

A Comparative Study of the Effectiveness of Online and Conventional Instructions on Learners' Productive Skills Development

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ABSTRACT

In the current millennium, the integration of instructional technologies has become mandatory, especially when the focus of instruction is only on fluency and correct learning. English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers believe that students can achieve an adequate level of fluency and accuracy only if they speak and write English with less difficulty and more spontaneity. For this purpose, instructors ceaselessly seek versatile ways and approaches to enrich the teaching of four language skills (mainly the productive ones). Online sources provide both students and instructors with various ranges of software applications and platforms to actively involve in different class activities. This study aims to pinpoint the effectiveness of both online and conventional teaching on learners' productive skills and to examine which mode of instruction leads to constructive output of EFL learners. Furthermore, this article considers teachers' attitudes and learners' perceptions on the use of online instruction in EFL classrooms. This research uses a qualitative approach by means of an interview and a questionnaire designated to 15 EFL teachers and 400 learners in a private university in Turkey. The results of this study reveal that both teachers and learners prefer having Hybrid instruction (the combination of both online and face-to-face models) in teaching and learning productive skills, so the findings of this research can assist EFL teachers, material designers and policy makers to include Hybrid education in their curricula.

Key words: Online Instruction, Conventional Instruction, Productive Skills, Teachers and Learners' Perceptions, Online Classroom Interactions

INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 brought revolutionary changes in teaching and learning due to the spread of the corona virus, which compelled the academicians, educators, teachers, and students to adapt themselves to a very new and highly innovative method of teaching and learning in the form of online education. The development of digital technology is very influential in the scope of education in the world; likewise, universities in Turkey have transitioned to online teaching after their completion of preparations for online learning platforms and tools.

Productive language skills are important because they are the observable evidence of language acquisition. The more the speaker or the writer produces appropriate and coherent language, the more we have proof of the progress in the learners' language system. Teaching productive skills is paramount because written and spoken communication are basic life skills. In real life, people generally may need to inform, convince, or share ideas. They are sometimes required to write emails, letters, and reports or to take notes and fill in forms.

Since classrooms are no longer considered a one-way communication environment in which the teacher is at

the center and the students are at the peripheral English language, teachers face a significant difficulty in making speaking and writing tasks beneficial to students. English language teachers are continually demanded to adapt their teaching methods to our present time in order to make students interested in learning, improving their speaking, and writing skills. Teachers in the COVID-19 period have been confronted with a variety of issues that have pushed them to deal with a new teaching strategy without any prior notice. Considering the vital role that technologies perform in the learning process, this study endeavors at analyzing the role of conventional and online teaching in improving productive skills as they are regarded equally essential in the communicative process.

Westrup and Baker (2003, p. 5) states, "a student who can speak English well may have a greater chance for further education, of finding employment and gaining promotion". However, speaking and writing are considered a major challenge among learners since the majority of them believe that learning a foreign language is a difficult task to achieve. Rumpagaporn and Darmawan (2007) emphasize that the teacher-student interaction approach is a turning point in

building the students' body of knowledge and boosting students' critical thinking and reasoning. They point out that when students receive knowledge in a non-centered teaching environment, they strongly build a remarkable sense of critical thinking skills, "such as gathering knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation in classrooms where supportive learning environments are presented".

This study aims to investigate some of the positive and negative aspects that EFL teachers and learners might face in regard to teaching and learning productive skills in EFL online classes. Based on the problem and gap mentioned in the above paragraphs, the following main questions can be investigated to attain the expected results of the study.

1. Which mode of instruction (Online or Conventional) enhances students' productive skills?
2. What are the difficulties faced by EFL teachers and learners in teaching and learning productive skills in online classrooms?
3. Which mode of instruction (Online or Conventional) is the EFL teachers and learners' preferences?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The outbreak of COVID-19 around the world and the abrupt closure of schools have forced all Turkish EFL teachers and students to use online education in the EFL classrooms. It is a fact that there has been a high demand for productive skills in universities in Turkey, these skills are both functional and communicative and assist learners to accomplish tasks. Similarly, they are the skills that are predominantly emphasized in language fluency, particularly with respect to presentations, homework assignments, and class participation as a whole. This is not to say that receptive skills (listening and reading) are not important. It should be stated that Turkish students consider speaking and writing the most challenging skills of the EFL curriculum. Sentence building and meaning creation are two equally important aspects of human speech's intelligibility.

