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AN INVESTIGATION OF UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY CLASS TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN DISTANCE

(Research article)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to reveal university preparatory class teachers' attitudes towards distance English language teaching in Turkey. The study has a mixed methods research design combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The participants were 50 instructors from 6 different universities. The general attitudes of participants towards distance English language teaching were investigated via a questionnaire and their more personal attitudes via a semi-structured interview. The results of the study revealed that distance English language teaching is advantageous especially in time management, accessibility, e-facilities, and implementing various productive teaching/learning methods. But, it has serious instructional disadvantages including lack of interaction, participation, motivation, focus, and self-discipline. Difficulties in teaching the four skills, hardness in working on phonology, deterioration of communication skills, difficulties in classroom management, various technical, technological and health problems are some further disadvantages. The results also suggest that distance English language teaching could be made more effective by taking some instructional, technical, technological, and digital precautions, and through training and guidance.

Keywords: distance English language teaching, distance education, face-to-face instruction, hybrid language teaching

1. Introduction

It is an undeniable fact that the world is globalizing day by day, and this in turn creates a need to have a command of a globally spoken language. Because languages are the primary means of communication and interaction between humans, societies, and states, keeping up in today's world compels each conscious person to learn at least one global language. Among all languages in the world today, English is the most widely spoken one, being the common means of communication between people all over the world, and therefore can be regarded as a world language (Verghese, 1989). Nowadays, English has become the international language for not only international relations and diplomacy but also business, commerce, science and technology (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991), and its widespread use in almost every field of life has made it a global de-facto standard language.

For a long time, language teaching and learning practices thrived only under the teachers' and students' responsibilities. However, the case has completely changed now. Considering emerging developments in the world today, in order to achieve meaningful results in language education, not only a well-developed appropriate language teaching technology has

to be used but also the total context of teaching should be considered in both human and pragmatic terms (Tudor, 2003). Therefore, today's second language teachers should not only utilize contemporary learning approaches and integrate technology into the learning process but also be guides and helpers on the way to continual language learning. In this respect, the development of computer technology, educational technology and the Internet has offered numerous facilities to make language learning easier and faster and has enabled language teachers to use interactive online learning tools to make their lessons more effective and thus to enhance their students' engagement in language learning.

By the way, many new language teaching and learning strategies, such as blended learning, have been developed. *Blended learning* is an educational strategy integrating online activities into traditional classroom instruction, and especially its *flipped classroom* application paves the way for conferring the learning responsibility on students who have direct access to the course contents before the class (Capone et al., 2017). In particular, their computer-assisted and web-based models had gained a widespread acceptance in English language education.

Meanwhile, *distance education* has also made great progress and its various types have begun to be used in a wide range of disciplines. Today, its computer-assisted and internet-based versions have become an integral part of modern education all over the world. Accordingly, distance English language teaching (ELT) in virtual classrooms has also substantially developed and become an alternative to the traditional ELT - the classical face-to-face ELT that takes place in physical classrooms. In particular, during the Covid-19 pandemic, distance education was almost the only way of maintaining education, including ELT.

Now, by the end of pandemic period, there is a huge amount of experience about distance education, especially about distance ELT, and it is a requirement and even a responsibility to utilize these experiences for determining what went right and what did not with it, for detecting and solving accompanying problems, and for deciding how to shape its future positively and to what extent we should use it.

In this regard, the present study was designed to reveal the attitudes of university preparatory class English teachers towards distance ELT in Turkey, and in particular, to find out its advantages, disadvantages and shortcomings, to reveal teachers' concerns about distance ELT, to take teachers' suggestions for improving its current models and for making them more effective, and to reveal their preferences between distance and traditional ELT.

Accordingly, within the scope of this main purpose, the following two main research questions (RQ1 & RQ2) and 15 sub-research questions (SRQ1.1 - SRQ1.6, SRQ2.1 - SRQ2.9) were addressed in the present study:

RQ1) What are the attitudes of teachers towards distance English language teaching?

SRQ1.1) What are the attitudes of teachers in terms of feasibility?
SRQ1.2) What are the attitudes of teachers in terms of e-facilities?
SRQ1.3) What are the attitudes of teachers in terms of time management and accessibility?
SRQ1.4) What are the attitudes of teachers in terms of psychological factors?
SRQ1.5) What are the attitudes of teachers in terms of classroom management?
SRQ1.6) What are the attitudes of teachers in terms of technical and technological factors?

RQ2) What are the personal attitudes of teachers towards distance English language teaching?

