CUDES JOURNAL — CURRENT DEBATES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

Güleç, H. & Noyan, E. (2023). Turkish EFL Instructors' Views on Emergency Remote Online Teaching: Challenges, Opportunities and Suggestions. *Journal of Current Debates in Social Sciences*, 6(2), 158-174.

Research Article

Turkish EFL Instructors' Views on Emergency Remote Online Teaching: Challenges, Opportunities and Suggestions

İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Acil Uzaktan Çevrimiçi Öğretim ile İlgili Görüşleri: Zorluklar, Fırsatlar ve Öneriler

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DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.29228/cudes.73582

Article Info

Received: 11.11.2023
Accepted: 25.11.2023

Keywords: emergency remote online teaching, challenges and opportunities in online teaching, online foreign language teaching, views of English language instructors, Covid-19

Abstract

The widespread and rapid impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic have led to the adoption of Emergency Remote Online Teaching (EROT) as a mandatory and innovative approach to provide education at all levels. With the aim of exploring the challenges and opportunities that this new educational practice created for instructors working in the Turkish higher education context, this study utilized a qualitative case study approach. Comprehensive interviews were conducted with three English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors, affiliated with a public institution, to reveal their instructional experiences and viewpoints on EROT. Thematic data analysis demonstrated that participants experienced various difficulties and benefits related to EROT and made some suggestions for more effective implementation of it. The findings of the study provide valuable insights not only for the Turkish EFL setting but also for all language education milieus for the future of distance online language education.

Makale Bilgisi

Geliş: 11.11.2023
Onay: 25.11.2023

Anahtar sözcükler: acil uzaktan çevrimiçi öğretim, çevrimiçi öğretimde zorluklar ve fırsatlar, çevrimiçi yabancı dil eğitimi, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin görüşleri, Kovid-19

Öz

Kovid-19 pandemisinin yaygın ve hızlı etkileri, Acil Uzaktan Çevrimiçi Öğretimin (EROT) her düzeyde eğitim sağlamak için zorunlu ve yenilikçi bir yaklaşım olarak benimsenmesine yol açmıştır. Bu yeni eğitim uygulamasının Türkiye'deki yükseköğretim kurumlarında çalışan öğretmenler açısından ne tür zorluklar ve fırsatlar ortaya çıkardığını incelemek amacıyla, bu çalışma nitel bir vaka çalışması olarak yürütülmüştür. Bu amaç ile Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinde çalışmakta olan 3 İngilizce öğretmeni ile derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmış ve böylece bu öğretmenlerin Acil Uzaktan Çevrimiçi Öğretim uygulamasına yönelik tecrübe ve görüşleri anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Tematik veri analizi, katılımcıların EROT ile ilgili çeşitli güçlükler ve avantajlar yaşadıklarını ve EROT'un daha etkili bir şekilde uygulanması için bazı önerilerde bulunduklarını göstermiştir. Bu araştırmanın bulguları yalnızca Türkiye'deki yabancı dil eğitim sistemi için değil, aynı zamanda uzaktan çevrimiçi dil eğitiminin geleceği adına tüm dil eğitimi ortamları için önemli bilgiler vermektedir.

1. INTRODUCTION

In mitigating the effects of the global Covid-19 pandemic on human health, various modifications have been made regarding educational practices, as in other areas of life. In this sense, the most important measure implemented by governments has been the shutdown of schools at all levels, in order to reduce physical and social contact among people so as to minimize the contagious effect of the disease. The closure of educational institutions around the world has led to an urgent transformation of the school system, moving education to remote online platforms (Öztürk Karataş & Tuncer, 2020; Talidong, 2020; Alhaider, 2023). Namely, learning and teaching have persisted despite the closure of schools (Carver, 2020).

Transferring instruction online can provide the flexibility of teaching and learning in any place and at any time but "well-planned online learning experiences are meaningfully different from courses offered online in response to a crisis or disaster" (Hodges et al. 2020: 1). Thus, this quick shift from face-to-face traditional classrooms to virtual ones in a time of uncertainty has led to a new educational practice, that is Emergency Remote Online Teaching (EROT). Making a seamless switch from a conventional educational background to online learning and teaching in a limited amount of time is unfeasible (Xia et al., 2020). So, this rapid transition has been accompanied by a number of challenges (Crawford et al., 2020) along with some opportunities (Toquero, 2020) in all levels of education.

Similar to other higher education institutions all around the world, Turkish universities have also started EROT practices in all areas of study, one of which is foreign language education. Within this context, the aim of this study is to reveal Turkish EFL (English as a foreign language) instructors' views on their way of practicing EROT. By adopting a qualitative case study approach in a state university and unravelling the participants' reactions to and solutions for dealing with their altered way of teaching may provide promising implications beyond the concerned 'case' improve the efficiency and quality of online courses.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Thanks to the advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), education has undergone significant transformations. Those internet-based education practices go by different titles, such as 'online education', 'online learning/teaching', 'e-learning and teaching', 'web-based learning/teaching', or in a more inclusive term 'distance education'. The simple assumption behind these terminologies is that the internet is used "in some way to enhance the interaction between teacher and student" (Curtain, 2002: 12) or the utilization of internet technology to learn and teach educational content. Apart from eliminating physical and time barriers, online education is highly flexible, adaptive, and personalized for the individual, while fostering autonomous learning. In contrast, considering some missing components of face-to-face interaction, an ambience of community and personal relationships must be consciously built in online spaces between learners and teachers and among students (Gacs et al., 2020).

