Variable	Group	*f*	%
Gender	Male	33	27,3
	Female	88	72.7
Age	21-25	34	28,1
	26-30	25	20,7
	31-35	18	14,9
	36-40	27	22,3
	41-45	10	8,3
	46+	7	5,8
Educational Status	Bachelor's degree	111	91,7
	Master degree	8	6,6
	Doctoral degree	2	1,7
Years of experience	1-5	58	47,9
	6-10	19	15,7
	11-15	21	17,4
	16-20	13	10,7
	21+	10	8,3
Teaching level	Primary	12	9,9
	Secondary	41	33,9
	High school	68	56,2
Weekly teaching hour	15	5	4,1
	16-20	15	12,4
	21-25	39	32,2
	26-30	58	47,9
	31+	4	3,3

The Gender: Based on the figures in Table 5, the sample consisted of mainly females (n=88; 72.7%), and there were also males with twenty-seven percent (n=33; 27.3%) of all the participants who completed the online questionnaire.

Age: EFL teacher participants' age distribution revealed that most participants were between the 21-25 age group (n=34; 28.1%) who had just started the teaching profession. Secondly, the 36- 40 age group (n=27; 22.3%) followed the first group.

Educational Status: A great majority of the participants had bachelor's degrees (n=111; 91.7%). Only six percent of teachers had a master's degree (n=8; 6.6%), whereas only two participants had a doctoral degree (n=2; 1.7%).

Total Teaching Experience: Almost half of the sample's total teaching experience was between 1-5 year(s) group (n=58; 47.9%). Secondly, the 11-15 years of experience group (n=21; 17.4%) followed the first group. Finally, only ten percent of the participants experienced above the twenty years (n=10; 8.3%).

Teaching Level: The majority of EFL teacher participants teach to high school students (n=68; 56.2%). Forty-one EFL teacher participants teach for middle school students (n=41; 33.9%), and only twelve teachers work at primary schools (n=12; 9.9%).

Weekly Teaching Hour: The vast majority of EFL teacher participants taught English for 26-30 hours in a week (n=58; 47.9%). Secondly, thirty-two percent of the participants taught 21-25 hours in a week (n=39; 32.2%). Finally, only four percent of EFL teacher participants taught English 15 hours a week (n=5; 4.1%).

3.5. Data Collection Procedure and Setting

The quantitative phase of the study was carried out in the 2020-2021 academic year in Kahramanmaraş. After the necessary permissions were obtained from the Ethical Committee of Çukurova University (see Appendix 4) and MoNE in the province of Kahramanmaraş (Appendix 5), the researcher, started to collect the quantitative data in the first place. As of March, the questionnaire was formed as Google Forms to contact the participants quickly. The questionnaire link was shared on various digital platforms as possible, such as on WhatsApp groups, Facebook groups, Instagram, and e-mails. Teachers and administers were encouraged to support the study by attending the questionnaire. Also, in the first place, participants were asked to accept the study by responding positively to the consent form at the beginning of the online questionnaire after having given sufficient information about the study. At the end of the process, 121 (88 females and 33 males) EFL teachers participated in the study.

Similarly, semi-structured interviews had been done by utilizing digital platforms because of the ongoing epidemic. After deciding the sample, the researcher reached the volunteered participants, the number of which was 12, by having phone calls or through text messages to schedule the interview. The participants were asked about how to conduct interviews. Some of them preferred the Zoom platform with which they were familiar; some selected Google Meets or Hang Out, while some chose to do through phone calls. According to the preferences of the participants, and interviewing schedule was planned. First, the researcher introduced the questions and the research's aims. Then,

the interviews were recorded for the descriptive analysis after taking the consent of all the participants, and each of the interviews nearly lasted 25-30 minutes. The interviews were carried out individually, and the whole process was recorded with the permission of the participants to be transcribed later.

3.6. Data Analysis

The data collected from the participants were taken from Google Forms in Excel format, and they were transferred to the SPSS 25.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). In the first place, the appropriateness and missing data were checked. It was seen that all the participants responded to the online questionnaires thoroughly. To analyze the data, descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, etc.) were taken into account, and the data were visualized by using tables.

In the analysis of the questionnaire to be used in this research, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was employed to examine the construct validity in this study since The broad purpose of factor analysis is to sum up, the data so that paradigms and associations can be readily elucidated and understood and hence, it facilitates to identify *constructs* and *concepts* (Yong & Pearce, 2013, p.79). Before conducting EFA, Kaiser Meyer Olkin's (KMO) sampling adequacy value and the significance value of Bartlett's test of sphericity in order to decide the suitability of the data for factor analysis were needed to be examined. If the KMO value is greater than .50, it denotes that each variable in the scale can intensively affect other variables (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005). As a result of the analysis conducted in this research, the KMO sampling adequacy value was found as (.708), and Bartlett's test of sphericity result was also computed significant ($\chi 2$= 3209,376, sd= 1081; $p<.01$).

After EFA values were completed, the SPSS 25.0 and Excel software were employed to analyze the downloaded research data through Google Forms. Frequency (f), arithmetic mean (X), percentage (%), and standard deviation (sd) values were utilized for the descriptive analysis. In addition, the skewness and kurtosis values were computed to test that the scale scores complete the assumption of normality. It was observed that the scores acquired from the scale were normally distributed.

When the necessary values were found, the independent samples t-tests were employed to examine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the sub-dimensions of the scale, including the scores of the gender variable. Also, one-way

analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to observe whether the mean scores acquired from the scale differed statistically significantly according to age, educational status, year(s) of teaching experience, teaching level, and weekly teaching hours.

For the analysis of semi-structured interviews to be used in the qualitative phase of the study, thematic analysis was utilized in an attempt to describe, interpret and organize the data obtained from the interviews. Thematic analysis is regarded as an independent qualitative descriptive analyzing technique which mainly defines as "a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). The result of semi-structured interviews was coded thorough thematic analysis. Using thematic analysis presents a possibility to determine precisely the relationships between concepts and to connect these various notions and ideas of the learners and compare those with the data that has been collected (Alhojailan, 2012). In this regard, the findings were truly expressed and systematically examined, and these descriptions were explained by identifying the content stated by the interviewees. In line with these results, some conclusions were reached based on emerging themes and sub-themes. In this research, the six-step framework described by Braun and Clark (2006) was adopted. These steps were described in Table 6.

Table 6.

Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase	**Description of the process**
1. Familiarizing self with the data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the transcripts.
2. Generating initial codes:	Arranging and coding the data in a systematic way across the whole data set
3. Searching for themes:	Assembling the codes into possible themes.
4. Reviewing themes:	Validating the themes in relation to the codes and the whole data set and organizing a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Analyzing the core of each theme and explaining the prime aims of them by defining clear terms and names for each of them.
6. Producing the report:	Creating a final remark for the analysis. Choosing interesting and important examples and developing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Note. Adopted from Braun & Clark (2006, p. 87)

With the consent of the participants, the audio recordings of interviews were employed not to miss any valuable research data. When all of the interview meetings

were completed, the interview data were transcribed using the *Dictation.io* program, an online platform for transcribing the audio material into written forms. Afterward, the six-step framework of Braun and Clark (2006) disclosed above was followed. First, the transcribed texts were extensively read in order to familiarize the data. Then, the coding procedure was conducted by determining the most repeated utterances by the participants. Finally, the coded data were analyzed to decide themes and sub-themes regarding the similarities and differences between the participants' words, sentences, expressions, and phrases. As for the results, the results of the qualitative data were presented in tables and discussed in detail.

3.7. Reliability and Validity

Quantitative data was gathered through an online Likert-scale questionnaire developed by using Google Forms digital platform to create surveys. The adapted and designed questionnaire consisted of four main sections in consideration of the research questions. The first part of the questionnaire aims to identify the demographic information of the participants. In the second section, the digital literacy of EFL teachers of MoNE was aimed to be recognized with ten questions. The purpose of the third section was to describe the experiences of EFL teachers of MoNE and the challenges they had encountered through the COVID-19 outbreak. With this aim, twenty-two questions were administrated. Finally, fifteen questions were adapted in the last section to discover the efficacy of the EBA/EIN platform. After an elaborated literature review, the questionnaire was designed, and 48 questions were adapted in the final version.

For this reason, the researcher followed several steps in ensuring the reliability and validity of the research. For the validity of the study, first, the items were submitted to ensure content validity by consulting field experts in the area and then the construct validity. Finally, the latest version of the questionnaire was submitted to ensure face validity. It was checked the Cronbach Alpha value for each dimension and the whole scale in the first place. Cronbach alpha values were computed as .86 for the first dimension, .76 for the second dimension, .91 for the third dimension, and .79 for the entire test, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7.

Cronbach Alpha Value for the Each Dimension and the Entire Scale

Components	**Cronbach Alpha Value**
First Dimension	.86
Second Dimension	.76
Third Dimension	.91
The entire test	.77

Content validity examines whether the questionnaire or scale sufficiently involves the whole or the parts of the content (Balcı & Ahi, 2015). In order to ensure content validity, obtaining expert ideas on the content and controlling the format of the scale can be regarded as among the best methods (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Through a detailed literature review, the items were developed to represent the content. When the final version was created, these items were introduced to the experts in English teaching and statistics. After their examinations, opinions, and suggestions, some items in the scale that were regarded as inappropriate, complicated, and out of scope were eliminated and reorganized. Also, an expert opinion was obtained to determine whether the items in the scale are relevant to the research subject for face validity. Construct validity was confirmed through exploratory factor analysis. As a result of factor analysis, some items were also removed from the scale, and the ultimate reliability of the scale was calculated. Eventually, a 48-item scale was developed. Also, in the study's qualitative phase analysis, internal validity is referred to as credibility and external validity to transferability. According to McKay (2006), the credibility or internal validity of the research can be achieved with a careful recording and analyzing process for all of the data obtained and representing it in a fair and unbiased manner. Also, member checking or consulting topics in the study to reckon the researcher's interpretation of the data (McKay, 2006). Therefore, the researcher provided the internal and external validity by ensuring these suggested points by asking a colleague to check the emerged themes and codes.

3.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methodology adopted, data collection tools employed, and data collection and analysis procedures comprehensively. In *Figure 13*, a summary of the chapter is given.

Research Design

Explanatory Sequential Mixed-method Research Design

Setting

Kahramanmaraş, State schools of MoNE

Participants

Quantitative Phase of the Study - 121 EFL teachers of MoNE	Qualitative Phase of the Study – 12 EFL teachers of MoNE

Data Collection

Online Likert-scale questionnaires developed through Google Forms	Semi-structured interviews conducted via digital platforms

Validity and Reliability

Opinions of Field Experts	Factor Analysis	Cronbach's Alpha	Member-checking

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics	Independent Samples T-tests	One-way ANOVA

Figure 13. Summary of the Methodology

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

The primary purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data gathered through an online questionnaire and semi-structured interview in figures and tables. Firstly, the questionnaire findings are elucidated based on the variables analyzed through *SPSS 25.0* and *Microsoft Excel*. Then the findings of semi-structured interviews are examined regarding emerging themes and codes, which were determined through thematic analysis. Finally, the interviews were transcribed with *the Dictation.io* program, a free digital software tool to transform audio files into written documents.

4.2. The Analysis and Findings of the Questionnaire

Quantitative data was gathered through an online Likert-scale questionnaire which was developed by using Google Forms digital platform. The adapted and designed questionnaire consisted of four main dimensions in consideration to the research questions. The first dimension of the questionnaire aims to identify the demographic information of the participants. In the second dimension, the digital literacy of EFL teachers of MoNE was aimed to be recognized with ten questions. The purpose of the third dimension was to describe the experiences of EFL teachers of MoNE and the challenges they had encountered through the COVID-19 outbreak while teaching online. With this aim, twenty-two questions were administrated. Finally, fifteen questions were adapted in the last dimension to discover the EBA/EIN platform efficacy. After a detailed literature review, the questionnaire was designed 48 questions were adapted in the final version after conducting a pilot study and obtaining the opinions of statistical and language experts. For this reason, firstly, the Cronbach alpha value and the factor analysis of the questionnaire were determined both for each dimension and the entire test to ensure reliability and the validity of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was analyzed based on different variables. The result of exploratory factor analysis, the results of independent *t*-tests, and one-way analysis of

variance (ANOVA) tests used to analyze the quantitative data will be presented in the following parts.