SRQ2.1) From teachers' point of view, what are the advantages of distance ELT?
SRQ2.2) From teachers' point of view, what are the disadvantages of distance ELT?
SRQ2.3) What are teachers' concerns about the distance ELT if exists any?
SRQ2.4) In teachers' opinions, does the distance ELT lack face-to-face practicing?
SRQ2.5) From teachers' point of view, regarding ELT, is it possible to achieve all learning goals and objectives through distance education?
SRQ2.6) In teachers' opinions, what are the most outstanding positive sides of distance ELT?
SRQ2.7) In teachers' opinions, what are the most outstanding negative sides of distance ELT?
SRQ2.8) In teachers' opinions, how could the distance ELT be made more effective?
SRQ2.9) Which one do teachers prefer? Distance ELT or traditional one? Why?

Throughout this article, the terms *teacher*, *instructor*, and *lecturer* will be used interchangeably according to the context.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Second Language Acquisition

"Learning a second language is a long and complex undertaking" (Brown, 2006). It is a long-term process that lasts throughout the lifespan of a human being. Since learning a second language involves a language transfer as well, the field of second language acquisition is a sub-discipline of both psychology and linguistics (Whong, 2011). Therefore, it both benefits from and contributes to such sub-disciplines as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and conversation analysis (Gass et al., 2020).

Today, second language acquisition (SLA) has become much more essential than ever before. In particular, the role and importance of English in international communication have significantly increased and large quantities of English have become available through the Internet and other electronic sources (Chapelle, 2003). At the point reached today, technological innovations and developments and such trends as teaching English at early ages and using it as a medium of instruction impel educators to search for more effective activities and resources for their classrooms (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

2.2 Technology Enhanced Language Learning

In last decades, with the developments in educational technology and with the use of computers in education, the field of language teaching and learning has witnessed significant progress. In particular, with the advent of multimedia computing and the Internet, the role of computers has become an ever more important issue in language education (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). In this regard, the field of *computer-assisted language learning* (CALL) has developed as a sub-discipline of applied linguistics that studies language learning by using computer technology. Students now efficiently make use of computers to access all kinds of internet resources for learning, research, and communication, and so do teachers to fulfill their instructional tasks.

On the other hand, the use of *information and communication technologies* (ICTs) in education, especially in language education, has enabled educators to create more effective teaching/learning environments. ICTs provide students with unlimited access to course materials and resources and to a better communication with their teachers, without any time and space limitation (Castro Sánchez & Chirino Alemán, 2011). It is for this reason that using ICTs in distance education offers numerous advantages to both teachers and students. Among them are faster content delivery, easy preparation of instructional materials, easy and quick

access to educational resources, virtual classroom environment, lower cost, enhanced collaboration and interaction, computer-mediated communication, quick feedback, accessibility of time and place, more qualified teaching, etc. (Hassan & Mirza, 2020).

2.3 Distance Education

The term *distance education* (DE) refers to "an umbrella concept covering correspondence courses, televised teaching, radio-broadcast teaching, open learning, computer-assisted instruction, telematic, individualized learning and self-learning" (Sauvé, 1993). In other words, it is a kind of planned learning that takes place through print or electronic communications media in a location or time different from that of the teacher (Gunawardena & McIsaac, 2004). More exhaustively,

> The term 'distance education' covers the various forms of study at all levels which are not under the continuous, immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms or on the same premises, but which, nevertheless, benefit from the planning, guidance and tuition of a tutorial organization.
>
> (Holmberg, 1977, p.9)

Holmberg is most recognized for his theory of personal communication in DE, between students and those supporting them (tutors, counselors etc.), of which central concepts are *personal non-contiguous interaction, individual learning, study pleasure, and motivation promoted by feelings of empathy and belonging* (Holmberg, 1997).

Distance learning can be either synchronous or asynchronous of which the former is a same-time but different-place type of education carried out through networked multimedia computers or high-speed TV channels and the latter offers students to learn at different times and places (Syed, 2001). In addition, advances in computer and communication technologies has offered a vast amount of alternatives to design more effective distance education systems (Kose et al., 2002).

In line with the development of DE, the role of teacher has been another topic of discussion. DE is a learner-centered system diminishing the role of the teacher and promoting independent study in that teachers are mainly responsible for augmenting prepared course materials by providing explanations, references, and reinforcements (Beaudoin, 1990). According to a study conducted by Moore (1997), teachers have two roles in DE: The role of contributing to the course development through arranging the content, setting boundaries for learning, and thereby bridging from up-to-date knowledge to application; and the role of facilitating the learning process through creating interactional environments.