The rapid transition of education from face-to-face classrooms to online platforms has been referred to as online teaching but this type of "crisis-prompted remote language teaching is not comparable to well-designed and carefully planned online language education" (Gacs et al., 2020: 1). Naturally, a cautiously designed online teaching implementation and a necessity-oriented EROT practice differ from each other significantly. The following table outlines the fundamental differences between online learning and emergency remote online teaching (Öztürk Çalık & Altay, 2021: 75).

Table 1

Differences between Online Learning and EROT

Online learning	Emergency remote teaching
Designed purposely to be remote and distant	Activated in response to a crisis or something beyond human control
Regarded as a main mode of education (not an exception) and meant to be a long-term solution	Meant to be temporary
All resources are accessible	May lack resources
Has full faculty support	May not have full faculty support
Accessible and voluntary	Obligatory
Has a detailed planning period	Urgent

As can be discerned from the table above, there are distinct differences between online education and emergency distance education in terms of aim, planning, design, preparation, implementation, evaluation and participation will, etc. "While planned online teaching is characterized by different modalities (e.g., fully online, blended) and modes of communication (e.g., synchronous, asynchronous), remote teaching may actually rely on or avoid technology for instructional purposes" (Moser et al., 2021:2). Additionally, the way remote teaching is carried out in divergent milieus may differ because of access to technology and internet facilities, geographical constraints and infrastructure, socio-economic levels of families, expertise, and experience of teachers, age of students, and institutional/state regulations. Taking into consideration the previous discussion, the current study uses the term 'Emergency Remote Online Teaching (EROT)' to conceptualize the teaching practice applied by the participant teachers in their particular context and time.

The widespread adoption of EROT practices during the pandemic was destined to bring forth a range of problems and difficulties and a variety of other issues as well (Bailey & Lee, 2020). To exemplify, Moser et al. (2021) investigated any noteworthy transformation in the practices and perceptions of PreK-12 and post-secondary foreign language teachers' instruction during Covid-19 in the United States. The German, Spanish, and French language teachers were also asked to compare their prior planned online teaching experience and the emergent one through a Likert-type survey. The participants reported that while engaged in remote teaching, they made multiple modifications to their customary practices, regulations, and expectations. They all voiced their worries about student achievements during the EROT procedures. By analyzing the results, the researchers concluded that "the pandemic presented unique circumstances that potentially reduced student engagement and impacted outcomes" (Moser et al., 2021: 8) and especially PreK-12 language teachers need further support to implement online teaching practices. Pertaining to course implementation, via Indonesian EFL teachers' self-reflection, Atmojo and Nugroho (2020) observed that emergency language teaching through the Internet deters teachers from satisfying preparation and planning lesson stages due to various obstacles.

In another study conducted by Hartshorn and McMurry (2020), the participant ESL (English as a second language) teachers working in an American university conveyed that the transition to virtual and synchronized instruction proved hard, as it entailed various obstacles such as keeping records of student attendance, resolving technical problems, and promoting engaging and interactive tasks. Embracing a similar methodology to the current study, Ghanbari and Nowroozi (2022) presented a descriptive account of how two Iranian EFL teachers coped with EROT challenges at the tertiary level. The participants proposed a range of coping measures to tackle the challenge of online teaching. To address technological difficulties (e.g., broken connections), the teachers employed synchronous and asynchronous devices to keep the learning process going and they became familiar with the virtual landscape and adopted new teacher roles and responsibilities. By diverting the focal point to a more specific issue, Zhang et al. (2021) investigated Chinese EFL teachers' online assessment practices during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study explored how the teachers altered their practices to meet the demands of the new evaluation modality and what factors influenced those alterations. The analysis of qualitative data suggested that "the adjustments in the assessment practices were a mixture of planned and improvised changes" (p. 504) based on national and local policies, contextual factors, and experiential reflections on online assessment practices. In the Turkish EFL context, Meç et al. (2020) sought, through a cross-sectional survey design, to explore English instructors' perceptions of online teaching, particularly the technical, pedagogical, and institutional problems they have come across. The findings signify that the participants confronted a deficit of technical equipment for online classes, an upsurge in the workload and a lack of financial backing from the institution. Along with their overall positive attitude towards EROT, the areas they perceived to be the most challenging were students' lack of motivation and autonomy, the faculty's lack of standards, and internet connection problems. Recently, Avcıoğlu and Altay (2022: 395) also have suggested that "distance English language teaching could be made more effective by taking some instructional, technical, technological, and digital precautions, and through training and guidance".

Considering the findings of all the aforementioned studies, this study aims to extend the literature knowledge of EROT practices by revealing Turkish EFL instructors' views on the relevant issue, and more specifically, to identify their considerations and suggestions based on their own experiences in online EFL classes. The study is believed to guide the betterment of distance language

education implementations thanks to its context-specific implications as well. Fulfilling this purpose, the researchers also try to provide "a roadmap for planning, implementing, and evaluating online education in ideal and in crisis contexts" (Gacs et al., 2020: 1) beyond the local circumstances and the global Covid-19 pandemic.