Some studies show that online students outperform their face-to-face counterparts when given the same conditions (Zhang et al., 2004). Other studies have revealed no difference in outcomes between students who took their courses online and those who took them in person. More modern techniques, on the other hand, use the Community of Inquiry (COI) framework to build online teaching and learning, the COI framework is an approach that supports the processes of teaching and learning in online settings. Within the online context, this framework indicates three crucial characteristics for teachers: (a) social presence, (b) cognitive presence, and (c) teaching presence. Instructors are not visible in online environments, as they are in traditional face-to-face teaching (Savery, 2010). He has related the idea of visibility to the concept of social presence and describes social presence as the "degree of feeling, perception, and reaction of being related to another intellectual entity" (Savery, 2010, p. 142). Teaching presence, which Garrison et al. (2010, p. 32) define as "the design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of attaining

personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes", is a crucial component of online education. For online students, not feeling the teacher's presence might be frustrating.

According to Alberth (2011), while some teachers may have good attitudes toward online education, others may have serious doubts. In regard to teaching online, teachers who believe in the use of technology have more excitement and drive, as well as a stronger capability to meet the obstacles of online learning. Students may notice these sentiments. Students' motivation, involvement, and engagement in online activities are all influenced by the instructor's facilitation skills. According to Panckhurst and Marsh (2011), the instructor's role is changing as control is being replaced by influence. Teachers no longer have power over the classroom; instead, they now have power over a network. The second component of the COI paradigm is cognitive presence, which comprises exchanging information, connecting ideas, and putting new notions into practice. (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007). Ni (2013) conducted a two-year study to compare student performance in online and face-to-face public administration classrooms in terms of interaction and efficacy. All online and face-to-face classes used the same program and were taught by the same instructor. The findings of student performance records and questionnaires showed that student performance is unaffected by the style of instruction. Furthermore, statistics suggest that 10% of students failed online classrooms compared to only 4% in face-to-face sessions, and failure in online classes was primarily due to students dropping out.

Teacher presence is vital in terms of the systemic, affective, and cognitive aspects of the teacher's job, according to Murphy (2015) and her colleagues; it helps to develop a positive teacher-student connection. There are particular factors that determine the performance of online instructors, in addition to maintaining fluent communication and an online presence: (a) attitude toward technology, (b) teaching style, and (c) control of the technology (Alberth, 2011; Hampel & Stickler, 2005; Murphy, 2015).

Although Hampel and Stickler (2015) claim that online language teaching is a socio-constructivist undertaking, many instructors continue to use technology to adapt new tools to their own old teaching style, despite being aware of this theoretical trend. Instead, they should be learning new abilities that will allow them to employ pedagogically transformative practice to empower both online teachers and online students. According to Aherrahrou and Makhoukh (2016), including online education in the classroom and as part of the students' learning process (guided or independent) would be a tremendous benefit to their linguistic development. Likewise, there is a great deal of attention paid to the correlation between technology and productive skills due to the "cognitive strategies and generic competencies that are instrumental to today's student-centered, flipped classroom" (Pérez Cañado, 2018, p. 1). There are some studies which claim that face-to-face students had a better performance than online students (Heppen et al., 2017), while others show that there is no significant differences in the

outcomes of face-to-face and online students (Ni, 2013, Montiel-Chamorro, 2018).

In conventional classrooms, one of the effective ways to teach productive skills is engaging the learners in a variety of interactive activities such as ice-breakers, videos, games, and role plays (Burns & Siegel, 2018); however, the pandemic had an impact on teaching and learning environment throughout the world. According to some current studies, teachers and learners did not think online education is an effective way of teaching and learning productive skills due to interactional and technical issues (Astuti & Solikhah, 2021; Erarslan, 2021; Mahyoob, 2020; Payne, 2020). On the other hand, some researches show that when the students are highly motivated, teaching speaking skill does not require much challenge and effort in an online environment (Alzamil, 2021; Kusumawati, 2020). Overall, the use of online education in EFL instruction, particularly when teaching productive skills, is becoming an unavoidable need, as it has been shown to alter classroom dynamics and positively affect learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Speaking and writing are, in fact, two of the most important indicators of literacy. As a result, they should be taught in a formal and stimulating atmosphere, as the world is becoming more digitalized than ever before, and technology is pervasive across all domains. In the coming years, the EFL classroom should use more inventive and novel teaching methods.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to explore the impact of online and conventional instructions on students' productive skills improvement. This study was conducted in Turkey in 2021 which all classes were taught online throughout the year. To investigate the research questions, which were developed to meet the objectives of this study, a qualitative research design that employed qualitative data collection procedure was adopted. Descriptive method was conducted due to some advantages such as interviews or surveys to gather the data, its fast and cost-effectiveness, and comprehensiveness factors. During COVID-19, the researchers largely relied on teacher-based or learner-based questionnaires and interviews to get the most data from participants. This study utilized a qualitative approach to gain insights into the meanings, interpretations, experiences and feelings of the research participants ascribed to the role that online instruction plays in improving productive skills of EFL learners, it means that the study has a qualitative tendency (Maxwell, 1996). Finally, understanding the construction of meaning was a central issue in this research, so the interview and the survey methods assisted the researcher in learning how different individuals explain the role which online instruction plays in teaching and learning a foreign language (Creswell, 2013).