2.4 The History of Distance Education

The origins of DE can be traced back to misty antiquity, when early civilizations communicated with drums, fire and smoke, petroglyphs, and eventually with printed texts (Threlkeld & Brzoska, 1994). However, the known history of DE, or *correspondence education* as was then called, goes back to the 1700s when it was in the form of *teaching in writing* between students and tutors realized by means of so-called self-instructional texts (Holmberg, 1994). In the progress of time, several models of DE were implemented. In the late 1800s, the University of Chicago launched the first major correspondence program in the United States (McIsaac & Gunawardena, 1996). In some countries correspondence education continued as so-called postal education which was based on periodic printing and delivery of course materials, while in some other countries radio broadcasting programs were begun to be used for distance education (Rumble, 1986). In 1910, the first instructional films were published in the United States and thus visual instruction began (Reiser, 2001). Current

models of DE mostly realized through the internet are the successors of correspondence schools that operated by delivering printed educational materials, and of later television, radio, or video-based courses and programs (Natriello, 2005). DE is the fastest growing kind of domestic and international education now and such concepts as networked learning, connected learning spaces, flexible learning and hybrid learning have expanded the scope and altered the nature of previous distance education models (Gunawardena & McIsaac, 2004).

As for the historical development of DE in Turkey, although distance education came to the fore after the establishment of the republic (Bozkurt, 2017), the studies on DE remained at the theoretical level until far into the 1950s. The first DE program in Turkey was implemented by the Banking and Commercial Law Research Institute of Ankara University Faculty of Law in 1956 as a postal DE to provide in-service training to bank staff (Bozkurt, 2017). After this time, works on DE were maintained by the Ministry of National Education for some decades at postal level, and the first Open Education Faculty of Turkey was established within the body of Anadolu University in 1982. Today, there are many state and private institutions that offer various kinds of DE in almost every field and discipline. Regarding the current status of DE in Turkey, strengthening the communication infrastructure, increasing the amount of technological investments, the use of web-based applications in DE, and the continuous development of the internet have led to a more conscious learning policy (Kırık, 2014). However, the unexpected Covid-19 pandemic required radical changes in many fields and sectors including education, and thus all educational institutions had to give more importance to internet-based DE applications and technologies (Dolmacı & Dolmacı, 2020). Although various problems were encountered during this rapid implementation of DE at first, they were overcome in the progress of time as much as possible in the pandemic conditions.

2.5 Distance Language Learning

In line with the advancements in DE, distance language learning has also made great progress in last decades. It is probably one of the areas that has most benefited from the virtues of DE. This is because, DE provides more individualized practices and more opportunities for genuine communication in the target language and offers many choices of sound learning activities for encouraging students to match their cognitive styles and preferences with the learning environment (Hokanson, 2000), thereby enabling a permanent language learning. Moreover, aside from such practical aspects as flexibility, cost saving, and remote access, distance language education offers some further advantages such as student-centeredness, repeatability, opportunities to experience language episodes, and opportunity for rapid accumulation of knowledge about linguistic processes (Hokanson, 2000).

However, to enable learners to acquire the target language in more flexible and accessible settings, compared to the traditional ones, distance second language course design should be based on advanced distance learning pedagogy and driven by SLA theories and research (Ariza & Hancock, 2003). The role of technology can not be ignored as well. It is a fact that for a successful online language teaching all necessary technological tools should be used to make the learning experience engaging (Blake, 2005). In this regard, for effective incorporation of networked technology into language instruction, language teachers should be provided with an appropriate physical context and with proper assistance (Kim, 2002), and their teaching environments should be equipped with all needed technology. Besides, as distance language teaching expands, the philosophical, pedagogical, and professional issues gain further importance and teacher identity is a significant factor in each of these domains (White, 2007), and therefore to create an effective and efficient online teaching environment,

language teachers should develop further skills beyond technological competence, such as facilitating online socializing and community building (Compton, 2009).

Today, the form and the scale of technology-mediated distance language education have so considerably expanded that, as a well-established means of language learning, it offers access to rich language learning opportunities for dispersed learner populations all over the world (White, 2017), and at the point reached, merely being equipped with full technology does not make a great deal of sense in DE, particularly in distance language education. Today's distance language learning models call for both technological and pedagogical innovations and offer different combinations of individual and collaborative language learning environments (White, 2017).

3. Methodology

3.1. Type of Research

Methodologically, the present study has a mixed methods research design that combines qualitative and quantitative methods. The core idea of mixed methods research is that integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, rather than using either method alone, provides a thorough understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative data gathering instruments were used in the current study: The participants' attitudes towards distance ELT were measured by means of a questionnaire and their more personal attitudes by means of a semi-structured interview.