4.2.1. Exploratory Factor Analysis

The purpose of this study is to explore the digital literacy of EFL teachers and their experiences and perceptions of using the EBA/EIN platform during the COVID-19 outbreak. Therefore, the researcher developed a Likert-scale questionnaire because of the limited literature on the unprecedented pandemic disease and its effects on life. Therefore, an *exploratory factor analysis* (EFA) technique was considered suitable to implement for this study. An exploratory factor analysis technique is regarded as appropriate when items with weak factor loadings on a factor that intensively affects other items considered to measure the same thing are probably deprived measures of the intended construct (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2011). The broad purpose of factor analysis is to sum up the data so that paradigms and associations can be readily elucidated and understood, and hence, it facilitates the identification of *constructs* and *concepts* (Yong & Pearce, 2013, p. 79). Also, when the implementation of EFA is determined, the factor analysis model is needed to be decided as well. For this study, the *common factor model*, which is a framework for comprehending or presenting the structure of correlations among observed scores on a set of measures, is preferred (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2011; Thurstone, 1947).

Forty-eight items of the scale designed for EFL teachers' experiences during the COVID-19 outbreak were subjected to the analysis of the common factor model using SPSS 25.0. "Common factor model is formally defined as an unobservable construct that exerts linear influences on more than one measured variable in a battery. It is referred to as *common* because it is common to more than one measured variable." (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2011, p. 6). A graphical representation of the common factor model, for example involving two orthogonal common factors and six measured variables, is given in Figure 13 on the next page.

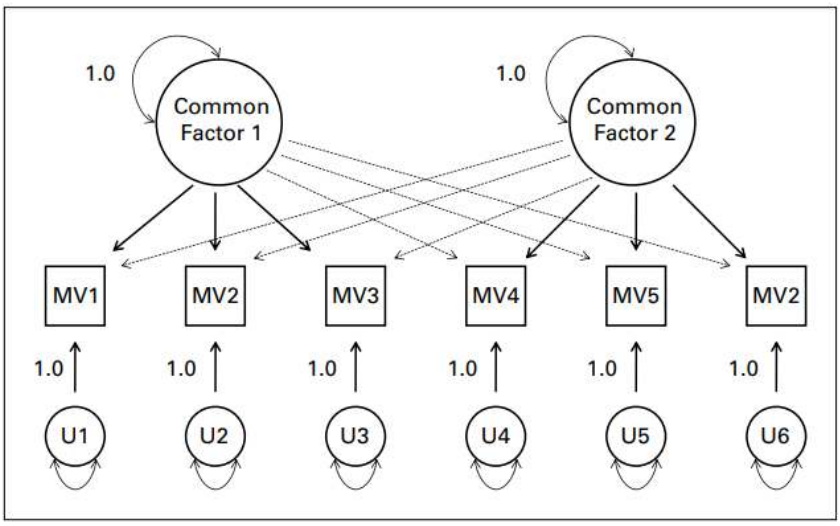


Figure 13. Graphical representation of the common factor model for an example involving two orthogonal common factors and six measured variables

Note. Adapted from Fabrigar & Wegener (2011, p.6)

Prior to conducting the factor analysis, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was evaluated with Kaiser Meyer Olkin's (KMO) sampling adequacy value and the significance value of Bartlett's test of sphericity. When the KMO value is more significant than .50, it refers that each variable in the scale can presume other variables (Field, 2013). In Table 8, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .70, which exceeded the suggested .50 value, and the Barlett Test reached statistical significance (p = .000) that less than 0.05 values of the significance level indicate that factor analysis is helpful for the data is displayed.

Table 8.

KMO and Barlett's Test Value

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,708
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3209,376
	df	1081
	Sig.	,000

Also, the eigenvalues and variances of the factors acquired as a result of EFA are given in Table 9 on the next page.

Table 9.

Eigenvalues, Percentages of Variance, and Cumulative Percentages for Factors of the Factors

Factors	**Factor Eigenvalue**	**Percentage of Variance (%)**	**Cumulative %**
F 1	4,31	43,70	43,70
F 2	8,91	30,63	74,34
F 3	2,77	25,65	85,60

When Table 9 is identified, it is noted that the scale consisting of three dimensions explains the eigenvalue of the factors in the first column as Kaiser states that eigenvalues for each factor extracted need to be higher than one (1960). In the second column, the percentage of variance (%) can be seen as indicating the variance explained by each factor. Finally, in the last column, cumulative % indicates the percentages of the total variance explained by the factors that need to be greater than 60% (Hair et al., 1998). In this respect, the total variance was found as 85,6%, and the contribution of the factors to the total variance was 30.6% and 25.6%, respectively. *Figure 14* revealed a *scree test* for the dimensions. The interpretation of the components determined varimax rotation. As a result of the rotation, items loaded with a close value difference, which is less than .1 and loaded in multiple factors, were tested.

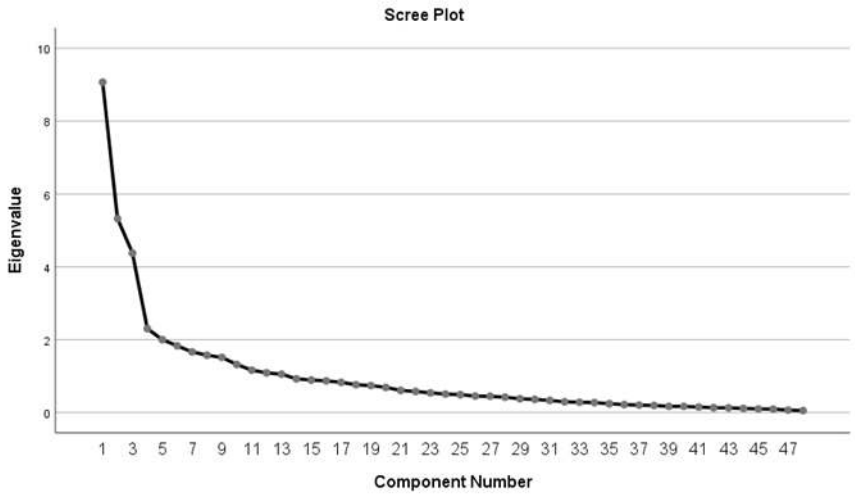


Figure 14

Scree Test for the Dimensions

Moreover, the distribution of factor loadings of the scale is given in Table 10.

Table 10.

Item Factor Loads After Rotation and Scale Items of the Dimensions

Dimension	Item Number	1st Dimension	2nd Dimension	3rd Dimension
Digital literacy of EFL teachers	dt4	,758		
	dt8	,751		
	dt10	,748		
	dt1	,711		
	dt7	,704		
	dt9	,684		
	dt3	,671		
	dt6	,641		
	dt5	,579		
	dt2	,577		
Experiences of EFL teachers during the COVID-19 outbreak	cv22		,636	
	cv7		,635	
	cv9		,616	
	cv10		,613	
	cv4		,603	
	cv21		,591	
	cv16		,537	
	cv20		,515	
	cv19		,486	
	cv8		,477	
	cv11		,457	
	cv13		,501	
	cv14		,435	
	cv12		,428	
	cv5		,421	
	cv17		,409	
	cv2		,406	
	cv3		,401	
	cv6		,298	
	cv18		,286	
	cv1		,278	
	cv15		,262	
Perceptions of EBA/EIN Platform	eb4			,833
	eb9			,802
	eb5			,794
	eb11			,781
	eb3			,780
	eb15			,778
	eb10			,754
	eb14			,733
	eb16			,731
	eb13			,723
	eb2			,709
	eb6			,669
	eb12			,460
	eb1			,542
	eb8			,333
	eb7			,313

As it is examined in Table 10 the factor loadings of the items in the first dimension vary between .57 and .75, and the factor loadings of the second dimension items vary between .26 and .63. The items that are in the third dimension range from .31 to .83. Alpha internal consistency coefficients of each dimension were calculated to test the reliability of the scale. Consequently, the alpha internal consistency coefficients were found for the first, second, and third dimensions are .86, .76, and .91. These findings refer that the questionnaire scale is reliable.

4.2.2. Descriptive Statistics for the Questionnaire

The current study aims to gain insights into the experiences of EFL teachers throughout the COVID-19 process and to present the strengths and weaknesses of the process in terms of teaching English online, the usage level of digital tools, and to explore and evaluate the efficiency of the urgency policies developed by MoNE and the EBA/EIN platform. Through exploratory factor analysis, teachers' perceptions were identified. Additionally, descriptive statistics of the dimensions to be included in the questionnaire were explained in detail, and the frequencies, percentages, item means, and standard deviations of the teachers' responses for each dimension are presented.

4.2.2.1. Descriptive Statistics of the First Dimension: Digital Literacy of EFL Teachers

The main goal of the first dimension is to examine the digital literacy of EFL teachers of MoNE who work in Kahramanmaraş at different levels regarding the first research question. The research question explores how efficiently EFL teachers use digital tools, their perceptions of online English teaching, how competently they develop teaching materials by using digital platforms, and how comfortable they are with adapting technological tools to their language classes in online teaching. The descriptive statistics of the first dimension are given in Table 11.

Table 11.

Descriptive Statistics for Items in Digital Literacy Dimension (N=121)

ITEMS		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	M	SD
1.	I feel competent in using digital technologies for teaching.	3	4	18	43	53	121	4,14	,96
		2,5%	3,3%	14,9%	35,5%	43,8%	100%		
2.	I collaborate with my colleagues to design technology-enhanced language teaching activities.	4	11	36	30	40	121	3,75	1,11
		3,3%	9,1%	29,8%	24,8%	33,1%	100%		
3.	I am interested in learning and reading more about technology-enhanced language teaching.	0	4	19	31	67	121	4,30	,86
		0%	3,3%	15,7%	25,6%	55,4%	100%		
4.	I feel competent about the use of technology to increase learners' motivation and enthusiasm.	2	1	16	40	62	121	4,31	,85
		1,7%	0,8%	13,2%	33,1%	51,2%	100%		
5.	I prefer to receive training and support for the use of technology in my lessons.	4	4	15	35	63	121	4,23	1,01
		3,3%	3,3%	12,4%	28,9%	52,1%	100%		
6.	I took related courses to technology-enhanced language teaching.	18	11	16	36	40	121	3,50	1,41
		14,9%	9,1%	13,2%	29,8%	33,1%	100%		
7.	I feel competent in using digital technologies for fun.	2	4	21	29	65	121	4,24	,96
		1,7%	3,3%	17,4%	24,0%	53,7%	100%		
8.	I feel competent in choosing appropriate digital tools to support teaching.	0	3	14	49	55	121	4,28	,76
		0%	2,5%	11,6%	40,5%	45,5%	100%		
9.	I feel competent about designing innovative teaching materials with digital technologies.	2	12	30	39	38	121	3,81	1,04
		1,7%	9,9%	24,8%	32,2%	31,4%	100%		
10.	I can adapt the use of technologies to different teaching activities.	0	6	21	45	49	121	4,13	,87
		0%	5,0%	17,4%	37,2%	40,5%	100%		
								4.07	
								Average mean	

There were ten items in this section of the questionnaire to identify the relationship of EFL teachers with technology usage and online teaching. The alpha coefficient of items is .86, which is a "Good" value (George & Mallery, 2002, p.231).
As seen in Table 11, the mean values of the items ranged between 3.50 and 4.31, which the maximum mean was found 4.31 for the first dimension, whereas the minimum mean was found as 3.50. The item with the minimum mean value was that "I took related courses to technology-enhanced language teaching." (M=3.50, SD=1.41). This can be inferred as EFL teachers who participated in the study were not trained for technology-enhanced language teaching. The item with the maximum mean value was that "I feel competent about the use of technology to increase learners' motivation and enthusiasm." (M=4.31, SD=.85). It is perceived from this item that most teachers feel competent about the use of technology to increase learners' motivation and enthusiasm. However, the average mean was 4.07. Therefore, it can be inferred as most of the respondents "Agreed" on the skills stated in items.