Participants

The study was conducted at a university in Istanbul, Turkey in 2021. Fifteen EFL instructors with different teaching experiences (from 7 to 15 years) participated in this study.

It should be noted that the same teachers who taught both conventional and online courses were selected for this study. The teachers in Preparation Program constantly participate in Continuous Professional Development sessions that are run by a qualified trainer twice in each month in both modes of instruction. All teachers are observed during each module by a certified trainer and all of them in each level follow the same teaching materials, books and syllabus prepared by experienced syllabus designers. It should be stated that all teachers had to attend training sessions of how to run online classes by using different platforms and applications such as Zoom before teaching their online lessons.

The learners of English Preparation Program in all levels: Elementary, Pre-intermediate- Intermediate and Upper Intermediate were the participants whose final productive skills scores (in both conventional and online modes of learning) were collected from the Testing office of the university. It should be noted that the final scores of speaking and writing exams of the learners who took the Preparation Program before pandemic (Face-to-Face instruction) were used to be compared with the online scores. In addition, the Google Form questionnaire was designed and emailed to all learners in Preparation Program to obtain their ideas about the role of online learning in their productive skills progress. English Preparation Program can be regarded as an intensive English course for students who are expected to complete their faculty education in English. The English Preparation Program, which takes one full academic year, meets accredited standards of English instruction, and at the end of the course, students are expected to gain a C1 level of English language skills.

Materials and Instruments in both Conventional and online Modes

The Versant™ English Placement Test (VEPT) is a diagnostic tool, which assesses a person's ability to comprehend and apply English in everyday situations, was used by the School of languages as a valid Placement test before the start of the course to place each student in the right level. The VEPT is for adults and students over the age of 16, and it takes about 50 minutes to complete. This test is created specifically for English language learners to measure their speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities using a computer. The VEPT was used in both conventional and online programs to place the learners in the appropriate levels.

The book and supplementary materials for both conventional and online courses were the same, (New Language Leader and the related listening/reading/writing supplementary materials). All online lessons were carried out via Zoom throughout the year and all students' homework and exams were conducted through Google Classroom, Google document, Canvas, and Edpuzzle.

The instruments consisted of a questionnaire for the learners and an interview via Zoom with the teachers in the current study. The questionnaire and the interview were designed to obtain the learners and teachers viewpoints qualitatively to explore the participants' perceptions

regarding the pros and cons and the related obstacles in online instruction. Hence, the researcher ensured to incorporate questions that were relevant to the research topic in order to yield reliable results that would be conducive to making firm conclusions about EFL teachers and learners' perceptions and attitudes toward the role of online instruction in teaching and learning of productive skills, as well as the different obstacles during COVID-19. The questionnaire for the learners encompassed some close-ended and open-ended questions to receive their opinions. Impetus behind the use of open-ended questions was to give enough room to learners to describe the online learning experiences and the obstacles encountered by them.

Two experienced instructors were asked to review and evaluate the questionnaire and the interview questions, and the results of the evaluation revealed that two questions sounded a bit too broad. Therefore, the researcher took the remark into consideration and made the questions more specific. The questionnaire was sent out to learners via Google Form. Meanwhile, another email was sent to invite the teachers to participate in the interview. Conducting interviews help researchers to have a better understanding of participants' opinions, experiences and behaviors. Interview questions were open-ended type so that in-depth information could be collected easily.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection tools of the current study consisted of, as noted above, an online questionnaire and interviews. In line with the research questions, the researcher used the following interview questions:

1. Which mode of instruction (online Instruction or conventional Instruction) enhances students' productive skills?
2. What obstacles do you face in teaching of productive skills in online instruction?
3. Do you think the evaluation of productive skills seem to be an issue in online instruction?
4. What are your experience of online teaching? What is your preference mode of English language teaching? Online, Conventional or Hybrid?

The result of the questionnaire was collected through Google Form. The online interviews were recorded and lasted approximately 20 minutes in length per person. The researcher collected the data via online interviews with Zoom with 15 participants. These online interviews also allowed the researcher to get an opportunity to search for further information and future research.