3.2 Research Population and Participants

The *target population* of this research is all university preparatory class teachers in Turkey. Its *study population*, on the other hand, comprised all preparatory class English language teachers of 6 different universities in Turkey: Hacettepe University, Middle East Technical University, Gazi University, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Ufuk University, and Uşak University. Due to the pandemic conditions, these universities were determined by *convenience sampling*. The *sample* of the study was selected from the study population by *volunteer sampling* and consisted of 50 instructors - 40 from state universities and the rest 10 from the only foundation university. The participants of the first part, the questionnaire survey part, of the study consisted of all these 50 instructors. In line with the main purpose of our study, having taught in English preparatory classes through distance education in at least one of the terms Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 was a prerequisite to participate in the study. Therefore, all 50 participants of the study were among those instructors who met this prerequisite. On the other hand, having participated in the first part of the study was the main prerequisite to participate in the second part, the semi-structured interview part. Therefore, the 10 participants of the semi-structured interview part were chosen among those 50 instructors, who participated in the questionnaire survey, so as to be at least one interviewee from each of the 6 universities. As for the sampling method, they were chosen as *randomly* as possible; however, when this was not possible the *convenience sampling* was applied.

3.3 The Procedure

The study was planned in Summer 2020 when distance education was being considered as an option for Fall 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic all over the world. First of all, a preliminary literature review was made and the topic of the study was determined. Then, the research questions were prepared, the data collection instruments were developed and the universities where the study would be conducted were determined. Due to the pandemic conditions, the questionnaire was planned to be conducted in an online environment. At the

beginning of Spring 2021, in order to get the required research permission, the researchers applied to the Ethics Committee of Hacettepe University. After the study was approved by the Ethics Committee, in order to get research application permissions from the above-mentioned 6 universities the formal applications were made to their rectorships.

By the beginning of Fall 2021, upon the completion of permission procedure, the researchers began to send the online questionnaire link to all preparatory class instructors of above-mentioned universities via an email inviting them to participate in and thus contribute to the research. Thanks to the way the researchers reached the participants, the sampling method for the questionnaire happened to be a *volunteer sampling*. At the beginning of the online questionnaire form, each participant was asked to confirm that he/she meets the prerequisites to participate in the study. Next, the consent form for the questionnaire was presented and the participants were asked to confirm that he/she is a volunteer and willing to participate in the study under the conditions specified in the consent form. Finally, the online form has ended by the questionnaire part where the items were presented sequentially, with response options ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

By the end of the year, the semi-structured interviews were begun to be carried out. But at that time, the pandemic was still ongoing and it was not possible to conduct face-to-face interviews. Therefore, like the questionnaire survey, the semi-structured interviews were conducted through an online form. At the beginning of the online form, a brief explanation of why the semi-structured interviews were being conducted through an online form was presented. Next, the consent form for the semi-structured interviews was presented and the participants were asked to confirm that he/she is a volunteer and willing to participate in the study under the terms detailed in the consent form and then to confirm that he/she accepts to answer the semi-structured interview questions through an online form. Finally, in the third part, the semi-structured interview questions were presented as open-ended questions.

By completion of the data collection procedure, the data were analyzed in Spring 2022.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

3.4.1. Instrument 1 – The questionnaire (survey instrument)

The quantitative data were collected via a questionnaire prepared to reveal participants' attitudes towards distance ELT and consisting of the following 25 5-point Likert-type items with response choices Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree and Strongly Agree:

Table 1

The items of the questionnaire

1) I think it basically depends on the teacher herself/himself whether the distance English language teaching process is effective or not.
2) From my point of view, planning a distance English language teaching is easier than planning a traditional one since time control is more easily achieved.
3) In my opinion, conducting a distance English language lesson is easier than conducting a traditional one since it doesn't require much physical effort.
4) I think distance English language teaching could be made more effective than the traditional one thanks to numerous e-materials.
5) I consider distance English language teaching more advantageous than the traditional one since all online lesson materials can easily be stored digitally.
6) I think the possibility of recording your lesson for future use is a big advantage of distance English language teaching.
7) Thanks to distance English language teaching, we can enrich our lessons with well-known

worldwide online teaching platforms.