4.2.2.2. Descriptive Statistics of the Second Dimension: Experiences in Online Teaching Practices during the COVID-19 Outbreak

The purpose of the items in the second dimension is to provide insights into the experiences and practices of EFL teachers during the COVID-19 outbreak. This section mainly focuses on the research question that strives to identify the burdens and advantages of distance online teaching, especially during such a sudden and forced teaching process. It aims to explore what the EFL teachers' experiences while teaching online are, how they overcome challenges, how assessment and feedback are taken place in online teaching, how efficient online teaching is for teaching skills, and the overall perceptions of this sudden shift in teaching are. The descriptive statistics of the second dimension are given in Table 12.

Table 12.

Descriptive Statistics for Items in Experiences and Practices during the COVID-19 Outbreak Dimension (N=121)

ITEMS		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	M	SD
1.	The transition/shift to online learning was too rapid.	5 4,1	6 5,0	25 20,7	37 30,6	48 39,7	121 100%	3,96	1,08
2.	The education system was not prepared enough for online education practices.	4 3,3	6 5,0	26 21,5	34 28,1	51 42,1	121 100%	4,00	1,06
3.	The infrastructure required for online learning was not ready.	2 1,7	5 4,1	29 24,0	36 29,8	49 40,5	121 100%	4,03	0,98
4.	I had a lack of experience in preparing e-learning content.	18 14,9	26 21,5	35 28,9	25 20,7	17 14,0	121 100%	2,97	1,26
5.	I had internet connection problems.	33 27,3	21 17,4	22 18,2	22 18,2	23 19,0	121 100%	2,84	1,48
6.	Students had internet connection problems.	1 0,8	1 0,8	16 13,2	19 15,7	84 69,4	121 100%	4,52	0,81
7.	I could not adapt to online teaching practices.	41 33,9	41 33,9	22 18,2	12 9,9	5 4,1	121 100%	2,16	1,12
8.	I am not experienced in using information and communication technologies.	38 31,4	35 28,9	27 22,3	17 14,0	4 3,3	121 100%	2,28	1,15
9.	Reliable assessment could not be made in the online education environment.	7 5,8	11 9,1	33 27,3	26 21,5	44 36,4	121 100%	3,73	1,20
10.	I felt a lack of knowledge on evaluating the learners' knowledge and skills in the online education environment.	9 7,4	13 10,7	41 33,9	37 30,6	21 17,4	121 100%	3,39	1,12
11.	Providing constructive feedback to my students was easier in online lessons.	19 15,7	29 24,0	37 30,6	25 20,7	11 9,1	121 100%	2,83	1,19
12.	Online education is not efficient in teaching skills such as listening, reading, writing, or speaking.	8 6,6,	19 15,7	31 25,6	31 25,6	32 26,4	121 100%	3,49	1,22
13.	In online education, it is difficult to teach according to the individual interests and abilities of the students.	5 4,1	12 9,9	25 20,7	30 24,8	49 40,5	121 100%	3,87	1,17
14.	It was challenging to notice common students' understandings and	4 3,3	7 5,8	24 19,8	47 38,8	39 32,2	121 100%	3,90	1,02

	misconceptions in online lessons.								
15.	The duration of the course in online education was too short.	20 16,5	31 25,6	24 19,8	20 15,5	26 21,5	121 100%	3,00	1,39
16.	Student motivation in online education is lower compared to face-to-face classes.	5 4,1	9 7,4	25 20,7	18 14,9	64 52,9	121 100%	4,04	1,18
17.	The school administrators showed positive attitudes and behaviors towards teachers during the online teaching process.	4 3,3	9 7,4	33 27,3	36 29,8	39 32,2	121 100%	3,80	1,07
18.	The time schedule of the online sessions (teaching hours) was not suitable.	14 11,6	18 14,9	26 21,5	31 25,6	32 26,4	121 100%	3,40	1,33
19.	The number of the online sessions was too many.	14 11,6	12 9,9	40 33,1	29 24,0	26 21,5	121 100%	3,33	1,2
20.	I didn't have a suitable environment at home for the online teaching.	45 37,2	30 24,8	18 14,9	17 14,0	11 9,1	121 100%	2,33	1,34
21.	Online lectures created extra stress on teachers.	12 9,9	9 7,4	16 13,2	33 27,3	51 42,1	121 100%	3,84	1,31
22.	I felt insecure and had some security problems while teaching online.	31 25,6	27 22,3	26 21,5	20 16,5	17 14,0	121 100%	2,71	1,38
								Average mean 3,38	

There were 22 items in this section of the questionnaire to identify the experiences and practices of EFL teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The alpha coefficient of items is .76, which is a "Good and Acceptable" value (George & Mallery, 2002, p.231). As seen in Table 12, the mean values of the items ranged between 2.16 and 4.52, which the maximum mean was found 4.52 for the second dimension, whereas the minimum mean was found as 2.16. The item with the minimum mean value was that "I could not adapt to online teaching practices." (M=2.16, SD=1.12). This can be inferred as EFL teachers who participated in the study could not adapt to the online teaching practices, which were sudden. The item with the maximum mean value was that "Students had internet connection problems." (M=4.52, SD=.81). It is perceived from this item that most of the teachers agreed upon students' existing internet connection-related problems. However, the average mean was 3.38. Therefore, it can be inferred as most of the respondents "Agreed" on the skills stated in items.

4.2.2.3. Descriptive Statistics of the Second Dimension: Evaluation of the EBA/EIN Platform

The main goal of the items in the third dimension is to discover the practices of EFL teachers on the EBA/EIN platform, which is the national infrastructure of MoNE. This dimension primarily concentrates on the usage of the EIN for language teaching, how competently, friendly and helpful the platform was in terms of the efficiency of online language classes, developing and finding teaching materials, reaching and giving feedback to students. The descriptive statistics of the second dimension are given in Table 13.

Table 13. *Descriptive Statistics for Items in the Evaluation of the EBA/EIN Platform (N=121)*

ITEMS		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	M	SD
1.	The EBA platform is easy to use for teachers.	5 4,1	3 2,5	22 18,2	29 24,0	62 51,2	121 100%	4,15	1,07
2.	The EBA platform is a good component of teaching.	5 4,1	11 9,1	39 32,2	30 24,8	36 29,8	121 100%	3,66	1,12
3.	The EBA platform helps me to gain time for online classes.	12 9,9	18 14,9	35 28,9	26 21,5	30 24,8	121 100%	3,36	1,27
4.	The EBA platform increased teacher-student interaction.	15 12,4	26 21,5	27 22,3	30 24,8	23 19,0	121 100%	3,16	1,30
5.	The EBA platform helped me to increase student-student interaction.	24 19,8	30 24,8	32 26,4	19 15,7	16 13,2	121 100%	2,77	1,30
6.	The EBA platform provided facilities for pair and group work in online classes.	25 20,7	29 24,0	32 26,4	20 16,5	15 12,4	121 100%	2,76	1,29
7.	The EBA platform requires practical knowledge to use it.	7 5,8	9 7,4	24 19,8	47 38,8	34 28,1	121 100%	3,76	1,11
8.	I participated in online seminars and training to use the EBA platform.	20 16,5	21 17,4	15 12,4	35 28,9	30 24,8	121 100%	3,23	1,43
9.	The EBA platform made me a more effective teacher.	19 15,7	26 21,5	35 28,9	23 19,0	18 14,9	121 100%	2,95	1,28
10.	I could find various materials in the EBA platform.	15 12,4	15 12,4	37 30,6	35 28,9	19 15,7	121 100%	3,23	1,22
11.	The EBA platform offers interactive educational content for learners (games, activities, etc.).	19 15,7	20 16,5	26 21,5	40 33,1	16 13,2	121 100%	3,11	1,28
12.	I have concerns to utilize the EBA platform appropriately.	17 14,0	9 7,4	39 32,2	42 34,7	14 11,6	121 100%	3,22	1,18
13.	The EBA platform provided me electronic support when I got confused.	17 14,0	12 9,9	40 33,1	39 32,2	13 10,7	121 100%	3,15	1,18
14.	The EBA platform contributes to the development and quality of education.	10 8,3	12 9,9	35 28,9	44 36,4	20 16,5	121 100%	3,42	1,13
15.	The EBA platform also consists of numerous sources for learners in the development of language skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing).	18 14,9	26 21,5	23 19,0	35 28,9	19 15,7	121 100%	3,09	1,31
16.	I suggest maintaining the usage of the EBA platform after the outbreak.	9 7,4	21 17,4	20 16,5	35 28,9	36 29,8	121 100%	3,56	1,28
								Average mean 3.29	

There were 16 items in this section of the questionnaire to identify the experiences and practices of EFL teachers on the EBA/EIN platform and the usefulness of the infrastructure, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The alpha coefficient of items is .91, which is an "Excellent" value (George & Mallery, 2002, p.231).

As seen in Table 13, the mean values of the items ranged between 2.76 and 4.15, that the maximum mean was found 4.15 for the second dimension, whereas the minimum mean was found as 2.76. The item with the minimum mean value was that "The EBA platform provided facilities for pair and group work in online classes." (M=2.76, SD=1.29). This can be inferred as EFL teachers who participated in the study thought that the EBA platform did not mostly provide pair and group work facilities in online classes. The item with the maximum mean value was that "The EBA platform is easy to use for teachers." (M=4.15, SD=1.07). It is perceived from this item that most of the teachers agreed upon that the platform was easy to use. However, the average mean was 3.29. Therefore, it can be inferred as most of the respondents "Agreed" on the skills stated in items.

4.2.3. Independent Samples T-Tests Results According to Gender

The independent samples *t*-tests' findings were conducted to examine whether the scores attained from the sub-dimensions of the scale diverge considerably according to the gender variable are presented in Table 14.

Table 14.

T-Test Results According to Gender

	Gender	**N**	**X**	**S**
Factor 1	Male	33	3,9545	0,84450
	Female	88	4,1318	0,59103
Factor 2	Male	33	3,3981	0,50718
	Female	88	3,3843	0,49062
Factor 3	Male	33	3,3010	0,71066
	Female	88	3,2667	0,87450

As shown in Table 14, the mean scores from Factor 1, which represents the digital literacy of EFL teachers entitled as the first dimension in the questionnaire, diverge considerably according to gender. The mean scores of the female teachers (X= 4,13) are

higher than male teachers (X= 3,95). Depending on these findings, gender has a meaningful and significant effect on teachers' digital literacy skills.

However, the mean scores from Factor 2, which represents the experiences and practices of EFL teachers during the COVID-19 outbreak entitled as the second dimension in the questionnaire, do not differ substantially accordingly gender, as seen in Table 14. The mean scores of male and female teachers are reasonably close to each other with a bit different. Accordingly, there was no significant difference in terms of their experiences and practices during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Also, the mean scores from Factor 3, which represents usage and efficacy of EBA/EIN platform entitled as the third dimension in the questionnaire, are not significantly different from each other according to gender. The mean scores of male and female teachers are relatively close to each other with a bit difference. Based on these findings, gender does not significantly affect the usage of the EBA platform.

4.2.4. One-Way Analysis of Variance Results According to Age

The results of one-way analysis of variance was conducted to examine whether the scores attained from the sub-dimensions of the scale diverge considerably according to the age variable presented in Table 15.

Table 15.

One-Way Analysis of Variance Results According to Age

	Age	**N**	**M**	**S**	**Source of Variation**	**Sum of squares**	**sd**	**Mean of squares**	**F**	**P**
	1	34	4,2647	0,49106	Between Groups	4,177	5	0,835	1,930	0,095
Factor 1	**2**	25	4,2320	0,71340	Within Groups	49,790	115	0,433		
	3	18	3,7944	0,75652	Total	53,967	120			
	4	27	3,8926	0,74520						
	5	10	4,1300	0,54985						
	6	7	4,0857	0,67436						
	1	34	3,3369	0,45949	Between Groups	1,275	5	0,255	1,051	0,391
Factor 2	**2**	25	3,4218	0,41897	Within Groups	27,903	115	0,243		
	3	18	3,4747	0,53742	Total	29,178	120			
	4	27	3,4933	0,53303						
	5	10	3,1864	0,50546						
	6	7	3,1753	0,59522						
	1	34	3,1784	0,74648	Between Groups	2,652	5	0,530	0,762	0,579
Factor 3	**2**	25	3,3440	0,82948	Within Groups	80,071	115	0,696		
	3	18	3,2259	0,77211	Total	82,723	120			
	4	27	3,1654	0,89048						
	5	10	3,5533	1,10980						
	6	7	3,6667	0,74536						

1: 21-25 years old, 2: 26-30 years old, 3: 31-35 years old, 4: 36-40 years old, 5: 41-45 years old, 6: 41 and older

As it is seen in Table 15, there is found no significant difference in the first dimension of the scale in terms of age group ($F_{(5, 115)}$ =1.930, p>,05). Thus, substantially, the age groups of the participant EFL teachers do not display a statistically significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of digital literacy of teachers.