The final speaking and writing exam scores of 400 learners (200 students before the pandemic and 200 students during the pandemic) were selected randomly from each level in both conventional and online instructions. It should be emphasized that as a policy of the decision makers, two teachers were responsible for grading the writing papers and speaking exams in both conventional and online instructions in each module in all levels to minimize the subjectivity of grading.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed through two steps: Obtaining the data of the questionnaire based on 4-point Likert Scale, Checkboxes, Multiple Choice, and open-ended item types on Google Form, and interpreting the percentages and comments. Meanwhile, the data from the recorded interviews were transcribed. Then, the important data from the interviews was used either to support or to contradict the data from the questionnaire results.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results will be presented in two sections:

First, the data coming from the teachers' interviews will be discussed;

Second, the data from the learners' survey will be demonstrated and compared with teachers' perceptions.

Teachers' perceptions

Teachers' perceptions were investigated in terms of four aspects: usefulness of online instruction in enhancement of learners' productive skills, obstacles in online teaching, evaluation of online instruction for teaching productive skills, and finally their attitudes toward online instruction.

Teachers' perceptions of the usefulness of online instruction in enhancement of learners' productive skills

The teachers utilized a variety of tools to teach productive skills online, using mainly Google Classroom, Google Document, Canvas, different websites, breakout rooms on Zoom, Padlet, Socrative, Miro, virtual online board. The teachers stressed that most of the above-mentioned tools were being used in the conventional mode, but they were using them more in online mode since the nature of online instruction required this.

Table 1 illustrates that the majority of teachers (53.33%) believed that conventional mode is suitable for teaching speaking skills and online mode is more effective for writing skill. On the contrary, 20% of the teachers pointed out that conventional is the best mode to teach productive skills due to cheating issues in the exams by the learners and their dependency on technology. Only 13.33% of the teachers stressed that the online mode was the best option for teaching productive skills, and 13.33% thought that there was no difference between the modes in enhancing students' productivity; it was the teacher's teaching method and personalities of the learners which motivated them to improve their productive skills.

Table 1. Percentages of the usefulness of both modes of instructions

Speaking skill	Writing skill	Number of Teachers <i>f</i> (%)
Conventional	Online	8 (53.33)
Conventional	Conventional	3 (20)
Online	Online	2 (13.33)
No difference	No difference	2 (13.33)

The obstacles of online instruction in teaching Productive skills

The participants were asked about the obstacles that might impeded the teaching of productive skills, most of the teachers had no difficulty of teaching productive skills in online instruction, and it can be interpreted that conducting constant online Professional Development sessions had a crucial role in this regard.

Conducting interviews with the teachers provided the opportunity for the researcher to gain some potential obstacles in online environment. Most of the participants agreed that the main constraint to the use of online instruction in teaching of productive skills was poor Internet connectivity since online teaching is dependent on the Internet connection. Teachers found themselves facing some issues such as poor network providers alongside unreliable and slow Internet and power cuts from the students' side that made online teaching more challenging especially during exams. More specifically while giving instruction, teachers had to repeat the same instruction several times due to some connectivity or technical issues and it made teachers spend much time on a section in a lesson; as a result, time management was a noticeable issue that many teachers complained. Viewed this way, the teaching of productive skills in online mode requires steady network performance, for any kind of internet fluctuation may cause distraction and disturbance inside the instructional setting.

Another commonly emerging obstacle to the use of online instruction among the participants was learners' dependency on technology such as Google Translate, Grammarly, and Spell Check. It was believed that most of the students used different applications in speaking and writing lessons to boost their classroom performance scores. Majority of the teachers remarked that in speaking activities students resorted to some online applications to find the English equivalent of Turkish lexis. Thus, using online devices and applications by the learners interrupted the natural flow of speaking and made the interactions more mechanical.

For some teachers, physical movement was an essential element in English language classrooms.

One of the participants stated that:

Teachers and students cannot walk around to do some speaking activities such as role-plays in a real physical environment and this leads to have less meaningful classroom interactions.

Encouraging students to participate in a variety of online activities and repeating frequently not to turn off the camera was a major concern of all teachers. Furthermore, many participants reported issues regarding the low level of motivation of some learners and limited interactions during class-time, and they pointed out that involving students to actively participate was difficult in online classrooms especially when there was no real human rapport and interactions. For instance,

There is not human rapport and interactions in online lessons, teachers and students are virtually present, but it lacks meaningful interactions... social presence is a key factor in social communications in teaching a language

which cannot be seen in an online environment...it might demotivate learners in achieving their goals.