8) In my opinion, another advantage of distance English language teaching is that it enables us to use many cutting-edge teaching methods such as blended and flipped teaching more easily.
9) I prefer distance English language teaching to the traditional one because thanks to mobile devices it provides to both me and my students an easy and quick access to the lesson wherever we are.
10) While teaching English language at a distance, I can easily and quickly check and give feedback to my students' assignments using online tools.
11) It is an undeniable fact that distance English language teaching saves us time in many ways.
12) I think, one of the advantages of distance English language teaching is that class hours are more flexible.
13) I think, distance English language teaching is less costly than the traditional one in many respects.
14) Contrary to the traditional one, distance English language teaching is not boring, for both me and my students.
15) In today's world, to adopt distance language teaching is a necessity for many reasons such as Covid-19 pandemic.
16) I think it is difficult to ensure students' online attendance at the class during distance English language teaching.
17) I think, it is more difficult to control the class in distance English language teaching compared to the traditional one.
18) In my opinion, it is more difficult to keep students' attentions alive during distance English language teaching than the traditional one.
19) Despite all of its disadvantages, I think learning goals can more easily be achieved through traditional English language education than the distance one.
20) In my opinion, as a disadvantage of distance English language teaching, there always exists a probability that a teacher may need technical support for keeping her/his distance lesson's going on.
21) Of course, the probability of a power or an internet loss is a disadvantage of distance English language teaching.
22) In my opinion, one of the biggest disadvantages of distance English language teaching is that it compels us to a sedentary work and thereby may cause health problems.
23) While teaching English language at a distance, being in front of a camera makes me stressed and anxious.
24) As a negative side of distance English language teaching, some students may fail to reach all essential system requirements and this causes to unfair competition.
25) Another factor which may cause to unfair competition is that distance English language teaching makes digital natives more advantageous than digital immigrants.

3.4.2. Instrument 2 – The semi-structured interview

The qualitative data were collected via a semi-structured interview consisting of the following 8 open-ended questions prepared to fill the flaws and gaps of the questionnaire and to reveal further and more personal attitudes that couldn't be measured by the questionnaire:

Table 2

The semi-structured interview questions

Q1) From your viewpoint, what are the advantages of distance English language teaching? What do you think about its disadvantages?

Q2) In your opinion, how could the distance English language teaching be made more effective?

Q3) Do you have any concerns about distance English language teaching? If yes, what are they?

Q4) According to many authorities, real advancement in language comes from face to face practicing. Do you think that the distance English language teaching lacks this face to face practicing?

Q5) Regarding English language teaching, is it possible to achieve all learning goals and objectives through distance education?

Q6) What is the most outstanding positive side of distance English language teaching?

Q7) What is the most outstanding negative side of distance English language teaching?

Q8) Assuming that you have the opportunity to practice both, which one would you prefer? Distance English language teaching or face to face training? Why?

3.4.3. Validity and Reliability Issues

All items of the questionnaire and all questions in the semi-structured interview were prepared by the researchers with great meticulousness so as to comprise the subject thoroughly and thereby provide the content validity. Besides, to ensure reliability and validity, the items of the questionnaire and the questions of the semi-structured interview were prepared so as not to contradict each other. In addition, following their preparation, two different experts were consulted and the instruments were arranged and improved according to their recommendations. Moreover, to increase the reliability of the questionnaire further, instead of 3- or 4-point ones, 5-point Likert-type items were used since they are more reliable. But even so, the reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed by calculating its Cronbach's alpha coefficient. As seen in Table 4, it was calculated as .879 (87.9%) indicating a strong internal consistency between questionnaire items and a high level of reliability.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1. The quantitative data analysis

First of all, the raw data were arranged and simplified by numerical coding. Namely, the response choices were coded using integers from 1 to 5 (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree and 5=Strongly Agree). Then, the questionnaire items were subgrouped according to their relevance to sub-research questions, i.e. the whole scale was divided into subscales. Namely, those items related to cost, planning, and conducting were grouped under the subtitle Feasibility (F), those related to electronic and digital issues under e-Facilities (eF), those related to saving of time, class hour arrangement, and accessibility under Time Management and Accessibility (TMA), those related to boringness, stress and anxious under Psychological Factors (PF), those related to students' attendances and attentions, and class control under Classroom Management (CM) and those related to hardware, software and internet-based issues under Technical and Technological Factors (TTF). The remaining questions are collected under the name Miscellaneous:

Table 3

Subscales & Item numbers covered by each subscale

Subscale	Item Numbers
Feasibility (F)	2, 3, 13
e-Facilities (eF)	4, 5, 6, 7
Time Management and Accessibility (TMA)	9, 10, 11, 12
Psychological Factors (PF)	14, 23
Classroom Management (CM)	16, 17, 18
Technical and Technological Factors (TTF)	20, 21, 24, 25
Miscellaneous	1, 8, 15, 19, 22

The items from 16 to 25 are not in favor of distance ELT while the rest are. These are so-called negative items. Therefore, while the central tendency and dispersion measures of the distributions that belong to the whole scale and the subscales PF, CM and TTF were being calculated, the responses to negative items were recoded in such a way that all 1s were converted to 5, all 2s to 4, all 4s to 2, and all 5s to 1 while all 3s remained unchanged. But, in some cases the unrecoded responses were still used for convenience. Nevertheless, it will be remarked whether unrecoded or recoded results are considered, whenever required.