In addition, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the second dimension of the scale in terms of age group ($F_{(5, 115)}$ =.255, p>,05). These findings suggest that the age groups of the participant EFL teachers do not perform a statistically

significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of the practices and experiences of online teaching during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Table 15 also indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the third dimension of the scale in terms of age group ($F_{(5, 115)}$ =.762, p>,05). Again, this refers that the age groups of the participant EFL teachers do not reveal a statistically significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of the efficacy and the usage of the EBA platform.

4.2.4. One-Way Analysis of Variance Results According to Teaching Level

The results of one-way analysis of variance was conducted to examine whether the scores attained from the sub-dimensions of the scale diverge considerably according to the teaching level variable is presented in Table 16.

Table 16.

One-Way Analysis of Variance Results According to Teaching Level

	Teaching Level	N	M	S	Source of Variation	Sum of squares	sd	Mean of squares	F	P
	1	12	4,2167	0,63365	Between Groups	0,389	2	0,195	0,429	0,652
Factor 1	**2**	41	4,1171	0,70601	Within Groups	53,578	118	0,454		
	3	68	4,0397	0,66042	Total	53,967	120			
	1	12	3,4659	0,46723	Between Groups	0,121	2	0,060	0,245	0,783
Factor 2	**2**	41	3,3548	0,50761	Within Groups	29,057	118	0,246		
	3	68	3,3944	0,49398	Total	29,178	120			
	1	12	3,4722	0,78648	Between Groups	3,944	2	1,972	2,954	0,056
Factor 3	**2**	41	3,4829	0,84915	Within Groups	78,779	118	0,668		
	3	68	3,1167	0,80235	Total	82,723	120			

1: Primary School, 2: Secondary School, 3: High-School

It is concluded in Table 16; there is found no significant difference in the first dimension of the scale in terms of teaching (grade) level ($F_{(2, 118)}$ =.429, p>,05). Thus,

substantially, the teaching levels of the participant EFL teachers do not display a statistically significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of digital literacy of teachers.

Additionally, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the second dimension of the scale in terms of age group ($F_{(5, 115)} = .245$, $p > ,05$). These findings suggest that the teaching levels of the participant EFL teachers do not perform a statistically significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of the practices and experiences of online teaching during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Table 16. also indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the third dimension in terms of teaching level ($F_{(5, 115)} = .762$, $p > ,05$). This refers that the teaching levels of the participant EFL teachers do not reveal a statistically significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of the efficacy and the usage of the EBA platform.

4.2.5. One-Way Analysis of Variance Results According to Years of Teaching Experience

The results of one-way analysis of variance was conducted to examine whether the scores attained from the sub-dimensions of the scale diverge considerably according to the years of experience variable presented in Table 17.

Table 17.

One-Way Analysis of Variance Results According to Teaching Experience

	Teaching Experience	N	M	S	Source of Variation	Sum of squares	sd	Mean of squares	F	p
	1	58	4,2328	0,58621	Between Groups	3,028	4	0,757	1,724	0,149
Factor 1	**2**	19	3,8526	0,81607	Within Groups	50,939	116	0,439		
	3	21	3,9714	0,67686	Total	53,967	120			
	4	13	3,9000	0,78209						
	5	10	4,1300	0,56382						
	1	58	3,3574	0,47639	Between Groups	1,223	4	0,306	1,268	0,286
Factor 2	**2**	19	3,5048	0,52963	Within Groups	27,955	116	0,241		
	3	21	3,5281	0,57863	Total	29,178	120			
	4	13	3,2448	0,40594						
	5	10	3,2364	0,37957						
	1	58	3,2770	0,78721	Between Groups	1,561	4	0,390	0,558	0,694
Factor 3	**2**	19	3,2737	0,67253	Within Groups	81,162	116	0,700		
	3	21	3,1524	1,04863	Total	82,723	120			
	4	13	3,2103	0,98652						
	5	10	3,6200	0,66892						

1: 1-5 year(s), 2: 6-10 years, 3: 11-15 years, 4: 16-20 years, 5: 21 years, and more

Table 17 indicates that there is found no significant difference in the first dimension of the scale in terms of years of teaching experience ($F_{(4, 116)} = 1.724$, $p > ,05$). Thus, substantially, the participant EFL teachers' years of teaching experience do not display a statistically significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of digital literacy of teachers.

Furthermore, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the second dimension of the scale in terms of the years of teaching experience ($F_{(4, 116)} = 1.268$, $p > ,05$). These findings suggest that the participant EFL teachers' years of teaching

experience do not perform a statistically significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of the practices and experiences of online teaching during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Table 17 also indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the third dimension in terms of the years of teaching experience ($F_{(4, 116)} = .558$, $p > ,05$). Again, this refers that the years of teaching experience of the participant EFL teachers do not reveal a statistically significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of the efficacy and the usage of the EBA platform.

4.2.6. One-Way Analysis of Variance Results According to Weekly Teaching Hours

The results of one-way analysis of variance were conducted to examine whether the scores attained from the sub-dimensions of the scale diverge considerably according to the weekly teaching hours variable are presented in Table 18.

Table 18.

One-Way Analysis of Variance Results According to Weekly Teaching Hours

	Weekly Teaching Hours	N	M	S	Source of Variation	Sum of squares	sd	Mean of squares	F	p
	1	5	4,3200	0,68337	Between Groups	3,014	4	0,754	1,716	0,151
Factor 1	**2**	15	3,9333	0,77429	Within Groups	50,953	116	0,439		
	3	39	3,9359	0,65473	Total	53,967	120			
	4	58	4,1638	0,65096						
	5	4	4,6250	0,28723						
	1	5	3,5909	0,70711	Between Groups	0,368	4	0,092	0,370	0,829
Factor 2	**2**	15	3,3879	0,29800	Within Groups	28,810	116	0,248		
	3	39	3,4103	0,45112	Total	29,178	120			
	4	58	3,3676	0,55874						
	5	4	3,2159	0,11364						
	1	5	2,9467	0,71709	Between Groups	2,811	4	0,703	1,020	0,400
Factor 3	**2**	15	3,5156	0,81004	Within Groups	79,912	116	0,689		
	3	39	3,1624	0,87777	Total	82,723	120			
	4	58	3,2862	0,80882						
	5	4	3,7500	0,83688						

1: 15 hours, 2: 15-20 hours, 3: 20-25 hours, 4: 25-30 hours, 5: 30 hours, and more

Table 18 indicates that there is found no significant difference in the first dimension of the scale in terms of weekly teaching hours ($F_{(4, 116)}$ =1.716, p>,05). Thus, substantially, weekly teaching hours of the participant EFL teachers do not display a statistically significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of digital literacy of teachers.

Moreover, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the second dimension of the scale in terms of weekly teaching hours ($F_{(4, 116)}$ =.092, p>,05). These

findings suggest that weekly teaching hours of the participant EFL teachers do not perform a statistically significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of the practices and experiences of online teaching during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Table 18 also indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the third dimension in terms of weekly teaching hours ($F_{(4, 116)}$ =.703, p>,05). Again, this refers that weekly teaching hours of the participant EFL teachers do not reveal a statistically significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of the efficacy and the usage of the EBA platform.

4.2.7. One-Way Analysis of Variance Results According to Educational Status

The results of one-way analysis of variance were conducted to examine whether the scores attained from the sub-dimensions of the scale diverge considerably according to the educational status variable are presented in Table 19.

Table 19.

One-Way Analysis of Variance Results According to Educational Status

	Educational Status	N	M	S	Source of Variation	Sum of squares	sd	Mean of squares	F	p
Factor 1	**1**	111	4,0640	0,67847	Between Groups	0,667	2	0,334	0,739	0,480
	2	8	4,3625	0,61630	Within Groups	53,300	118	0,452		
	3	2	4,0500	0,07071	Total	53,967	120			
Factor 2	**1**	111	3,3997	0,48440	Between Groups	1,014	2	0,507	2,125	0,124
	2	8	3,4034	0,57518	Within Groups	28,163	118	0,239		
	3	2	2,6818	0,19285	Total	29,178	120			
Factor 3	**1**	111	3,2396	0,80184	Between Groups	1,893	2	0,946	1,382	0,255
	2	8	3,7333	1,17541	Within Groups	80,830	118	0,685		
	3	2	3,4667	0,65997	Total	82,723	120			

1: Bachelor's degree, 2: Master degree, 3: Doctoral Degree

It is concluded in Table 19, there is found no significant difference in the first dimension of the scale in terms of educational status ($F_{(2, 118)}$ =.739, p>,05). Thus, substantially, the educational status of the participant EFL teachers does not display a statistically significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of digital literacy of teachers.

Also, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the second dimension of the scale in terms of educational status ($F_{(5, 115)}$ =.125, p>,05). These findings suggest that the educational status of the participant EFL teachers does not perform a statistically significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of the practices and experiences of online teaching during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Table 19 also indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the third dimension in terms of educational status ($F_{(5, 115)} = 1.382$, p>,05). This means that the educational status of the participant EFL teachers does not reveal a statistically significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of the efficacy and usage of the EBA platform.

4.2.8. Open-Ended Questions for Additional Comments of Teachers

In the online Likert-scale questionnaire, there was given a question at the end of each domain in order to obtain further suggestions, comments, and experiences of the participant EFL teachers. The comments, opinions, and experiences of teachers were noted carefully, and prominent themes were determined. As a result, the teachers' answers to the open-ended questions coincided with some of the items on the scale. Twenty answers were received, and the common points were listed in line with the dimensions in Table 20.

Table 20.

Answers of the Teachers to the Open-Ended Questions at the End of the Questionnaire

	Perceptions of Teachers
Dimension 1	Teachers need to be aware of a bunch of advantages of today's tech-savvy learners who were born into digitalization, and classrooms in actual settings are needed to be enhanced with technology integration in favor of existing demands of current educational standards.
	The forced usage of virtual classrooms and digital applications had been highly beneficial for teachers.
	The notion of using technology to teach English can be interpreted as complete support; however, using technology in real classrooms such as smart boards, computers, projectors were more preferable.
	Apart from the ability to use technology and innovative materials for teaching efficiently, students' device or internet-related problems were also important.
	Technological devices help teachers to make their students motivated and enthusiastic about the lesson.
	Technological tools are needed to motivate and support students to create their materials to be self-autonomous learners.

Dimension 2	The number of online sessions and obligatory lessons should be reregulated for online teaching considering the problems with substructure. One of the main problems is that students do not regularly attend online classes. The point is that it hampers the continuation of the teaching curriculum and proceeding with the subjects or having enough practice on them. The sudden shift to online distance education was too quick, and there were connection problems for teachers. There is a need to renovate the techniques for the evaluation of teaching.
Dimension 3	The materials for teaching English on the EBA platform are not up-to-date and innovative. It is time-consuming to access the platform and online lessons. Students and teachers have lack of knowledge to use the platform efficiently.

4.3. The Analysis and Findings of the Semi-Structured Interviews

The qualitative data was obtained from online semi-structured interviews established through online applications such as *Zoom* and *Google Meets* because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve EFL teachers from different teaching levels, and the participants' demographic information is given in Table 21. The ten questions in the semi-structured interviews aim to provide an in-depth exploration of challenges and opportunities from the participant EFL teachers in line with the research questions. Also, it is targeted to draw an overall conclusion for the perceptions on the feasibility of online teaching during the COVID-19 outbreak. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data. The similarities in the shared practices of teachers helped to identify five themes. These themes were revealed as;

- Attitudes to online teaching and adaptability,
- Differences between online teaching and face-to-face teaching,
- Evaluation and providing feedback in online education,
- Challenges and opportunities of the EBA platform,
- Preferences for the future.