With this objective in mind, the following research questions are posed:

1. What are the Turkish EFL instructors' views on emergency remote online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of the challenges?
2. What are the Turkish EFL instructors' views on emergency remote online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of the opportunities?
3. What are the Turkish EFL instructors' suggestions for a successful implementation of emergency remote online teaching?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

Within a qualitative inquiry paradigm, the present research is a single case study addressing the emergency remote online teaching practices and views of EFL instructors working at the English preparatory program of a state university placed in South-eastern Anatolia, Turkiye. As has been noted by Yin (2018), as an empirical method, a case study "investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in-depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 23). This study examines a single group as the case, that is all three teachers situated in the intensive English program of the university concerned. The participant teachers were portrayed through semi-structured interviews with an in-depth focus to unravel what they thought about, how they carried out, and what challenges and opportunities they experienced with the emergency remote online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic in their specific context.

3.2. Context and Participants

This study was undertaken at a newly-founded state university that provides intensive English language classes only for the students of English Language and Literature department before they embark on their program of study. Three Turkish EFL instructors participating in this study were among the staff of English preparatory school, but they were only responsible for teaching general English classes to those students. Therefore, purposive sampling method was utilized for the study group. The participants expressed their practices, views, problems and benefits regarding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on EFL teaching during emergency online teaching practices. They all also voiced their concerns about this new teaching method, which they had no previous experience with. The backgrounds of the participant teachers with their pseudonyms are described below to have a better understanding of them.

Table 2

Background Information about the Participants

Hasan	Veysel	Zeynep
Hasan is a 62-year-old male teacher who has been working in the university's School of Foreign Languages for 10 years. He previously taught at the Ministry of National Education for 24 years. He got his BA degree in ELT in 1985 and completed his MA in the field of History in 2014. He is teaching 8 hours of grammar and 8 hours of reading and writing at the intensive program. He is using Zoom as the online teaching platform and the school's Learning Management System (LMS) to assign grammar exams.	Veysel is a 29-year-old male teacher. He has been teaching English for 8 years. He worked at the Ministry of National Education for seven years before he started to work at the university last year. He is holding BA and MA degrees in ELT and going on his PhD in the same field. He is teaching 8 hours of integrated skills and 8 hours of speaking and listening courses at the intensive program. He is using Zoom as the online teaching platform and the textbook′s online platform to assign homework and quizzes.	Zeynep is a 30-year-old female teacher. She has been teaching English for 8 years. She previously taught at the schools of Ministry of National Education for four years before moving to tertiary level. Last year she started working as an instructor at her current institution, but she previously worked at another state university for three years. She holds BA and MA degrees in ELT. She is teaching 16 hours of integrated skills course at the intensive program. She is using Zoom to deliver online classes and the textbook′s online platform to assign homework.

3.3. Data Collection

Interviews have been the most common and core way of collecting data in qualitative inquiries since they allow the researcher to make an in-depth investigation into the phenomenon under investigation (Miles et al., 2014). In the same vein, Richards (2009) brings to the fore that interviews are an instrument that can be used to delve into the truth beneath the surface from the perspectives of participants in order to grasp the nature of their experiences and feelings. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), interviews can be conducted one-to-one or in group/s in a face-to-face way or through the telephone, internet, and e-mails. According to the degree of structure, a researcher may decide to carry out a structured interview (with pre-determined questions), an unstructured interview (without any planned questions), or a semi-structured interview (using pre-prepared questions with sufficient flexibility). Semi-structured interviews enable the interviewer to arrange the direction and guidance of the interview and thus the interviewee might be encouraged to reflect on the issue by changing the order or wording of pre-determined questions (Dörnyei, 2007).

Considering the advantages, semi-structured interviews were employed in the present research as the main data collection tool. Upon asking an ELT professor who is an expert in qualitative research for his opinions of the questions prepared by the researchers, a piloting session was conducted with another instructor working for the same institution, then some amendments were made to the questions based on the expert's view and piloting. The participants were then invited to hold the interviews (see appendix A). With permission of the participants, data were collected through recorded Zoom meetings with three instructors in a one-on-one mode. Each meeting lasted about forty minutes and the interviews were held in the first language of the participants to make them feel comfortable so that they explain themselves better.

3.4. Data Analysis

After completing the data collection phase through the semi-structured interviews, the recorded meetings were transcribed by the researchers collaboratively. The data were then processed through thematic analysis with the purpose of "finding and marking the underlying ideas in the data, grouping similar information together, and relating different ideas and themes to one another" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995: 229). Theming of the interview data or search for themes in the data "requires comparable reflection on participants' meanings and outcomes" (Saldana, 2013: 177). The researchers independently listened to the interviews and iteratively read the transcriptions to code the data as they emerge. The purpose of this coding process was to recognize and name as many ideas as possible that reflect the instructors' challenges and opportunities of emergency remote online teaching. The designated codes were compared by checking the relevance between them so that the themes were generated. Disagreements in identifying the codes and themes (see Table 3 and Table 4 below) were resolved through negotiated consensus among the researchers. The themes identified for each participant were constantly compared to reveal the group's common outcomes. As an effort to ensure the trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of data analysis, a colleague pursuing a Ph.D. in English Language Teaching reviewed the codes and emerging themes along with the transcriptions and then an agreement was reached upon discussions on small differences. Finally, as for member-checking (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007), the researchers also asked the participants to review and comment on the transcriptions and analysis of their cases both for the Turkish and English versions.