After completing the recoding work, the subgrouped data were analyzed by means of IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) Statistical Software (Version 23). First of all, to confirm the reliability of the survey instrument (the questionnaire), the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient (Cronbach, 1951) was calculated as given below in the table:

Table 4

The Reliability Level of the Questionnaire

Reliability Statistics	
Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
25	.879

As known, a Cronbach's alpha value which is not less than .70 can be regarded as acceptable in social sciences. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire of the current study was calculated as .879 (87.9%), indicating a high level of reliability.

After that, the normalities of the whole scale and subscale distributions were tested using skewness and kurtosis values - the most used and accepted statistics for testing the normality of a distribution in social sciences. According to Tabacknick & Fidell (2013), a distribution would be assumed to be normal if the skewness and kurtosis values are between –1.5 and 1.5. In this regard, using the *recoded responses* for negative items, the following skewness and kurtosis values were calculated for the whole scale and sub-scales:

Table 5

Central tendency & dispersion measures, Skewness and Kurtosis values

Scale	Items	Mean response	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
F	2, 3, 13	3.2000	.88577	.077	-.895
eF	4, 5, 6, 7	3.4650	.89216	-.521	.504
TMA	9, 10, 11, 12	3.5500	.76097	-.153	-.747
PF	14, 23	3.1800	.87924	-.532	.559
CM	16, 17, 18	2.0200	.83682	.695	.137
TTF	20, 21, 24, 25	1.9400	.75180	.949	.783
The whole scale	All items	2.9400	.53454	.236	.669

As seen in Table 5 above all skewness and kurtosis values are between –1 and 1. That is, all of the above-listed distributions could be assumed to be normal and so any parametric test could be used. But, the normality of the whole scale distribution was also checked by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality:

Table 6

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality for the whole scale

Number of items	Statistic	df	Sig.
25	.094	50	.200

As seen in Table 6 the Kolmogorov-Smirnov significance value is .200, greater than .05. That is, the whole scale distribution is not significantly different from normal and could be assumed to be normal.

After completing the reliability and normality issues, the item-based and subscale-based analyses were performed and their results were summarized in Section 4.1.

3.5.2. The quantitative data analysis

After the quantitative data analysis was completed, the qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews were analyzed through thematic (content) analysis. Thematic analysis can be defined as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and was originally developed by Holton (1975). It is aimed by thematic analysis to find repeated patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this respect, to analyze the qualitative data, first the semi-structured interview questions were coded as Q1, Q2, …, Q8 as shown in Table 2, and the participants were coded as P1, P2, …, P10. Next, the answers were coded through assigning the code P*m.n* to the answer given by participant P*m* to question Q*n*. After that, the answers were analyzed through thematic analysis. Namely, for each question the themes and then the sub-themes supporting each theme were determined through careful readings. Finally, all themes and sub-themes were coded and the results were summarized in Section 4.2.

Further information about the methodological details including the results of the analyses can be found in Avcıoğlu's unpublished master's thesis (Avcıoğlu, 2022).

4. Findings

4.1. The Results of the Quantitative Analysis

In this section, the results of the quantitative analysis are summarized in terms of research questions. Namely, to find a possible answer to sub-research questions from SRQ1.1 to SRQ1.6 and thereby to the research question RQ1, the frequencies and related percentages of the responses and the item-based and subscale-based central tendency and dispersion measures were examined. In addition, the university-based results were compared to reveal if there exists a significant difference between state university instructors' and foundation university instructors' attitudes towards distance ELT. In tables 7 to 17 below, the bold numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 indicate the codes assigned to response choices *Strongly Disagree*, *Disagree*, *Undecided*, *Agree* and *Strongly Agree*, and M, SD, SM and SSD stands for *Mean response*, *Standard Deviation*, *Sub-scale Mean* and *Sub-scale Standard Deviation*, respectively:

4.1.1. SRQ1.1) What are the attitudes of teachers in terms of feasibility?

Basic descriptive statistics for the responses to *Feasibility (F)* items are as follows:

Table 7

Frequencies (f), percentages (%), means and standard deviations for F items

Item		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	Total	M	SD	SM	SSD
2	*f*	6	16	9	13	6	50	2.94	1.252		
	%	12	32	18	26	12	100				
3	*f*	8	18	7	13	4	50	2.74	1.242	3.20	.88577
	%	16	36	14	26	8	100				
13	*f*	1	3	9	23	14	50	3.92	.944		
	%	2	6	18	46	28	100				