In addition, interrelated codes and subthemes were determined in relation to these themes. Next, the emergent themes, sub-themes, and codes were discussed; also, frequencies were used to show how many times the participants exclaim these codes. Finally, alphanumeric characters were given to present participant numbers using anonymous coding; for example, P1 represents participant number one.

Table 21.

Demographic Information of the Participants in the Interview

Participant	**Gender**	**Age**	**Teaching Level**
P1	Female	26	Primary
P2	Male	26	Primary
P3	Female	36	Primary
P4	Female	29	Primary
P5	Female	26	Secondary
P6	Female	27	Secondary
P7	Male	28	Secondary
P8	Male	32	Secondary
P9	Female	33	High-school
P10	Male	28	High-school
P11	Female	25	High-school
P12	Female	38	High-school

4.3.1. EFL Teachers' Attitudes to Online Teaching and Adaptability

This theme represents the experiences and practices of EFL teachers in online teaching, how comfortable they feel about the adaptability of online teaching, especially during a pandemic disease, and their familiarity with utilizing digital tools in distance online teaching. In concern of frequent notions of the participant EFL teachers for this theme, three sub-themes were generated as *infrastructural deficits and challenges*, *technical proficiency*, *training and guidance*, and interrelated codes were created. Table 22 shows the sub-themes and codes for the attitudes to online teaching and adaptability.

Table 22.

EFL Teachers' Attitudes to Online Teaching and Adaptability

Sub-themes	**Codes**	***f***
Infrastructural deficits and challenges	Internet connection,	12
	Device-related connection problems,	12
	Impacts of financial conditions of the families,	12
	Social concerns,	11
	A complex home and work balance,	10
	Time-consuming lesson plans and schedules,	8
	The lack of a collaborative and interactive teaching environment,	7
	The change in content delivery techniques,	7
Technical proficiency	Time allocation for comprehending the software,	10
	Challenges in uploading materials,	6
	Adjustments in the new system,	4
	Poor usage of the digital platform,	1
Training and guidance	Lack of digital training and support,	8
	Lack of pedagogical knowledge.	8

The transition to distance online teaching processes because of the COVID-19 disease was accompanied by many difficulties that were indicated as codes in Table 22. As agreed by all the participants indicated by frequencies, due to the infrastructural problems mostly, students had problems maintaining participation in online classes, so that the subjects' continuity was hampered by lack of attendance. The lack of technological device to connect live-streamed lessons mainly because of having more students-siblings at home with only one mobile phone, tablet or computer created extra burden for the students with lower-income families who were having financial difficulties. Also, the COVID-19 disease as a growing pandemic affected teachers', themselves, their families' and friends' state of health and many different causal connections that this condition caused a complex balance in the distinction of home and work-related problems. Teachers also indicated the social concerns of students who, for example, had to work for income, were living in a small house with a crowded family or had no private study area at home. Moreover, to deliver online teaching and meet students' needs, teachers stated that they were forced to change their teaching techniques

and materials, which demanded extra time to develop online in the absence of an interactive, communicative, and collaborative atmosphere in the teaching environment.

Nearly all the students in my classes had internet connection problems, and they missed the online classes more than several times in a month. (P7)

I had difficulties motivating students to attend the lesson… It was really hard to prepare teaching materials, upload and share them to the EBA platform. I managed to allocate time to my son. I spent most of my spare time on the screen apart from teaching sessions. (P3)

Additionally, teaching online and adopting digital platforms' usage necessitate technical and pedagogical skills. Prior knowledge and familiarity of the software programs made essential differences in preparation time for the teachers. In addition to their technological skills, it was indicated that they did not train to use technological tools. There was no clear guidance on how to monitor online sessions, especially at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, they became genuinely concerned and felt lost. It was highlighted mainly by the participants that there was a need for in-service training of teachers to use technological tools effectively and integrate them into their classes.

I felt that I was incompetent as a 21st-century teacher. I was aware of my responsibilities and did my best to motivate students; however, I just did not know how to use materials in an online setting. My husband, who is an engineer, helped me a lot. (P12)

It was great for my students and me that a friend of mine suggested to me some free and interactive books. I mean, I learned so many different websites and useful applications from my friends like Google Classroom, Nearpod. I was informed by collogue friends since I am interested in educational technology, but I think we all need to be trained for this in the universities since it is a must to use technology in our era. (P4)

4.3.2. Differences between Online Teaching and Face-to-Face Teaching

This theme aims to provide opinions of EFL teachers upon mainly the differences between online teaching, which has been developed so suddenly, and face-to-face and traditional teaching. Basically, how EFL teachers responded to the changes which were caused by the pandemic and how they interpreted the differences and similarities of online

teaching, and face-to-face teaching were targeted to be revealed in this theme. In concern of frequent notions of the participant EFL teachers for this theme, two sub-themes were generated as *strengths* and *weaknesses*; and interrelated codes were created. Table 23 shows the sub-themes, codes, and frequencies for the differences between online teaching and face-to-face teaching.

Table 23.

Differences Between Online Teaching and Face-To-Face Teaching

Sub-themes	**Codes**	***f***
Strengths of online education	Being independent of time and place-flexibility,	12
	Variety of teaching materials,	12
	Increased learning opportunities,	9
	Easily access digital documents,	9
	Recorded lessons and accessibility of printed documents,	7
	More self-disciplined students,	4
Weaknesses of online education	Inefficacy,	12
	Connection and disconnection problems,	12
	The digital divide among students,	10
	Inability to focus on a screen for long hours,	10
	More motivated students in face-to-face teaching,	9
	Privacy,	8
	Lack of eye contact, gestures, and social interactions,	6
	Restricted interpersonal relationships such as group activities and games,	6
	Sense of isolation.	5

It was investigated how EFL teachers responded to this process and identified the differences between online teaching and face-to-face teaching with the challenges of online education and adaptability of EFL teachers to teach online with the determined codes indicated in Table 23. The participant EFL teachers were asked to compare their experiences with online teaching and traditional teaching as considering the advantages and disadvantages of the process. Mainly, all participants of the qualitative phase of the study stated a clear distinction between online teaching and face-to-face teaching in terms of flexibility, variety of used materials in the courses, and inefficacy of online teaching according to face-to-face teaching and connection and disconnection problems of the

students. They noted that online teaching was more flexible; because it was independent of time and place. Teachers and students had the opportunity to be connected and engaged in the online lessons anytime and anywhere. However, some of the participants considered this opportunity a challenge since it hampers focusing and concentrating on the lesson.

I think face-to-face teaching was more efficient because it contains social relationships, and students were aware of being in an educational setting. They wore school uniforms and were with their classmates in a classroom that made them more concentrated on the lessons. Peer work somewhat affected them. (P5)

Teachers are now considered as human machines or robots by students. For example, we met with my first-grade students online for the first time, and later, when they saw me at school in real life, they felt surprised. (P1)

Additionally, most of the participant EFL teachers appreciated the online education since it offered a variety of digital materials and learning opportunities to practice English in virtually authentic contexts, whereas several participants reckoned that online education was restricted for the students with different multiple intelligence. They noted that sitting in front of a screen for long hours and staying online was a real challenge for the students who were kinesthetic learners.

In this century, students who were generally called generation z born in technology can actively use digital sources to learn English. YouTube and so many other digital channels provide visuals and videos. However, this may not be an option for the students who had kinesthetic, interpersonal, or naturalistic intelligence since they may have concentration problems… (P11)

Furthermore, one of the strengths of online education is that it contains published materials that can be printed anytime. Also, participant EFL teachers specified that remote learning canalized students to be more self-disciplined and responsible for their learning.

I think students who attained lessons and follow them on digital channels became more self-disciplined learners. Also, they have mastered adapting to online education. (P10)

On the other hand, it is noted by the participant EFL teachers that student might feel more isolated in online education because of the digital divide and inequalities among them occurred during the COVID-19 disease. Teachers were also concerned about restricted relationships among students, such as pair works, group activities, and games. Furthermore, it is stated that when they share the coursebook or any content on the screen,

they lost the eye-contact with the students. Also, it is suggested students turn off their cameras during the lessons, and these factors restrained the social interactions. Finally, some of the teachers felt uncomfortable in online education since there was no privacy of teaching sessions when students' cameras turned off that anybody at home could witness the lessons.

Students generally live in small houses in the school area and have at least two or three siblings who were also students at home. So they were generally in the same room while joining the online lessons and when I asked a question to that kind of student and s/he answered, we heard different voices as well. (P7)

4.3.3. Evaluation and Providing Feedback in Online Education

This theme purposes of discovering the practices of course evaluation during the COVID-19 outbreak. It was aimed to figure out whether participant EFL teachers were satisfied with the assessment techniques, how often formative assessment took place for the evaluation, and how they provide feedback to students. In concern of frequent notions of the participant EFL teachers for this theme, two sub-themes were generated as *assessment* and *feedback*; and interrelated codes were created. Table 24 shows the sub-themes, codes, and frequencies for course evaluation, assessment techniques, and corrective feedback.

Table 24.

Evaluation and Providing Feedback in online education

Sub-themes	**Codes**	***f***
Assessment	Dissatisfaction in evaluation	12
	Reliability of the assessment	10
	Summative assessment techniques	9
	Formative assessment techniques	8
	Usage of digital platforms for evaluation	6
	Interactive activities	5
	Regular and continuous assessment	5
Feedback	Lack of timely given corrective feedback	10
	Time limitation for individual feedback	7

Participant EFL teachers generally referred that course evaluation in distance online education was insufficient in terms of doubts about behaviors behind the screen, unfamiliarity with online assessment tools, lack of students' commitment to presence and attendance, lack of punctuality, lack of professional behavior during the evaluation. Teachers stated that they frequently preferred digital tools to share assessment documents with students by using *Whatsapp*, *Bip*, *Google Classroom*, *Gmail*, *the EBA platform*. Apart from posting the documents on a platform, they tried to reach the students who did not attend the online lessons.

I have difficulties assessing students appropriately because I didn't know how to do it first. Nearly ten students joined the online lessons even from the crowded classes, and I felt concerned for students who didn't attend the classes. I made extra effort to reach them via Whatsapp and phone calls. (P11)

There were always doubts about the reliability and validity of the assessment because it was impossible to ensure how students complete the tasks or activities. Sometimes, when I asked questions, I heard different voices answering the question, and students repeated after them. (P8)

Another point is that not all students took responsibility for participating in the classes and completing the given tasks. Teachers primarily provide digital documents shared by MoNE and some of the most visited educational websites such as *Ezel Ballı, Demet Hoca, Emre Öğretmen*. Also, teachers tried to have a place for formative assessment techniques considering assessment for learning with the interactive activities and digital games; however, they stated that students gave more attention to national sit-down exams that MoNE organized since the emphasis was on passing the exam and grading the students.

There was inconsistency in the evaluation of the students because students participated in the sit-down, face-to-face exams and didn't join the online classes again. They felt like it was enough to pass the class with written exams and unnecessary to participate in the process. (P9)

Additionally, it is essential to assess students continuously during the teaching process. Therefore, there is given emphasis to provide timely and corrective feedback to students by teachers. However, due to the coronavirus disease, teachers generally had difficulties giving immediate feedback to students that they mostly preferred to give after the online sessions. Also, to students who needed more activities to understand the

subjects fully, teachers sent activities, achievement tests, live worksheets, and homework, which led them to create their own learning materials to enhance comprehension.

Giving immediate feedback to each student was impossible during the online lesson, which was only 30 minutes. Especially with the younger learners, you need to provide more feedback to engage them in the learning task so that I sent them extra individual feedback and tasks accordingly after the lessons. (P3).