4. RESULTS

The purpose of this case study was to provide insight into the experiences of three EFL instructors employed by a Turkish public university who were teaching remotely in the wake of Covid-19. Based on information gathered through online interviews with the instructors and observation of their online classes, which provided insightful viewpoints into the interview data, the drawbacks and benefits of emergency remote online instruction, along with recommendations for future implementation, were provided under the following subtitles.

4.1. Challenges Faced in the Emergency Remote Online EFL Teaching Period

The participants of the current case study reported multiple drawbacks of emergency remote online EFL teaching by comparing it with face-to-face language teaching. Voicing mostly negative views and reservations, they usually accentuated that online teaching cannot serve as a substitute for face-to-face classroom instruction, especially in foreign language education, emphasizing especially on the vitality of an interactive and dynamic atmosphere.

In order to make the common problems that the instructors identified easier to comprehend, they were assigned to codes and themes as presented in table 3.

Table 3

Challenges of Emergency Remote Online English Teaching

Themes	Codes
1. Digital Divide	-Restriction in the number and quality of assignments - Power outages -Unstable internet connection -Insufficient internet allowance -Awkward communication with students residing in rural areas -Financial obstacles faced by students
2. Limitations in Available Online Platforms	-Lack of multiple students' participation -Difficulty in tracking students' movements -Limited pair and group work opportunity -Limited interaction -Limited video storage capacity -Difficulty in tracking students' progress -Difficulty in conducting oral exams or tasks
3. Lack of Attendance	-The dilemma of recording online classes/the negative sides of recorded lectures
4. Lack of a Physical Classroom Setting	-Poor sense of belonging -Inability in establishing a good rapport with students -Lack of peer collaboration -Speaking anxiety -Lack of eye-contact with students
5. Remaining at Home	-Being disturbed by family members -Limited social life
6. Online Privacy	-Deactivated webcams -Anxiety towards recorded lessons
7. Unreliable Assessment	-Placing someone else in the exams -Cheating/googling the answers -It is difficult to prove whether students engage in the exam independently
8. Students' Negative Attitudes Towards Online Education	-Unawareness of the importance of online lessons -The exploitation of the online lessons' conditions
9. Teachers Professional Inadequacy	-Little ICT knowledge -Lack of experience in online teaching and assessment

4.1.1. Digital Divide

The results showed that conducting online courses is hampered by the students' inequality in wealth and technology, their inability to pay for digital amenities and internet infrastructure, and their place of residence. The instructors' complaints over the restricted availability of information and communication technology were identical. It was reported that irregular power outages, intermittent internet access, or students' inadequate internet allowance led to unfavorable interactions, both in and

out of class, with students particularly those from low-income backgrounds or who lived in rural areas. Zeynep claimed that this limited the quantity and quality of assignments offered to students.

Zeynep*: "Not every student has an individual place to live within their residence. For instance, one of my students resides in a rural dwelling characterized by a singular stove in just one room as its primary heating. Despite this constraint, she endeavors to engage in remote instruction by relocating to the sole room within her residence that offers access to the internet but lacks a stove."*

4.1.2. Limitations in Available Online Platforms

One other concern raised by the instructors relates to the limitations imposed by the already accessible web platforms for establishing virtual learning environments. Based on the feedback supplied by the participants, it was seen that the learning management system (LMS) utilized by the university did not include the necessary elements required for facilitating effective language sessions. According to Hasan, establishing eye contact with students proved a challenge, a factor he deems highly significant. Additionally, the instructor expressed that the online teaching platform utilized by the university restricted the ability of numerous students to actively engage through the use of webcams or microphones. This limitation posed challenges in monitoring students' activities and movements. Consequently, the instructor opted against utilizing this platform for conducting online lessons. In a similar vein, Veysel asserted that the online educational platform at their access lacked provisions for collaborative activities such as pair or group work, hence resulting in restricted options for student interaction. The instructor also addressed the issue of video storage capacity on the platform, noting the inability to upload lectures recorded on a different online platform.

Hasan*:"Our university's teaching platform prevents students from simultaneously activating cameras and microphones. Listening to the teacher and typing in the chat box are all that they do. I was unable to instruct on that platform.*

4.1.3. Lack of Attendance

Zeynep identified students' lack of attendance as the primary obstacle she encountered. Consequently, there arose challenges in consistently monitoring students' academic advancement. Furthermore, Veysel expressed his inability to properly evaluate the students' oral proficiency due to the limited engagement observed in online instructional sessions. According to the instructor's point of view, assessing the speaking proficiency of students who are not present poses significant challenges and lacks logical justification. Moreover, Zeynep highlighted her concerns over the video documentation of instructional sessions, as the availability of recorded material may foster a tendency among students to disregard the live sessions.