One of the obstacles, according to Savenye (2005) is to maintain the students' motivation actively in online education. You and Kang (2014) point out that learners who are not enthusiastic about online learning have poor quality work or late assignments. Meanwhile, "successful students tend to have stronger beliefs; they will succeed higher self-responsibility, higher self-organization skills, and better technical skills and access". Chaney (2001) believes that learners should monitor their motivating factors because that will contribute to the continuance of learning duration. The students who lose their motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, can lose their achievement. Learning can happen in three areas: the learner's interaction with the instructor, the learner's interaction with other learners, and the learner's interaction with the topic. Online learning will be a failure if communication and engagement between students and teachers are ineffective, as one of the participants mentioned it:

I think online learning is ineffective for teaching productive skills. During online learning the students seem passive and some of them are not motivated, they are unwilling to participate in discussion activities or writing tasks.

It can be concluded that there are some variables which affect online education such as: the Internet infrastructure, learning styles, engaging and motivating learning activities, cheating tools, and teachers' attitudes towards online instruction. Future studies can be conducted in different countries with different teaching and learning tools and the findings can be compared with the result of the current study.

Evaluation of productive skills in online instruction

The evaluation of students' productive skills in online instruction was the third question of the interview and Table 2 provides the summary of the teachers' responses.

Table 2 reflects that 40% of teachers agreed that they faced no problems regarding the evaluation of productive skills; on the contrary, it worked better than conventional type. They supported their ideas by expressing that they could spend much time to give feedback to students due to the flexibility of online instruction, in addition, the teachers emphasized that the recording of the lessons and sharing the screen on Zoom enabled them to give further feedback to the learners. Five teachers (33.33%) stressed this fact that writing skill could be evaluated conveniently, but there were some issues in terms of speaking evaluation. Teachers agreed that

Table 2. Evaluation of productive skills

Item	f(%)
There is no issue regarding online evaluation of productive skills.	6 (40)
Online evaluation does not work well for speaking skill.	5 (33.33)
Online evaluation is not suitable for productive skills.	2 (13.33)
Discrepancies among teachers make online evaluation more difficult.	2 (13.33)

monitoring all students' speaking activities simultaneously was not possible in breakout rooms on Zoom, students did not do the task unless the teacher showed up, furthermore, being unable to record the speaking activities in the breakout room was another drawback of online evaluation. Lack of sufficient paralinguistic features such as body movements, gestures, postures, and eye contacts were another major concern for teachers to evaluate students' oral performances.

Another issue was raised by two teachers who stressed that online instruction was not appropriate for productive skills due to some Internet connection issues, some online applications, e.g., Grammarly, Google Translate, Spell Check used by many learners during the lessons and in some cases during the exams, made the teachers frustrated. Although the students were required to use two cameras while taking exams and oral presentations, the teachers were obliged to check the students during the exams constantly.

An intriguing idea can be drawn from two teachers who considered the productive skills evaluation from another perspective. These teachers stated that evaluation of learners' online exams was not very easy due to different interpretations of the rubrics in both speaking and writing exams, in fact, it was believed that some teachers might misunderstood the rubrics or they used their own styles for grading learners productive exam papers. For instance,

Different interpretations or misunderstandings of the rubrics in both writing and speaking exams may occur; teachers might face communication problems; in online mode, it takes a bit longer to get things done than in conventional mode.

To investigate the differences of learners' speaking and writing scores in online and conventional modes, the researcher compared the exam results of 400 learners of both speaking and writing exams in both instructions. The comparison is provided in Table 3 and Table 4.

It can be observed that there are not noticeable differences between the scores of speaking and writing exams for the levels in both types of instructions except for the Pre-intermediate

Table 3. Mean scores of speaking exams in Conventional and Online instructions

Level	Mean scores in Conventional mode	Mean score in Online mode
Elementary	16.31	17.75
Pre-intermediate	14.24	17.08
Intermediate	16.01	16.89
Upper intermediate	16.11	16.59

Table 4. Mean scores of writing exams in Conventional and Online Instructions

Level	Mean scores in Conventional mode	Mean score in Online mode
Elementary	14.59	15.71
Pre-intermediate	14.28	16.15
Intermediate	14.83	15.88
Upper intermediate	14.57	15.05

level which the mean score of speaking exam is (14.24 out of 20) and (17.08 out of 20) in conventional and online modes respectively. The mean score of writing exam is (14.28 out of 20) in conventional mode and (16.15 out of 20) in online one. It can be interpreted that there was a huge discrepancy among graders for that level in productive skills. Referring to the third question of the interview about the evaluation of online instruction, some of the teachers pointed out that there was the feasibility of discrepancies and misinterpretations of the rubric among some teachers and the probability of cheating by learners during the exams. Thus, the finding of exam results comparison in both instructions supports the teachers' beliefs regarding misinterpretations of some teachers in grading the writing papers and speaking exam.