There were inequalities among students, and I felt responsible for their learning as well since they had to take the national exam as other students to obtain a right to enter more prestigious Anatolian or science high schools. For this reason, I generally used digital exams, which can be downloaded and printed. (P6)

4.3.4. Challenges and opportunities of the EBA platform

It is primarily aimed to examine the efficacy of the EBA platform during the COVID-19 pandemic. The platform was widely used by administrators, teachers, and students across the country before the pandemic. However, it had become the primary source when all K-12 schools were closed due to the serious risk caused by the coronavirus disease. In this respect, the purpose of this specific study is to inspect what features the platform offered teachers to deliver the content efficiently, what their experiences and practices with the usage of the platform were, and how helpful and practical component of online education it became. In respect to frequent notions of the participant EFL teachers for this theme, three sub-themes were generated as *infrastructural features, content,* and *feasibility of assessment*; and interrelated codes were created. Table 25 shows the sub-themes, codes, and frequencies for the perceptions of participant EFL teachers upon the usage of the EBA platform.

Table 25.

Challenges and opportunities of the EBA platform

Sub-themes	**Codes**	***f***
Infrastructural features	Lack of sufficient infrastructure on the platform	10
	Being user-friendly	8
	Accessibility	7
	Taking a long time to upload content	7
	Loss of time during the online lessons	6
	Complicated interface for logging into	5
	Irrelative search results	4
Content	Authentic materials	9
	Visual content, interactive videos, and animations	9
	Interactive books and activities	8
	Agreement with private publishers	5
	Game-based activities	5
	Lack of valuable documents for teaching skills	4
Feasibility of assessment	Adequate source for evaluation	10
	Student e-portfolios	7
	Reports	6

The EBA platform was established in 2012 as a component of the FATIH Project. It has been investigated by researchers to provide insights to improve the platform in favor of teachers. In this concern, participant EFL teachers were asked about the development of the EBA platform, and according to their experiences during the pandemic, it offered so many opportunities to both teachers and students, and they noted the platform as user-friendly and easily accessible. After the pandemic, the EBA was enhanced with applications that they could be downloaded to any device such as mobile phone, tablet, or computer. Also, the government's free internet support for the platform's usage ensured the inequalities among students that they could freely explore the content. It was also feasible to download the documents or books to the device for further studies. However, it still needed to be improved in terms of infrastructural features. For instance, when it was searched on any topic, the user came up with irrelevant content out of context.

The EBA platform was totally updated after the pandemic. The updated version was more user-friendly and helped me in various ways to reach students. For example, even while I was outside, I could access the platform easily. (P2)

I think using this kind of platform was complimentary because students easily access a variety of content for free and download them into their device. They could use 8 gigabytes of internet which were freely defined to all students by the telecommunication companies in the platform to watch videos, see the materials or join the online lesson. (P10)

Considering the many opportunities that the platform offered, having a variety of books from private and international publishers was also essential. Thus, students could review and revise the subjects from different sources. Furthermore, interactive books, authentic materials, interactive videos, and animations were valuable and practical for further studies and gave an opportunity for learners to proceed at their own pace. In addition, one of the sections of the EBA platform was the *Reports* section that provides teachers information about the students' activities on the platform. For instance, when the teacher assigned homework to a class, s/he could see how many students completed the homework in the class and how much time they spent on the activity. This was considered necessary because, with the help of reports, teachers could plan their further classes according to students' scores and proceedings. Similarly, e-portfolios in the platform that gave students and previous work help teachers recognize the differences among students in a class and observe how students preserved diversity. Also, the EBA platform consisted of a great deal of materials for the students who would take the national exam at the end of secondary school.

The EBA platform was so helpful for me to monitor students' studies on the platform. For example, I planned homework on the platform, and when the due time was ended, I could see who completed the task or left uncompleted in detail. (P9)

Another issue pointed by teachers is the lack of game-based activities, especially for younger students who are thought of as better learners when supported with games during the lessons. Also, in teaching language skills, the platform was inadequate, especially with productive skills such as writing and speaking. As a result, participant EFL teachers evaluated the platform that it was pretty practical and helpful, especially during the pandemic; yet, it was regarded that improvements works for infrastructural deficiencies are in need.

4.3.5. Preferences for future

The qualitative phase of the study provided insights into the perceptions, practices, and experiences of EFL teachers to identify perfectible points on online language education. In this theme, teachers were asked whether they were satisfied with online teaching or they preferred traditional teaching in real settings. In respect to frequent notions of the participant EFL teachers for this theme, three codes were generated as

online education, traditional education, and *hybrid learning model*. Table 26 shows the codes and frequencies for the preferences of the future.

Table 26.

Preferences for future

Codes	***f***
Hybrid learning model	7
Traditional education	3
Online education	2

I think online education was insufficient because it was considered an unfamiliar way of learning in Turkey. However, with the coronavirus disease, teachers and students experienced that it was achievable to learn online. For this reason, in my opinion, a hybrid learning model would be developed in the future. For example, the theoretical phase of lessons could be delivered online, and practice could be done in the actual settings. Online education would be an inseparable part of education anymore. (P11)

Consequently, the participant EFL teachers are concerned about the teaching fashions in the future because of the ongoing pandemic and its effects on education. When infrastructural deficiencies and digital divide among students are considered, teachers state that it will be better to return to traditional teaching. However, most teachers believe that online education will be a part of our education system since students are now familiar with online education and digital learning tools. In this respect, it was regarded that at least, until the pandemic would be totally gone and a cure or a vaccine would be developed, a hybrid learning model consisted of online and face-to-face classes. In this context, utterances of the teachers are given to shed light on the way that a better future for education was expected.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the results of this current study have been compared and discussed. Findings are presented under three research questions of the study, and analysis of the findings is discussed in detail regarding research questions and previous studies in the literature. In relation to the quantitative and qualitative findings, firstly, digital literacy of EFL teachers, secondly, the educational challenges and changes in practice during the COVID-19 pandemic, and finally, strengths and weaknesses of the EBA platform will be discussed with respect to the reviewed literature.

5.2. Discussion of the Findings Based on the Research Questions

This study was carried out in order to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. How effectively did EFL teachers of the Ministry of Education in Turkey use the digital tools and Education Information Network during the distance education process in the COVID-19 outbreak?
    a. What are their perceptions regarding the usefulness of such a mode of teaching?
    b. What are the difficulties they faced in developing and teaching online materials?
2. What kind of teaching strategies did EFL teachers of the Ministry of Education in Turkey utilize during online classes?
    a. What type of modifications did they have to adapt while teaching online?
    b. How did they perform instruction while teaching online?
3. What type of assessment did EFL teachers of the Ministry of Education in Turkey perform while giving feedback to their students during online classes?
    a. Which tools did they use to evaluate the learning outcomes?
    b. How do they evaluate such assessment tools during the outbreak?

Regarding the research questions, sub-questions were also created in order to have sufficiently evident results. The explanatory sequential design of the mixed-method research was administrated in the study, and two different data collection tools, including a Likert-scale online questionnaire and a semi-structured online interview, were utilized to provide answers to these research questions. For the first phase of the study, the online questionnaire was implemented to 121 EFL teachers to gather data in the first place. Then, after analyzing the quantitative data through SPSS 25.0, a semi-structured interview was organized to have a sufficient understanding of the EFL teachers' experiences and opinions. In the second phase of the study, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 12 EFL teachers, corresponding to ten percent of the population. Then, the qualitative data was analyzed through thematic and content analysis. Finally, it was brought about a conclusion to draw an overall understanding of the research questions.

5.3. Digital Literacy of EFL Teachers

This current study aims to describe and clarify the perceptions and practices of EFL teachers of MoNE throughout the COVID-19 disease outbreak and their challenges during the sudden transition to online distance education. The disease started unexpectedly and suddenly expanded that educational institutions, administrators, teachers, and students were not ready and prepared to maintain educational affairs (Chakraborty & Marty, 2020; Jarvis et al., 2020; Tran et al., 2020, among others). Moreover, the ambiguity posed by the COVID-19 disease created extra stress and some concerns among teachers (Korkmaz & Toraman, 2020; König, Jäger-Biela & Glutsch, 2020). In this regard, the primary aim of the study is to gather data about how EFL teachers manage the process in terms of feasibility and adaptability of online teaching, motivating students to stay connected to learning, the technological and educational challenges, and overall evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of the process.

The first section of the Likert-scale questionnaire with ten questions and semi-structured interview in-depth questions aimed to explore how EFL teachers were digitally literate and how they integrate digital tools into teaching sessions. Based on the findings of the related data, it was found that EFL teachers of MoNE feel competent in using digital educational technologies while teaching English online and adopting digital tools in their course plans.

Digital or electronic technologies have evolved into an inseparable regular life component and inextricably intertwined with educational notions (Cho, Mansfield & Claughton, 2020; Halverson & Smith, 2009). In this regard, EFL teachers appeared to be active users of digital technologies for teaching. However, the one-way analysis results indicated that EFL teachers' competence in using educational technologies do not differ according to age and teaching (grade) level. Dudeney, Hockly, and Pegrum (2013) asserted this as an ability of this era in terms of commitment to digital literacies, utilizing them wisely and efficiently to interchange ideas, deliver knowledge, and develop a social association in education working, personal and social disposal.

While analyzing the first phase of the data, which is a quantitative datum, descriptive values were pointed in the first place, and frequencies, mean and standard deviation values were described. The average mean of the questions in the first dimension that targeted to figure out how EFL teachers give place to digital technologies in their teaching sessions was computed at 4.07. This can be uttered that EFL teachers mostly agreed on the items in the related dimension. Amidst a global crisis driven by the COVID-19 pandemic and in an environment forced to transmit education in virtual settings, using technological devices wisely is of prime importance (Bates, 2020; Hodges et al., 2020; Jandric, 2020; Rapanta et al., 2020). In this respect, it has been considered essential to remain aware of educational technologies' extensive usage.

Additionally, the independent samples t-tests were computed the identify the relationship between digital literacy skills according to gender. In this study, 88 (%72.7) female teachers and 33 (%27.3) male teachers participated. The results of the independent samples t-tests suggest that gender has a significant effect on the digital literacy of EFL teachers according to the mean scores of the female teachers (X= 4,13), which are higher than the mean scores of the male teachers (X= 3,95). Moreover, the results of one-way analysis of variance according to age groups in the study display that age has no significant effect on EFL teachers' digital literacy skills (p= .09). Also, the results of a one-way analysis of variance according to teaching levels in the study indicate that there is no significant and meaningful relationship between the teaching levels and digital literacy of EFL teachers (p=.65).

Similarly, the results of one-way analysis of variance according to years of teaching experience indicate that years of teaching experience have no significant effect on EFL teachers' digital literacy skills (p=.14). Likewise, EFL teachers' teaching hours and educational status were computed with the one-way analysis of variance. Again, the

results indicated no significant relationship between teaching hours and educational status in terms of EFL teachers' digital literacy skills (p=.15 and p=.48, respectively).

On the other hand, based on the findings, EFL teachers' overall attitude in using digital tools for online teaching was identically distributed. Teachers stated that they mostly prefer integrating digital tools in their teaching sessions and feel enthusiastic about reading and learning more about educational technologies (Davis et al., 2019). Despite the internet connection and device-related problems, teachers stated that they managed to reach students by using digital applications, and they obtain in-depth information about the digital tools used in the online delivery of teaching while practicing it (Zhang et al., 2020). In addition, the challenges in collaborating with colleagues to design technology-enhanced materials and choosing appropriate material to teach the subject in virtual settings are among the most frequently stated issues (Ferri, Grifoni & Guzzo, 2020). Furthermore, most EFL teachers asserted that they did not have adequate and professional training to use digital technologies to teach English, and they expressed their willingness to be educated for designing innovative teaching materials (Dick & Hacker, 2003).

To sum up, digitalization is considered a prime necessity of the 21st century. EFL teachers are found to be highly motivated technology users and strive to have considerable technical knowledge since teachers can be attributed as the facilitator of teaching through the careful use of educational technology. In addition, as Fabry and Higgs (1997) proposed in their study, teachers needed to attend technology-related training programs, share their experiences with colleagues, and practice with technology. Further, it is disclosed in the literature that the lack of professional development is such a barrier to use technology appropriately as it would not be expected from teachers to be influential technology users unless they were educated on how and when to use it (Guasch, Alvarez & Espasa, 2010). As Prensky (2009) executes, within the lifetime of digital natives, educators, parents, and peers need to be digitally wise to encourage children to embrace digital improvement and be involved in more powerful digital mental enhancements.