Zeynep:*" The primary issue is the attendance of the students. Almost all of the students attend face-to-face classes. However, it is sometimes challenging to monitor their academic advancement in online courses, particularly when students frequently exhibit non-attendance."*

Veysel:*" One could only track the progress of pupils who attended online classes. Unfortunately, I couldn't help others. They were unknown to me. I never saw their faces. Only 15-20 students attended courses consistently. I cannot grade non-attenders by their summative exam scores. Only those who regularly attend online sessions can be assessed in terms of productive skills."*

4.1.4. Lack of a Physical Classroom Setting

The findings of the analyses indicate that teachers encountered several obstacles as a result of the absence of a physical classroom setting in distant online teaching. According to Hasan, the practice of online teaching poses limitations on establishing visual contact with students. In a similar vein, Zeynep asserted that students exhibited a deficient sense of engagement with the class and encountered challenges in cultivating a positive relationship with their instructors. She further stated

that the utilization of peer collaboration benefits was not possible. Consequently, the combination of such problems ultimately resulted in a form of speaking anxiety.

Zeynep:*" Online education lacks the authentic ambiance of a physical classroom setting. The establishment of a favorable classroom environment holds significant importance within the realm of language instruction, particularly in the cultivation of speaking proficiency. The students do not experience a sense of belonging within the class. The students are unable to develop a positive relationship with their teachers, resulting in the experience of speaking anxiety."*

Hasan:*" I like to make eye contact with my students due to my instructional personality. I don't think lessons are just theory. I think teachers and students should be spiritually connected.*

4.1.5. Remaining at Home

The examination of interview data and class recordings revealed that the presence of teachers in their homes may give rise to certain challenges. As an illustration, Hasan asserted that his family members expressed dissatisfaction with their limited interactions with him, despite his physical presence within the household. The potential for interruption during online lectures may arise due to the desire of his grandchildren to engage in play with him. In addition, Veysel argued that emergency remote online teaching has also curtailed social interactions, as individuals were formerly able to socialize with friends during their daily commute to school or work. He added that being in a domestic environment hampers his inclination to engage in social interactions with his friends.

Veysel:*" During the face-to-face instruction time, we could see our friends on the way to work or talk to each other outside after school. You have things to do, though, so you don't want to go out when you're stuck at home. This makes it hard for me to hang out with other people."*

Hasan:*" My grandchildren wanted to play with and see their grandfather. My family also complained about my endless online classes. I spent most of my time at my computer desk. The kids saw me at home but they couldn't talk to me, which caused problems."*

4.1.6. Online Privacy

Teachers faced an additional obstacle pertaining to the concerns around students' online privacy. Participants exhibited a prevailing inclination to deactivate their cameras and mute their microphones. Zeynep expressed her opinion on the worries experienced by students in relation to video recording. According to her viewpoint, students may not consistently show the necessary preparation for being recorded on an open camera.

Zeynep: *"Typically, I offer students the opportunity to make necessary preparations prior to requesting them to activate their cameras. The issue arises when individuals choose to keep their cameras deactivated, as they may not always be inclined to activate them due to concerns around personal privacy."*

4.1.7. Unreliable Assessment

Another pattern that was identified from the analyzed data was the presence of worries related to the reliability and validity of the online evaluation. The findings from semi-structured interviews indicate a prevalent belief among teachers on the potential for students to engage in the act of hiring or arranging for someone else to take their tests on their behalf. In addition, concerns were raised over the potential for cheating or students' ability to access answers through online search engines during the administration of an online examination. In addition, Zeynep expressed concern that it is difficult to determine whether the students themselves made the exam.

Veysel:*"We couldn't give students one or two days to finish the tests in the coursebook's digital platform as they either gave the test to someone else or shared the results with other people."*

Zeynep:*"The examinations exhibit issues pertaining their dependability. During the examination, my ability to visually monitor students is limited, so impeding my capacity to ascertain whether they independently complete the test, seek any external assistance, or consult internet resources for answers. It is a fact that individuals have the potential to obtain certain responses through the use of online search engines such as Google. However, the verifiability of such potential remains problematic."*

4.1.8. Students' Negative Attitudes towards Online Education

The results of the study also indicated a potential issue pertaining to students' perceptions of online education. According to Veysel, students undervalue the significance of online instruction. Moreover, as indicated by Hasan, students tend to consider online learning as a task that can be easily accomplished. Another aspect of concern relating to this matter is that students are likely to exploit the advantages of the conditions presented by online learning.

Veysel: *"Students feel comfortable with online education due to the lack of physical contact with teachers. Since attendance is optional, they say they don't have a phone, computer, etc. I have troubles with non-attending students that request a great deal after the course."*

Hasan: *"The availability of online courses has fostered a sense of comfort among students, as they perceive an increased ease in comprehending the course material. This impression is mostly attributed to the opportunity of accessing video recordings at a later time, so facilitating a more flexible and personalized learning experience."*

4.1.9. Teachers' Professional Inadequacy

The ultimate issue emerged from the data pertains to the educators' deficiency in online instructional delivery and evaluation. Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, educators possessed a level of familiarity with pedagogical approaches employed within conventional classroom settings, while their proficiency in information and communication technology (ICT) was confined to the digital tools and resources utilized inside their instructional environments. However, the implementation of emergency remote online teaching compelled educators to augment their proficiency in information technology and discover novel and efficient methodologies for delivering instruction online. Their little understanding of ICT and insufficient proficiency in the specific ICT skills required for online teaching and assessment turned out to be a significant obstacle for them.