According to Table 7 above, the mean response to *feasibility* items is 3.20 (out of 5) with a standard deviation of about .89. This may be interpreted as that participants do not seem to definitely prefer one of the two methods regarding *feasibility*. But, the item-based means do not seem to support the subscale mean. Namely, while the mean responses to items 2 and 3 are relatively small (2.94 and 2.74, respectively), the mean response to item 13 considerably differs upwards (3.92). Therefore, it would be more appropriate to conclude as an answer to SRQ1.1 that the participants tend to prefer the traditional ELT regarding planning and conducting issues while a vast majority of them seem to prefer the distance ELT regarding cost.

4.1.2. SRQ1.2) What are the attitudes of teachers in terms of e-facilities?

Basic descriptive statistics for the responses to *e-Facilities (eF)* items are presented below:

Table 8

Frequencies (f), percentages (%), means and standard deviations for eF items

Item		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	Total	M	SD	SM	SSD
4	*f*	4	9	13	18	6	50	3.26	1.139	3.465	.89216
	%	8	18	26	36	12	100				
5	*f*	4	16	11	13	6	50	3.02	1.186		
	%	8	32	22	26	12	100				
6	*f*	2	6	8	23	11	50	3.70	1.074		
	%	4	12	16	46	22	100				
7	*f*	1	7	1	29	12	50	3.88	1.003		
	%	2	14	2	58	24	100				

As seen in Table 8 above, the mean response to *e-facility* items is approximately 3.47 with a standard deviation of about 0.89. But the mean response for item 5 (3.02) is relatively lower than those for items 4, 6, and 7 (3.26, 3.70, and 3.88, respectively). Therefore, SRQ1.2 would be answered as follows: While the participants tend to think differently about the view that easiness in digital storing makes distance ELT more advantageous, they seem to agree that distance ELT could be made more effective than the traditional one via numerous e-materials, and a majority of them agree that the possibility of recording a lesson for future use and the opportunity of enriching lessons with well-known worldwide online teaching platforms are big advantages of distance ELT.

4.1.3. SRQ1.3) What are the attitudes of teachers in terms of time management and accessibility?

Basic descriptive statistics for *Time Management and Accessibility (TMA)* are as follows:

Table 9

Frequencies (f), percentages (%), means and standard deviations for TMA items

Item		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	Total	M	SD	SM	SSD
9	*f*	5	16	10	14	5	50	2.96	1.195	3.55	.76097
	%	10	32	20	28	10	100				
10	*f*	1	9	4	26	10	50	3.70	1.055		
	%	2	18	8	52	20	100				
11	*f*	0	6	6	23	15	50	3.94	.956		
	%	0	12	12	46	30	100				
12	*f*	2	9	6	23	10	50	3.60	1.125		
	%	4	18	12	46	20	100				

As seen in Table 9 above, the mean response to TMA items is 3.55 with a standard deviation of about .76. But, while the mean response for items 10, 11, and 12 support the total mean, the mean response for item 9 is somewhat lower, just below 3. Therefore, it can be concluded as an answer to SRQ1.3 that except for the effectiveness of mobile devices on accessibility the participants tend to confirm that, regarding TMA, the distance ELT is more advantageous than the traditional one.

4.1.4. SRQ1.4) What are the attitudes of teachers in terms of psychological factors?

Basic descriptive statistics for *Psychological Factors (PF)* are presented below:

Table 10

Frequencies (f), percentages (%), means and standard deviations for PF items

Item		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	Total	M	SD	SM	SSD
14	*f*	7	18	17	6	2	50	2.56	1.013	3.18 (23-recoded)	.87924
	%	14	36	34	12	4	100				
23	*f*	14	25	2	5	4	50	3.80 (recoded)	1.195		
	%	28	50	4	10	8	100				

As mentioned in the data analysis section, item 23 is a negative item that is not in favor of distance ELT and, therefore, in order to calculate the central tendency and dispersion measures given in Table 10 above the recoded responses were used for item 23. As a result, the mean response for PF items is 3.18, with a standard deviation of about .88. But, the means for the two items are quite distant from each other (2.56 vs 3.80). Therefore, SRQ1.4 would be answered as follows: Although a great majority of participants do not agree that being in front of a camera during teaching at a distance makes them stressed and anxious, many of them find distance ELT more boring compared to the traditional one.