5.4. The Educational Challenges and Changes in Practice During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This rapidly evolving pandemic has forced many educational organizations and institutions to make dramatic changes for a digital transformation and a suitable format

in online delivery (Dwivedi et al., 2020). In response to this danger, all administrators, professionals, and governments across the globe have managed to create appropriate solutions to minimize the adverse impacts of the pandemic in the educational systems of the countries (Onyema et al., 2020). Furthermore, the widespread availability of the technology has enabled authorities to design critical and timely policies to maintain educational affairs (Abdollahi et al., 2020; Esposito & Principi, 2020; OECD, 2020; WHO, 2020, among others). In this respect, this current study aims to gather data on EFL teachers' changes, challenges, and experiences throughout the distance online education process posed by the COVID-19 outbreak. In an attempt to explore the perceptions and practices of EFL teachers in the process of online teaching, 22 items were developed in the questionnaire in the first phase, and to have a clearer understanding, semi-structured interview questions were organized in the second phase. Accordingly, the quantitative and qualitative data were meticulously analyzed.

The results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis indicate that most of the teachers agreed on such an immediate process of transition from face-to-face teaching to online education during which institutions, teachers, and students were unprepared and unready (Allo, 2020; Ferri et al., 2020; Gruber & Bauer, 2020; MacIntyre, Gregersen & Mercer, 2020; Valverde-Berrocoso, 2020 among others). In line with this opinion, the most commonly stated problems encountered during the COVID-19 outbreak were infrastructural challenges such as slow speed internet connection, lack of adequately working devices at the moment, and lack of familiarity with the digital tools and lack of definite knowledge how to use them effectively (García & Weiss, 2020).

Additionally, the results of the study mainly indicated that there was not a significant difference in terms of EFL teachers' experiences and practices during the COVID-19 outbreak according to gender variable that mean scores of male and female teachers' mean scores are so close to each other (M=3.39 and M=3.38 respectively). Similarly, age groups, teaching level, educational status, years of experience, and weekly teaching hours of the participant EFL teachers do not perform a statistically significant difference in the total scores they unveiled in the dimension of the practices and experiences of online teaching during the COVID-19 outbreak according to significance value (p) in the ANOVA results. It is presumed and considered that the reason behind this can be regarded as the sudden shift to distance online education, being unprepared in terms of infrastructural readiness, having no time to convert teaching materials to online

settings, and the concerns on feasibility and adaptability of online teaching among educators (Dwivedi et al., 2020; Hodges et al., 2020).

It is concluded that EFL teachers mainly experienced challenges in students' internet connection and disconnection problems, inability to concentrate on a screen for long hours, lack of interaction in virtual classes, and the lack of a collaborative and interactive teaching environment. Additionally, as Korkmaz and Toraman (2020) examined in their study, the most burdensome experiences were the lack of reliable assessment and sufficient feedback to students while evaluating the learning outcomes, lack of practice on how to evaluate skills and knowledge in virtual settings, lack of motivation, deficiency in addressing the learning outcomes according to students' needs; on the other hand, having nearly no problems with the attitudes of school administrators, the duration of the sessions, the number of online sessions. Similarly, many studies in the literature implementing efficient online assessment techniques in online education environments were considered as a significant part of productive teaching and learning, as is identified in this study (Elzainy, El Sadik & Al Abdulmonem, 2020; Gaytan & McEwen, 2007; Huang et al., 2020; Krach, Paskiewicz & Monk, 2020 among others). However, on the contrary to the results of Korkmaz and Toraman's study (2020), it is concluded from this study that teachers perceived online teaching as feasible and easy to adapt. Moreover, they generally disagreed on the items indicating insufficient knowledge on the usage of digital tools and e-teaching materials.

Furthermore, particularly throughout this COVID-19 disease outbreak, it is essential to take advantage of digital technologies to offer high-quality language education with sufficient access to valuable technologies providing limitless sources and materials for successful and encouraged cooperative learning for students (Becker, 2000; Bull & Ma, 2001; Harmer, 2007; Shin & Kang, 2018). In this respect, it is highly essential to educate language educators, especially for integrating technologies into the teaching environment and having practice in their extensive usage to increase participation and motivation in their classes. In line with the current study's findings, as Orhan and Beyhan (2020) asserted, an absence of technological skills and knowledge impacted online education quality, and teachers kept using traditional teaching techniques during the current crisis due to lack of pre-service experience. In this regard, approaches to using technology to reinforce teacher professional development and collaboration and develop student autonomy and independent learning should be enhanced (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020).

Finally, as Robles and Braathen (2002) state that "Online learning is here to stay!" teachers mainly stated that the mode of online delivery of teaching would be a part of education in the future. They thought it could be planned as a hybrid learning model consisting of online and face-to-face classes and a paradigm shift in education. In addition, considering the approaches, teaching methods, and techniques embraced by teachers, teachers stated that they had to make changes in their teaching fashion during the distance online education process. Based on the views and opinions of teachers, it was needed more time to explain how the course aims would be transferred, set expectations for the learners at the beginning of the session, which was considered as this new teaching mode demands different and challenging abilities with distinctive conditions and requirements (Bergdahl & Nouri, 2020).

5.5. Strengths and Weaknesses of the EBA Platform

The world has been witnessed such vast, swift and remarkable changes in a short time due to the novel coronavirus disease. In the time of the COVID-19 epidemic outbreak, the EBA/EIN platform has become the primary national resource for the maintenance of education, with the newly added facilities to ensure ongoing synchronous (online) and asynchronous (offline) learning in Turkey (Karanfil, 2021). In this respect, it was aimed to explore the experiences of EFL teachers on the EBA platform, whether the platform was competent, valuable, and helpful to deliver teaching and materials, how joyful the content of the platform for language learning and teaching was, and how the platform supported online assessment and feedback.

The results of the study identify that according to the teachers' suggestions, the EBA platform was a good component of teaching and easy to use for teachers. The updated version of the EBA platform for the COVID-19 pandemic with new features such as live-streamed classes and assistants provides more guidance. Kurnaz (2020) investigated the usefulness of the EBA platform at schools, and according to results of the study, there was a need to renovate the platform and make it easier to use it more availably. With respect to the quantitative and qualitative data gathered in this study showed parallelism with Kurnaz's study in terms of requiring current and authentic materials on the platform, a more friendly interface to gain time, and irrelevant search results; however, it was discovered that teachers were able to upload self-created materials, homework, projects and course-related content to the platform and there were

more materials in line with the curriculum and the learning outcomes of the lesson on the contrary to the results of Kurnaz's study.

It can be inferred from the results of the study that the EBA platform has been developed in various ways, namely:

- There is more assistant and friendlier interface, significantly when it is enhanced with the infrastructure of *Zoom* (Akbulut, Şahin & Esen, 2020),
- It is now available to upload content more easily and effortlessly with the technical guidance on the platform (Yucesoy-Ozkan et al., 2020),
- The platform has been enhanced with the agreements of the pioneer publishers for language teaching. Therefore, now, teachers and students are able to reach various books and publications on the platform, such as *Cambridge University Press* (Aktay & Keskin, 2016).

Moreover, improved features of the platform encouraged teachers to be more effective teachers to monitor students' developments and provide feedback accordingly. Among the other features which were practical to use, *e-portfolios*, *reports*, *lists*, *exercises,* and *academic support* are mainly opportunities offered to learners to proceed at their own pace and teachers to facilitate their teaching sessions that create a positive influence on learning (Aktay & Keskin, 2016; Keleş, Öksüz & Bahçekapılı, 2013; Koçak, 2013; Öztan, 2012).

However, regarding many opportunities that the platform offered as Pala, Arslan, and Özdinç's study (2017) suggested that student's and teacher's perceptions on using the EIN and indicated several problems and shortcomings in using such as slowly opening videos, eye-straining content, and usability of the platform showed parallelism with the results of the current study. Another issue pointed by teachers is that improvements can be made to provide game-based activities, especially for the younger students and learners with different multiple intelligence. Also, in teaching language skills, the platform was inadequate, especially with productive skills such as writing and speaking. As a result, participant EFL teachers evaluated the platform that it was pretty practical and helpful, especially with the improvements during the COVID-19 pandemic; yet, it was regarded that updated and authentic content could lead learners to be more autonomous learners and enhancements in infrastructural deficiencies were needed.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction

The final chapter presents the concluding remarks of this current study. This chapter will cover an overall picture of the study and a summary of the study. An overview of the study regarding the data analysis, discussions, and findings will be covered with limitations, implications, and recommendations for further research.

6.2. The Summary of the Study

This specific study was conducted to investigate the perceptions, practices, and experiences of EFL teachers of MoNE throughout the COVID-19 disease outbreak and swift shift from traditional education to distance online delivery of teaching, which was determined to mitigating the transmission of the coronavirus disease. In this regard, the primary aim of the study was to explore challenges and changes that EFL teachers encountered during distance online education and how they manage to overcome these challenges. Secondly, it was targeted to describe the EFL teachers' overall perceptions of the efficacy of distance online education and how their teaching methods and techniques were altered to increase students' motivation. Also, one of the primary goals of the study is to offer remarkable insights into how evaluation of learning outcomes, the concept of assessment for learning, and providing corrective feedback took part during this process in terms of reliability and validity of the assessment. Finally, the main purpose of the study is to search for the digital literacy of EFL teachers and the strengths and weaknesses of the EBA/EIN platform to the proper delivery of teaching during the COVID-19 disease outbreak. In line with these aims, three research questions and sub-questions were designated to guide this study.

The mixed-method design was implemented in this study by utilizing quantitative and qualitative data collection tools with the intention of reaching more reliable and valid results. In this mixed-method study, the explanatory sequential research design was utilized. The explanatory sequential design requires two-phase data collection and analysis in a sequence, and priority is given to the quantitative data. In this design, the two phases are interdependently associated with each other by initially leading the

participants' determination and establishment of interview questions, further picturing the final discussion with a comprehensive interpretation of both phases together (Clark, Creswell, Green & Shope, 2008). Accordingly, quantitative data were gathered through an online Likert-scale questionnaire (see Appendix 1) and analyzed in the first place, and then qualitative data were gathered through an online semi-structured interview in this study (see Appendix 2).

As for the result, it was observed that the COVID-19 disease affected all educational affairs, and the transmission of these affairs to virtual settings was too quick; however, EFL teachers were digitally literate, and they reckoned digital tools as a part of language teaching. Also, the EBA platform was competent and friendly to use in spite of still having some infrastructural deficiencies and internet connection problems.

6.3. Conclusion of the Study

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions and policymakers strived to find solutions to assure that students could continue their education despite the crisis and social distancing measures. The closure of all K-12 schools across the country and establishing distance online education policies took place as an emergency reaction to the COVID-19 disease. In this concern, this study was carried out to discover how EFL teachers adapted the process and evaluated their practices while teaching online. When analyzing the qualitative and quantitative data, the participant EFL teachers' gender, age, educational status, years of experience, teaching level, and teaching hours were computed. However, there was found no relationship between these variables and the digital literacy of EFL teachers.

Amidst this ongoing crisis, it was observed that there was no way left other than adapting to the current condition and accepting the transformation. Considering the results of the study, EFL teachers were able to adapt online teaching and integrate digital materials in their teaching sessions in order to ensure the maintenance of students' learning. Nevertheless, challenges in online lessons, the problems EFL teachers encountered, and particularly students with no internet connection or digital devices to attend the lesson were among the points that needed to be considered.

As for the EFL teachers' perceptions, they felt competent in using digital tools, and the EBA platform was helpful and friendly to use. Moreover, they considered that online education was advantages in terms of being independent of time and place-

flexibility, availability of a variety of teaching materials, offering increased learning opportunities for free, easy access to digital documents, offering recorded lessons and accessibility of printed documents, and leading students to be more self-disciplined and taking responsibility of their own learning. Nevertheless, there were also some constraints while teaching online such as inefficacy of online education, already occurred loss of learning, connection and disconnection problems, digital divide among students, inability to focus on a screen for long hours and related concentration problems, less motivated students according to face-to-face teaching, having some privacy-related challenges, lack of eye-contact, gestures and social interactions, restricted interpersonal relationships such as group activities and games and associatively students' suffering sense of isolation.