Zeynep: *"I have little proficiency in utilizing technology. I received assistance from both of my colleagues."*

Hasan: "*The novel instructional design was unfamiliar to both educators and learners. Undoubtedly, the utilization of digital instruments inside an online setting demands the acquisition of distinct proficiencies."*

4.2. Benefits Gained within the Emergency Remote Online EFL Instruction Period

Given the novel nature of emergency remote online teaching, the researchers sought to figure out whether there were any potential advantages inherent to this novel instructional approach, in addition to its inherent problems. The semi-structured interviews provided insights into the difficulties faced by the teachers during the Covid-19 outbreak, as well as the various opportunities that emerged from emergency remote online EFL instruction. Addressing this particular issue, the thematic analysis of the data obtained from the interviews yielded a set of codes and themes indicated in table 4.

Table 4

Benefits of the Emergency Remote Online EFL Teaching

Themes	Codes
1. Digital Grading System	-Automatic score calculation -Avoiding the consumption of paper and optimizing time usage
2. Remaining at Home	-Becoming nearer to one's own family -Having an opportunity to advance in one's academic career - Establishing physical comfort
3.Utilizing Information and Communication Technology	-The practical distribution of instructional materials -Utilizing engaging and captivating instructional materials -Enhancing proficiency and familiarity with Information and Communication Technology
4. Teaching Comfort and Flexibility	-Providing teaching sessions without timing constraints and irrespective of location -Being allowed to deactivate students' cameras and microphones and remove them from the session when needed. -Reduced exposure to students exhibiting misbehavior -No time waste for commuting

4.2.1. Digital Grading System

As indicated in table 4, the primary benefit highlighted by the instructors is the automated calculation of examination scores facilitated by the online technologies the instructors employed. They made clear that they stopped utilizing paper and time-consuming manual scoring methods for exams by taking advantage of the digital grading system. The following are examples of arguments that were presented.

Veysel: *"In the context of traditional classroom instruction, we would generate hard copies of the examination materials prior to the implementation. We would engage in deep reading sessions, dedicating significant time to evaluating written and auditory components. Currently, the homework is assigned on the online platform associated with the textbook. Subsequently, the students complete the assignments, and the system automatically assesses their performance. Only the writing and speaking components need to be evaluated manually."*

Zeynep: *"I distribute the tasks and assessments that are included at the end of each unit to the students. The performance of students is evaluated by the system, I monitor their progress by a comparative analysis of scores on a unit-by-unit basis."*

4.2.2. Remaining at Home

In the preceding section, teaching a class within one's own residence was perceived as presenting challenges, although it also yielded certain advantages for educators as well. The obligation to provide education in the home environment seems to foster a stronger relationship between mothers

who also act as instructors and their children. Furthermore, the instructors have indicated that engaging in remote instruction offers a chance for academic advancement, while simultaneously providing individuals a sense of personal well-being and physical ease.

Zeynep: "*I have recently commenced an additional graduate program. Had we not transitioned to online education, it is likely that I would have encountered significant difficulties in completing the program due to the overwhelming workload and the requirement to be physically present on campus for a full five days each week."*

Hasan: *"Being in a classroom means I always stand while I teach and write on the board. But with this kind of learning, I can sit in my chair and still use my tongue and fingers.*

4.2.3. Utilizing Information and Communication Technology

The teachers also highlighted the benefits associated with making use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The utilization of ICT is facilitating individuals in developing a greater level of familiarity with technological tools, hence augmenting their professional expertise. They stated that their use of ICT has enabled them to efficiently and conveniently access a wide range of educational materials, hence facilitating their ability to provide guidance and support to students based on these resources. Moreover, it has grown individuals' awareness regarding the accessibility of enjoyable and intellectually engaging material. Additionally, this sudden shift to online teaching has enhanced their proficiency and aptitude in utilizing ICT tools and technologies.

Hasan: *"The younger demographic exhibits a greater affinity towards the digital world, which we are compelled to recognize this. In real terms, I received assistance from my colleagues in relation to the technology-related problems."*

Veysel: *"I advise my students to utilize specific social media channels. One example is the application called "Speaky." if they establish positive relationships with others within that context, they may further enhance their oral communication abilities. Moreover, the wealth of videos are available on the popular online platform YouTube that might be utilized by students as a means to enhance their proficiency in English."*

4.2.4. Teaching Comfort and Flexibility

The instructors have additionally expressed that the implementation of emergency remote online teaching provided them the freedom to engage in teaching activities without constraints of time and location. Educators enjoyed the ability to arrange a class session at 10 o'clock in the evening and deliver instructional content from their balcony while taking a cup of coffee at the same time. The use of emergency remote online teaching was reported to offer increased flexibility in terms of time and physical limitations.

The instructors additionally indicated that online teaching facilitated managing sessions as they could switch off cameras and reduce speaker volume as desired. Likewise, it was made clear that there is a lower probability of exposure to disruptive students in online learning environment when compared to the conventional classroom settings.