Teachers attitudes toward online instruction

Majority of teachers mentioned they had a positive experience of teaching English online since most of them familiarized with the latest online teaching aids and platforms during Professional Development sessions.

One of the participants stated that:

At first, I was against online teaching because I did not have enough computer technology knowledge, but then I loved teaching online and I like to continue online due to the support received from the manager, coordinators, and Professional Development trainers.

Another teacher added:

It is a good experience, we are doing successfully in our school, learning how to adjust to a different circumstance, sharing colleagues' ideas, knowing and improving our ability in technology.

Some teachers had some opposite experiences such as the following:

I prefer to socialize with my colleagues and students, I feel bored and sometimes depressed! I have missed writing on the whiteboard, I would like to walk around, have some movements while teaching.

Table 5 presents that the majority of the teachers (60%) stated that they would prefer to continue the coming year in Hybrid mode since:

- It provides an independence and collaborative atmosphere for learners.
- It allows learners to work at their own pace, to assist them to understand new concepts before moving on.
- Learners can work on their own without receiving full support from teachers, using a combination of digital instruction and face-to-face environment.

Teacher and learners interaction is enhanced through Hybrid instruction to identify mistakes while focusing on the

Table 5. Teaching preferences

Mode of instruction	f(%)
Hybrid instruction	9 (60)
Online instruction	4 (26.66)
Conventional instruction	2 (13.33)

objectives of the learning process. Communication in English language is made perfect through Hybrid instruction because of the exploitation of online tools and resources in both modern and traditional concepts of learning English. Using the Internet helps students in improving key English language skills such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Furthermore, access to online tools and resources give learners an opportunity of revisiting presentations and seminars to brush up their memories and internalize English learning.

Learners' Perceptions

To explore the learners' ideas (89 participants) about the impact of online instruction on their productive skills improvement, a survey containing both close-ended and open-ended items was conducted.

Learners' perceptions of the role of online and Conventional modes in improving their productive skills

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the learners' responses about the comparison of online and conventional instructions in both

speaking and writing skills improvement based on 4-point Likert Scale from Extremely Ineffective to Extremely Effective.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 present that 64% of learners agreed that Face-to-Face instruction was extremely effective in improving their speaking skill, whereas, only 15.7% of participant stated that speaking skills could be enhanced by online instruction. In terms of the improvement of writing skill, 43.8% of learners believed that online instruction extremely worked well to improve the writing skill, but it was agreed that 28.1% of online instruction could be extremely effective in boosting their writing skill.

By comparing the data from the teachers' interview results and the learners' survey, it can be concluded that the learners' perceptions are quite similar to teachers' where 64% of learners and 53.33% of teachers agreed on the effectiveness of conventional mode of learners' speaking skill improvement. On the other hand, 43.8% of the learners believed that conventional instruction is extremely effective to improve writing lessons and only 28.1% emphasized the role of online instruction on their writing skill improvement which is in contrast with what teachers expressed.

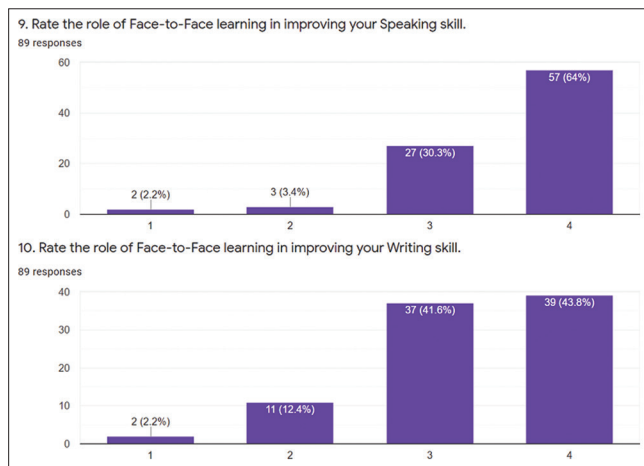


Figure 1. The role of Conventional mode in productive skills improvement

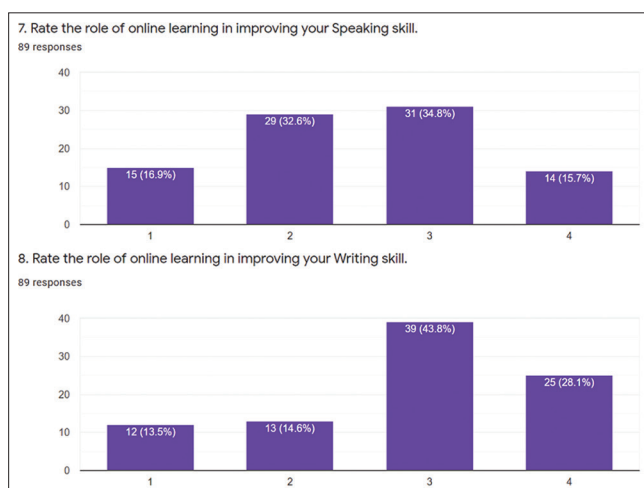


Figure 2. The role of online mode in productive skills improvement

Learners' opinions about the advantages and the disadvantages of online instruction

Figure 3 and Figure 4 illustrate the positive and negative aspects of online instruction from the learners' perspectives.