Additionally, the results of the study indicated that one of the main concerns of EFL teachers upon distance education was to provide a reliable and valid evaluation of learning outcomes. EFL teachers stressed that during the COVID-19 disease outbreak, there was no adequate and accurate assessment had been done since students were unable to attend the live-streamed classes. Therefore, it turned out to be obligatory to use summative assessment techniques according to the MoNE's evaluation criteria when there was no option to follow formative assessment techniques because of the irregular or no attendance of the students. The observation of the process was generally made through interactive activities, digital platforms, and games. Furthermore, because of the time limitation, EFL teachers were unable to give timely and immediate feedback individually during the online education process. However, according to the study's qualitative findings, they generally stated that there was no division of the time for reaching students through digital channels. Students mostly tried to reach them through social media tools or applications such as *WhatsApp*, *Gmail*, *Google Classroom*, or phone calls with their teachers anytime. In this regard, it was regarded that even if EFL teachers did not provide immediate corrective feedback during the live-streamed classes, they responded to students' messages and needs or reached them through these means after the class during the day.

In addition to extensive usage of digital tools, distance online education had been provided through the EBA platform as the national educational source of Turkey. The EBA platform was not a new infrastructure, but it was a component of the FATIH Project launched in 2012. In this regard, especially with the betterment of the platform during the COVID-19 disease outbreak, EFL teachers found the EBA platform as user-friendly and easy to use and access. Also, the platform offered authentic materials, visual content,

interactive videos and animations, interactive books, and activities to students for further studies. With these practical features, providing tests and sources for evaluation reports to monitor previously given homework and assignments and student's e-portfolios were regarded as strengths of the platform. However, EFL teachers still expressed some concerns, such as losing time to connect live-streamed lessons, taking a long time to upload files and produce content, encountering irrelative search results, and lacking valuable documents for teaching skills.

In conclusion, the study revealed important information on the perceptions and opinions of EFL teachers over such an unprecedented crisis of the era. Digitalization in education is regarded as an expected return with the extensive improvements in technology. Nevertheless, educational institutions and organizations across the globe did not prepare sufficiently for such a swift shift in the mode of teaching. These conditions signified the significance of teacher education accordingly the necessities of the time because, at the beginning of the pandemic, teachers hesitated about using digital platforms and applications. Therefore, there should be redesigned of the curriculum of the teacher education institutions. Moreover, the lack of technological pedagogical knowledge hampered and damaged the continuation of education that the loss of learning among students increased, and the gap between students widened.

6.4. Implications

There have been conducted many studies in the literature to explore the effects of technology on education since the world has been digitally shifted. Considering a number of researches, it has been deduced that technology can enhance the creativity and productivity in teaching and learning when it is integrated into the instructional environment (see e.g., Hockly, 2015; Kulik & Kulik, 1991). However, the world has been unwittingly witnessed a worldwide COVID-19 epidemic that it was resulted with global school closures and the forced usage of digital tools as a solution to maintain educational affairs. In this sense, the study purposed to explore how EFL teachers adapted to this process and what strategies EFL teachers developed against the challenges faced. The results of the quantitative and qualitative data indicated that EFL teachers were digitally literate despite the fact that they were not adequately trained for this; the internet connection platforms and the reliability and validity of the assessment hampered the distance online education process; and the EBA platform was a valuable part of online

teaching with improved features for distance education during the outbreak. In this regard, when the findings are considered, the following implications can be pondered:

- Teachers should be undergone in-service training to use digital tools efficiently for teaching.
- The infrastructural opportunities of the country should be improved since students who live in rural settlements have no internet connection at all due to the absence of the substructure for the Internet in the area.
- More interactive, task-based and innovative materials are needed to be prepared beforehand.
- In addition to teachers, students should also be informed about how to use digital tools appropriately for learning.
- If the distance online education has to continue for the next academic year, there should be innovations in the curriculums, materials, and documents for continuous education both for educators and students.

6.5. Recommendations for Further Research

This study focused on exploring the perceptions and experiences of EFL teachers during the distance online education process caused by the COVID-19 disease with the hope of extending the scope of future inquiry and teaching. However, to gain more sophisticated results, students can also be added to study, and learner perspectives can be searched in-depth. Additionally, when analyzing the gathered data, gender, age, educational status, teaching level, years of teaching experience, and weekly teaching hours of teachers were determined as variables in this study. Likewise, these variables can be investigated in-depth from different perspectives in the future. Also, classroom observations can be made in order to see the timely challenges and how teachers manage the situations. Finally, future research can comprise a bigger sample to reach generalizable and more reliable results.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Digital Literacy of English Language Teachers in Turkey throughout COVID-19 Outbreak – Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to explore the experiences of English Language Teachers of the Ministry of Education in Turkey during the COVID-19 outbreak. The purpose is to identify the efficiency of the digital teaching process and the EBA (EIN) platform, in terms of the difficulties faced in developing and teaching online materials, and how to evaluate learning outcomes in online platforms. The information you provide will only be used within the objectives of the relevant scientific research. Your personal information will be kept private and confidential. If you have any question, do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your participation and contribution to this study.

Emine DEMİR
emine.demir.1808@gmail.com

Section 1- Demographic Information

Your gender: Female ☐ / Male ☐
Your age:
Your teaching level:
Years of experience:
What is the highest degree you have completed? :
How many hours a week do you teach? :

Section 2- Engagement & Comfort with Technology

After reading the statements in the questionnaire carefully, use the following scale when responding to each statement by circling the number from the scale.

Key: 1- Strongly disagree 2- Disagree 3- Neutral 4- Agree 5- Strongly agree

1. How do you engage and feel about the following statements?

11. I feel competent in using digital technologies for teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I collaborate with my colleagues to design technology-enhanced language teaching activities.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I am interested in learning and reading more about technology-enhanced language teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I feel competent about the use of technology to increase learners' motivation and enthusiasm.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I prefer to receive training and support for the use of technology in my lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I took related courses to technology-enhanced language teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I feel competent in using digital technologies for fun.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I feel competent in choosing appropriate digital tools to support teaching.	1	2	3	4	5

19. I feel competent about designing innovative teaching materials with digital technologies.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I can adapt the use of technologies to different teaching activities.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 3 - Experiences in Online Teaching Practices during the COVID-19 Outbreak

Key: 1- Strongly disagree 2- Disagree 3- Neutral 4- Agree 5- Strongly agree

23. The transition/shift to online learning was too rapid.	1	2	3	4	5
24. The education system was not prepared enough for online education practices.	1	2	3	4	5
25. The infrastructure required for online learning was not ready.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I had a lack of experience in preparing e-learning content.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I had internet connection problems.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Students had internet connection problems.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I could not adapt to online teaching practices.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I am not experienced in using information and communication technologies.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Reliable assessment could not be made in the online education environment.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I felt a lack of knowledge on how to evaluate the learners' knowledge and skills in the online education environment.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Providing constructive feedback to my students was easier in online lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Online education is not efficient in teaching some skills such as listening, reading, writing, or speaking.	1	2	3	4	5
35. In online education, it is difficult to teach according to the individual interests and abilities of the students.	1	2	3	4	5
36. It was challenging to notice common students' understandings and misconceptions in online lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
37. The duration of the course in online education was too short.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Student motivation in online education is lower compared to face-to-face classes.	1	2	3	4	5
39. The school administrators showed positive attitudes and behaviors towards teachers during the online teaching process.	1	2	3	4	5
40. The time schedule of the online sessions (teaching hours) was not suitable.	1	2	3	4	5
41. The number of the online sessions was too many.	1	2	3	4	5
42. I didn't have a suitable environment at home for the online teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
43. Online lectures created extra stress on teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
44. I felt insecure and had some security problems while teaching online.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 4 – The EBA/EIN Platform and Online Teaching
Key: 1- Strongly disagree 2- Disagree 3- Neutral 4- Agree 5- Strongly agree

17. The EBA platform is easy to use for teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
18. The EBA platform is a good component of teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
19. The EBA platform helps me to gain time for online classes.	1	2	3	4	5
20. The EBA platform increased teacher-student interaction.	1	2	3	4	5
21. The EBA platform helped me to increase student-student interaction.	1	2	3	4	5
22. The EBA platform provided facilities for pair and group work in online classes.	1	2	3	4	5
23. The EBA platform requires practical knowledge to use it.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I participated in online seminars and training to use the EBA platform.	1	2	3	4	5
25. The EBA platform made me a more effective teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I could find various materials in the EBA platform.	1	2	3	4	5
27. The EBA platform offers interactive educational content for learners (games, activities, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
28. I have concerns to utilize the EBA platform appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5
29. The EBA platform provided me electronic support when I got confused.	1	2	3	4	5
30. The EBA platform contributes to the development and quality of education.	1	2	3	4	5
31. The EBA platform also consists of numerous sources for learners in the development of language skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing).	1	2	3	4	5
32. I suggest maintaining the usage of the EBA platform after the outbreak.	1	2	3	4	5

Please write down any other comments, suggestions, or strategies you experienced.
…….
……....
…….
…….

Appendix 2. Digital Literacy of English Language Teachers in Turkey and COVID-19 Outbreak – Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your experience with online teaching and the EBA platform. How do you define this process? What are the positive and negative elements of this process? Please tell me what you like or don't like about it?
2. What are the differences between online teaching and face-to-face teaching?
3. What is your opinion about continuation of online learning in your following academic year?
4. Are you satisfied with the online teaching and evaluation? Elaborate your answer with reasons.
5. Which teaching strategies did you use mostly? What are the reasons to use such mode of teaching? How did your teaching style change while teaching online?
6. Which assessment tools did you used to evaluate learning outcomes during online teaching? Was the EBA platform useful for assessment?
7. Were you able to give constructive feedback to your students in online teaching?
8. What were your concerns during online teaching?
9. Did the EBA platform help you to overcome challenges?
10. How was your relationship with students throughout the outbreak?
11. Is there anything further you would like to discuss that we did not ask you regarding the online teaching during the pandemic. How helpful was it for your academic progress?

Appendix 3. Official Response for the Research Population

CİMER | CUMHURBAŞKANLIĞI İLETİŞİM MERKEZİ

Sayın **EMİNE DEMİR,**

T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Merkezi (CİMER)' ne 06.03.2021 tarihinde yapmış olduğunuz 2101118565 sayılı başvurunuz 10.03.2021 tarihinde KAHRAMANMARAŞ İL MİLLİ EĞİTİM MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ tarafından cevaplanmıştır:

Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Merkezine yapmış olduğunuz başvurunuz incelenmiştir.

Başvurunuzda yer alan, İlimizde görevli ingilizce öğretmeni sayısı 806'dır. Diğer taraftan, konu ile ilgili yüksek lisansınıza dayanak teşkil edecek anket vb. çalışmalarınızda Müdürlüğümüz ilgili birimlerine müracaat ederek uygunluk izni almanız gerektiğini saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.

Appendix 4. Approval Document of Ethics Committee

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 01/03/2021-43367

T.C.
ÇUKUROVA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü

Sayı :E-95704281-604.02.02-43367

01/03/2021

Konu :Etik Kurul Onay Belgesi

YABANCI DİLLER EĞİTİMİ BÖLÜM BAŞKANLIĞINA

İlgi : 54767575 - 31/12/2020 tarihli, 156916 sayılı ve "Etik Kurulu Değerlendirme" konulu yazı,

İlgi yazınız ekinde Enstitümüz Müdürlüğüne gönderilen İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı 2018931095 no'lu yüksek lisans öğrencisi Emine DEMİR'in danışmanı Prof. Dr. Yonca ÖZKAN'ın yönetiminde hazırladığı Kahramanmaraş ilinde Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı bünyesinde çalışan İngilizce öğretmenleri ile planlanan yüksek lisans tezi çalışmasının yürütülmesi için "Etik Kurul Onay Belgesi" ekte sunulmuştur.

Gereğini bilgilerinize rica ederim.

Prof.Dr. Serap ÇABUK

Enstitü Müdürü Ek:Etik Kurul Onay Belgesi