One further advantage highlighted by the teachers is the reduced time commitment associated with online instruction. People are no longer expending time on commuting. In addition, teachers have claimed that they spend less time creating instructional materials for online teaching compared to the extensive time they previously spent on preparing such resources for use in traditional classrooms.

Veysel: *"It is often more effective for teachers to hold lessons from home, since it allows for greater flexibility in scheduling classes based on their personal preferences. They just ask students make themselves available."*

Hasan: *"When attending the class, the students show a high level of interest, demonstrating an intense curiosity in receiving instructions. Notably, they refrain from engaging in any form of*

distracting activities or engaging in conversations in groups. The students direct their whole attention to me, actively engage in listening and respond to inquiries. Hence, thus far, I have not encountered any challenges pertaining to class management in the context of my Zoom-based teaching."

Zeynep: *"In online education, individuals have observed a reduction in the duration of their daily commute to work, often ranging from 40 to 45 minutes. Consequently, this time has been directed for personal use and self-care."*

Another purpose of the present study was to derive practical recommendations from instructors in order to enhance the efficacy of online teaching. During the interviews, a number of proposals were put forth by teachers regarding the new teaching methodology, which are outlined in the following section.

4.3. Instructors' Suggestions for Successful Implementation of Online EFL Teaching

According to Öztürk Karataş and Tuncer (2022), the Covid-19 pandemic has left a lasting impression on language instruction due to its highly contagious nature. Hence, it is obligatory upon all parties involved to address and fix the shortcomings and deficiencies inherent in emergency remote online teaching, and thereafter create and execute future online classes in a manner that accounts for such variables. The challenges associated with emergency remote online teaching may not have a universally applicable solution. However, instructors propose several recommendations to improve the quality of local online English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, while considering certain worldwide characteristics.

The participants provided several recommendations for effectively implementing online English teaching. These proposals can be summarized as follows.

1. Efforts should be made to build local online platforms that are effective in facilitating language teaching through promoting engagement and enabling pair and group work.
2. There is a need for enhancing teachers' ICT expertise and digital literacy skills.
3. The development of online assessment systems that possess both reliability and validity is crucial.
4. It is imperative that students are provided with free supplementary internet data allowance.
5. There is a need to enhance student attendance.
6. The unlimited involvement of students in online classes should be limited.
7. The compulsory nature of attendance in online classes should mirror that of traditional classroom settings.
8. It is imperative to provide students with training in order to enhance their understanding and recognition of the significance of synchronous learning.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study unveiled the experiences of three EFL instructors employed at a state university in Turkiye throughout the quick shift to the emergency remote online teaching environment necessitated by the Covid-19 outbreak. The findings of this study correlate with past research, while also introducing novel concepts that can serve as a foundation for future investigations.

The research findings indicate that the teachers who took part in the study reported encountering several challenges during the transition process. However, they also acknowledged that this change yielded several advantages for both themselves and their students. Furthermore, they proposed a range of essential measures that need to be promptly adopted in order to ensure the continued effectiveness of this system.

For instance, the findings of this study pertaining to research question 1 are consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Atmojo and Nugroho (2020), which identified numerous deficiencies

in the EROT system with regards to course preparation and planning. Likewise, the present findings are consistent with the outcomes of other investigations carried out within the same timeframe. As an example, Meç et al. (2020) highlighted that Turkish English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors encountered various challenges throughout this particular process. These challenges encompassed a dearth of technical resources, deficiencies in the economic framework of educational establishments, issues associated to student motivation and autonomy, as well as problems related to internet connectivity during the implementation of the EROT application. Similarly, Hortshorn and McMurry (2020) conducted a study wherein they noted that the shift to synchronous education presented challenges for instructors in terms of monitoring class attendance, troubleshooting technical issues, and engaging in interactive activities during classes. Additionally, Moser et al. (2021) expressed their concern on the pandemic's distinctive circumstances, which resulted in diminished student engagement and influenced academic achievement. Upon examination of the findings pertaining to the first research question in this study, it becomes evident that the participants in this study had similar challenges as the aforementioned issues.

The participants of this study also expressed some concerns on the available internet opportunities for students, which can be attributed to economic disparities or unsatisfactory learning environments at home. The possible explanation for this phenomenon could be attributed to the fact that the research was done at a university located in a socioeconomically deprived region of Turkiye, with a student population characterized by limited financial resources. Conversely, the study participants expressed challenges associated with administering oral examinations and monitoring students' academic progress. The current scenario appears to be associated with the insufficiency of the online platforms utilized for educational purposes within this university, namely ALMS and Zoom. The system offered by Zoom is primarily intended for facilitating meetings rather than functioning as a specific training solution. The ALMS system was widely adopted by numerous institutions in Turkiye as a result of their rapid adoption of the EROT system. It is possible that these problems may be minimized in light of the existence of advanced online platforms that are better equipped to facilitate the delivery of instruction.