According to the results of the survey, access to online materials plays a prominent role in online instruction, 67.4% of the respondents agreed that the use of a variety of online educational tools and platforms provided for them during the lessons helped them to learn productive skills easily. The second advantage of online learning is having the opportunity of being at home and spending time with the family, and the last positive point is learning on their own pace with 44.9%, which can be interpreted that the although the learners had much time to study, they might be unable to manage their learning pace properly.

Furthermore, an open-ended question was administered for the same item to gain some other advantages from the learners and only 6% of the learners mentioned managing the time for studying, saving time and money for commuting, focusing much on the lessons due to lack of social life were other privileges of online learning.

Figure 4 gives some information about the disadvantages of online learning. It appears that technical and Internet connection problems were the main concern of learners (80.9%) and lack of natural interactions with teachers and other students (77.5%) was the second concern. Based on the results of the open-ended section, 7% of the learners pointed out that online learning lead to insufficient concentration, inefficiency in learning, low motivation, boring learning experience, and monotonous lessons.

The learners' motivation in online instruction

According to the findings, students' lack of motivation is another major challenge they confronted. Given that student

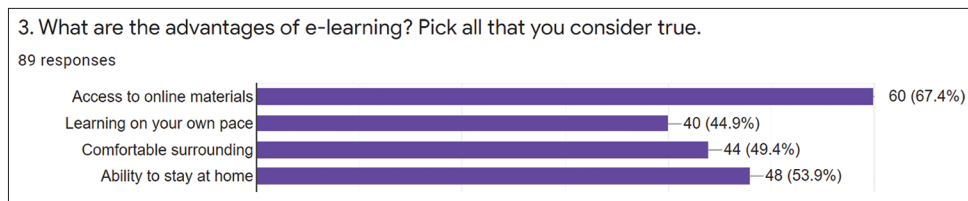


Figure 3. The advantages of online instruction

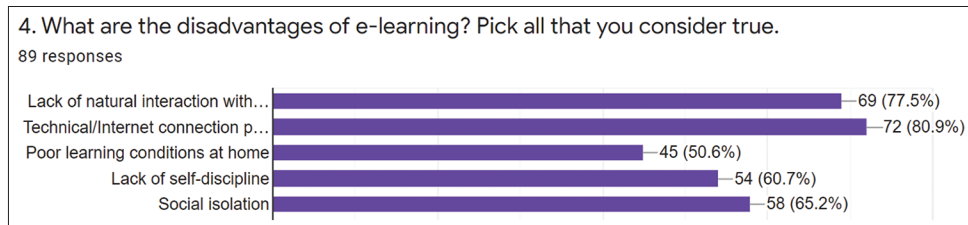


Figure 4. The disadvantages of online instruction

motivation is one of the most important parts of L2 learning (Dörnyei, 1994), any threat to student motivation jeopardizes learning efficacy, posing a dilemma for both students and teachers.

Figure 5 presents the level of motivation in online instruction based on 4-point Likert Scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, which 36% of the learners agreed that the level of motivation was low in an online environment, whereas, just 21.3% strongly agreed that the motivation level was high. Thus, there is a consensus between teachers and learners' perceptions that the online instruction does not encourage learners to increase their motivation.

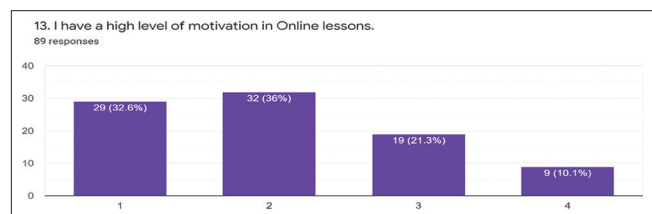


Figure 5. The level of motivation in online instruction

Learners' opinions about their preference mode of language learning

It is obvious from Figure 6 that there is not a huge difference between Face-to-Face and Hybrid instructions. The first preference for the learners is Face-to-Face (46.1%) following with Hybrid instruction (44.9%), comparing with the gained data from the teachers perceptions, Hybrid mode is the teachers' first option (60%), online mode (26.66%) and Face-to-Face (13.33%) respectively. It seems the teachers' first preference is the Hybrid mode, however, the learners would prefer to learn English in conventional mode.