On the other hand, it became clear that the requirement for participants to conduct their classes at home resulted in significant challenges. Regrettably, the prevailing circumstances can be mostly attributed to the government-imposed restrictions in response to the existing pandemic conditions. Under new circumstances, teachers would not be required to deliver their courses remotely from home. There is also availability of other locations within the teacher's institution, such as their office, computer laboratories, or even quiet cafes, which can facilitate the provision of online education. Teachers have expressed concerns regarding the disparities between online education and traditional face-to-face instruction in physical classrooms. Similarly, it is implied by the participants that students also have exhibited negative attitudes towards online education. These sentiments can be attributed to the fact that both teachers and students are accustomed to the conventional school environment and the physical conditions associated with it. The sudden switch to online learning has resulted in a lack of familiarity and a diminished sense of belonging, thus contributing to their dissatisfaction. It is possible that their lack of knowledge may be the reason for their limited understanding of the subject matter. Finally, the issues pertaining to assessment reliability by the teachers may be attributed to the insufficiency of the online platforms employed by the institution for delivering online education, which are presently the most widely recognized in the industry, as well as the absence of a suitable online platform specifically tailored for this subject that has yet to be developed or noticed by these teachers. One potential strategy could be implementing a kind of design for the platforms that prioritizes reliability in the context of examinations, evaluations and assessment.

In line with the research conducted by Meç et al. (2020), the participants in this study demonstrated a favorable disposition towards the EROT application as well. Within this particular scenario, the individuals engaged in a discussion pertaining to the diverse advantages they possess in relation to the second inquiry of the research. However, although the participants in the study conducted by Meç et al. (2020) indicated having an extensive workload, the instructors included in this study asserted that it actually facilitated their work process. The observed discrepancy could perhaps arise from variations in the institutional requirements. Also, upon analyzing the findings, the instructors participated in this study expressed that the automated computation of students' grades in tests conducted via the ALMS system, along with the removal of the need for commuting to work or

school, resulted in time savings. This circumstance is obviously connected to the necessity of conducting classes remotely and staying at home. In the absence of pandemic-related stay-at-home measures, individuals would be expected to stick to their regular work schedules and participate in in-person examinations. However, it is indisputable that the rapid shift to online education has resulted in teachers and students not only acquiring previously unattained technological abilities, but also taking advantage of previously unexplored internet resources. In relation to the participants' perceptions of teaching comfort and flexibility, it is evident that these factors are also influenced by the prevailing pandemic circumstances. It is important to note that any alterations to these conditions may potentially introduce constraints on certain aspects of the aforementioned flexibility and comfort in an online teaching context.

The final inquiry of the study pertained to the perspectives of the participating instructors regarding possible improvements to the standard of instruction delivered in EROT mode. In light of the recommendations put forth, it is apparent that certain instructional, technical, and digital measures should be implemented, as supported by the research conducted by Zhang et al. (2021) and Avcıoğlu and Altay (2022). In particular, it has been emphasized that assessment practices should be upgraded to align with the requirements of the new education system, and adequate instruction and guidance should be provided to ensure their successful implementation. In light of the recommendations put forth within this framework, it is worth noting that although several of them correlate with those of other studies and possess universal applicability, some others emphasize the necessity for evaluations to be conducted with a special focus on regional or institutional settings.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined the challenges faced and advantages gained from the emergency remote online teaching mode, which has become globally mandatory due to the Covid-19 pandemic, from the perspectives of three English language instructors working at a public university in Turkiye. The interviews conducted with the teachers revealed that they encountered a range of challenges, including technical issues, power outages, difficulties in ensuring student engagement and adaptation to the lesson, economic inequalities and restrictions, inadequate knowledge of materials and equipment, difficulties in monitoring student progress, doubts towards the evaluation system, and the complications arose as a result of carrying out lessons in a home environment.

However, the instructors also noted the advantages of this novel mode of instruction, including time savings for both students and instructors, increased convenience across multiple domains, faster digital skill development, and increased frequency of interactive media utilization. Finally, a variety of recommendations, some of which are institutional or regional in scope and others of which are universal in nature, have been put forth in response to the issues raised by educators.

The findings of this study offer some pedagogical implications for all stakeholders in foreign language education. It has been revealed that the recommendations put forth by instructors to enhance the efficacy and quality of online instruction primarily concentrate on the provision and accessibility of technological resources, which should immediately be taken into consideration by educational authorities. To ensure a clear understanding of the pedagogical implications of this research, it is posited that the problems and benefits that emerged from this study, when combined with the aforementioned suggestions, may offer significant insights and assign a degree of responsibility to governmental bodies, university administrators, school principals, and instructors themselves (e.g. improving their ICT skills, possessing knowledge of online teaching methodologies) to ensure that future online language education programs are executed efficiently.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What is your first impression related to emergency remote online teaching over Covid-19 pandemic?
2. How have you implemented online classes in the intensive English program?
3. What kind of difficulties have you experienced while delivering your online EFL classes during the Covid-19 pandemic period?
4. What kind of opportunities have you experienced while delivering your online EFL classes during the Covid-19 pandemic period?
5. What are your general views on the implementation of online education as regards to learner attendance, participation, motivation, and responsibilities?
6. What are your general views on the implementation of online education as regards to classroom management?
7. What are your general views on the implementation of online education as regards to assessment and evaluation?
8. What are your general views on the implementation of online education as regards to teachers ' collaboration, workload and personal life?
9. What are your suggestions for an implementation of more effective online classes?