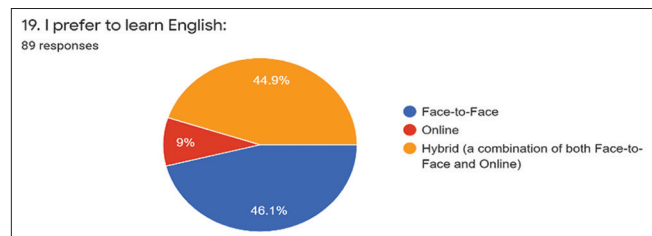


Figure 6. Learning preferences

DISCUSSION

This paper aimed to explore the perceptions of learners and teachers about the effectiveness of online instruction on learners' productive skills improvement in an EFL context in Turkey. The findings of this study underline the importance of interaction as a fundamental ingredient in engaging students in an online course, as well as the critical role of student/teacher perceptions in deciding and mediating the teaching and learning experience's success.

The responses of students and teachers revealed some useful information between how these groups perceived course effectiveness. The use of technology by itself does not have an impact on teachers' perceptions; effective teacher Professional Development programs should go

beyond the basics of "what" platforms are the best or "how" to use applications and tools to focus on understanding and utilizing the characteristics that shape interaction and boost motivation level in an online environment. Teacher education programs should emphasize how to promote social presence and collaboration in online classrooms. Students' and teacher's social contact, which may occur spontaneously in a face-to-face class, must be actively incorporated into the design of an online course. According to Rubin et al. (2013), one of the characteristics of a successful online course, is the ability to construct a COI where learners, instructors, and learning materials interact to gain knowledge and skills. The framework establishes a set of standards and concepts for ensuring effective learning environments and positive educational outcomes (Akyol & Garrison, 2013).

Additional ways for online students to improve their speaking skills should be considered as well. Students may benefit from online activities with peers who are native speakers of English and conducting regular "chatting" sessions with their classmates and teachers might enhance their oral performances. Ni (2013) believes that outcomes do not

differ significantly between methods of instruction; the variations that discovered were related to the students' characteristics than to the style of instruction. This study did not go into detail about student characteristics, but according to the teachers' interviews, students who completed all of the coursework were organized, disciplined, and motivated.

Online education is a fascinating new option to learn almost anything; it has had a good impact on both students and instructors' lives. The quality of education has improved since the use of technology is increasing swiftly. Both students and instructors have a positive attitude about online classes. However, there is always an opportunity for improvement. This involves things like improving infrastructure, improving the Internet connectivity, developing rural areas, and changing students and teachers' attitudes about online education. Colleges and other educational institutions must provide sufficient training courses and give support to both students and teachers on the use of online classes that will make them feel more at ease in the future.

Standardization of grading system of productive skills is another crucial issue which needs to be considered by universities and English language institutions. To gain a better grasp of grading and assessing English as a Foreign Language, teachers must be supported by conducting more training sessions, as a result, it leads to consistency in grading among teachers and makes students satisfied. The study also demonstrated that while online instruction will play a larger role in the future, it will not be able to replace traditional Face-to-Face classroom learning. Both teachers and learners were in favor of the combination of both modes in the current study, so it can be suggested that Hybrid or Blended instructions can satisfy teachers and students in the future. It is difficult to make the whole switch to online education. However, the advantages of online education should not be overlooked. As a result, it is necessary to comprehend the obstacles of online learning and to take corrective actions to overcome them.

CONCLUSION

The education system in Turkey switched from face to face to online during the pandemic, and teachers and learners had to use different teaching and learning platforms and tools. They confronted with some issues because the system was totally new and challenging. The teachers had some difficulties to maintain the students' level of engagement and motivation high, and they had to involve the learners in online activities. The present study focused on investigating the effect of online and conventional instructions on English language learners' productive skills improvement. To meet the purpose of this study, interviews with the teachers were conducted and the students were asked to complete a questionnaire. Different educational tools and platforms were utilized to observe their effectiveness on online education. To conclude, both teachers and learners were in favor of Hybrid instruction and it was agreed that this mode of instruction leads to better improvement of productive skills. There are some recommendations for decision makers and teacher trainers to prepare teachers and learners to update

and modify their methods and teaching materials in case if a similar crisis happens.

The number of participants as teachers did not exceed 15; therefore, caution needs to be considered for generalizing the findings of this research. In addition, the lack of sufficient studies related to this research can be the second limitation of this article.

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