4.1.5. SRQ1.5) What are the attitudes of teachers in terms of classroom management?

Basic descriptive statistics for *Classroom Management (CM)* are as follows:

Table 11

Frequencies (f), percentages (%), means and standard deviations for CM items

Item		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	Total	M	SD	SM	SSD
16	*f*	1	10	2	21	16	50	3.82	1.155	3.98 (unrecoded data)	.83682
	%	2	20	4	42	32	100				
17	*f*	1	5	8	20	16	50	3.90	1.035		
	%	2	10	16	40	32	100				
18	*f*	1	1	5	22	21	50	4.22	.864		
	%	2	2	10	44	42	100				

As seen in Table 11 above, all CM items are negative, but all statistics in the table are of unrecoded responses. This is because the subscale CM does not have negative and non-negative items together and currently no parametric test is needed. Consequently, the mean response to CM items is 3.98, with a standard deviation of about .84, and is strongly supported by item-based means. Therefore, it can be concluded as an answer to SRQ1.5 that a vast majority of the participants do not find the distance ELT more advantageous regarding CM.

4.1.6. SRQ1.6) What are the attitudes of teachers in terms of technical and technological factors?

Basic descriptive statistics for *Technical and Technological Factors (TTF)* are as follows:

Table 12

Frequencies (f), percentages (%), means and standard deviations for TTF items

Item		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	Total	M	SD	SM	SSD
20	*f*	1	6	6	26	11	50	3.80	.990	4.06	.7518
	%	2	12	12	52	22	100				
21	*f*	0	2	1	18	29	50	4.48	.735		
	%	0	4	2	36	58	100				
24	*f*	2	1	4	18	25	50	4.26	.986		
	%	4	2	8	36	50	100				
25	*f*	1	10	5	21	13	50	3.70	1.129		
	%	2	20	10	42	26	100				(unrecoded data)

As in Table 11, all items in Table 12 are negative, but all statistics are of unrecoded responses since currently no parametric test is needed. Consequently, the mean response to TTF items is 4.06, with a standard deviation of about .75, and is strongly supported by item-based means. Therefore, it can be concluded as an answer to SRQ1.6 that regarding TTF a vast majority of the participants agree that distance ELT is not advantageous.

4.1.7. RQ1) What are the attitudes of teachers towards distance English language teaching?

4.1.7.1. Overall assessment

To make an overall assessment and thereby to answer the research question RQ1, the central tendency and dispersion measures given in the table below for the whole scale - with all negative items recoded - could be examined:

Table 13

Mean and standard deviation for the whole scale (negative items recoded)

Items	M	SD
The whole scale	2.94	.53454

According to the table, the mean response is 2.94, with a standard deviation of about .53. This result tells us that the participants did not explicitly tend to favor any of the two teaching methods, distance or face-to-face ELT. Therefore, in order to be able to make a precise judgement, it should be focused on the subscale-based and item-based means given in the table below:

Table 14

Subscale-based and item-based means

Subscale	Item	M	SM	Subscale	Item	M	SM
Feasibility	2	2.94	3.20	Classroom Management	16	2.18*	2.02
	3	2.74			17	2.10*	
	13	3.92			18	1.78*	
e-Facilities	4	3.26	3.465	Technical and Technological Factors	20	2.20*	1.94
	5	3.02			21	1.52*	
	6	3.70			24	1.74*	
	7	3.88			25	2.30*	
Time Management and Accessibility	9	2.96	3.55	Miscellaneous	1	3.08	
	10	3.70			8	3.78	
	11	3.94			15	4.30	
	12	3.60			19	2.32*	

Psychological Factors	14	2.56	3.18		22	2.18*
	23	3.80*		* : Recoded means		

According to the table above it can definitely be argued that the participants find distance ELT more advantageous than the traditional one in terms of TMA and eF with two exceptions that they differ from each other about easy and quick access via mobile devices and about the digital storing facility. On the other hand, they evidently opt for the traditional ELT regarding TTF and CM. Regarding PF, the participants seem to find distance ELT more boring, but a great majority of them do not agree that being in front of a camera during teaching at a distance makes them stressed and anxious; and regarding F, while they do not seem to find planning and conducting a distance ELT easier they predominantly find it less costly. As to the miscellaneous items, also considering the Table 15 below where more detailed statistics take place, the participants seem to think with a big majority that although distance ELT enables to use cutting-edge teaching methods such as blended and flipped teaching more easily, learning goals can more easily be achieved through the traditional one. With a great majority, they seem to accept on one hand that distance ELT compels them to sedentary work and thereby may cause health problems, and on the other hand that in today's world adopting distance language teaching is a necessity. Finally, for many of them, it basically depends on the teacher herself/himself whether the distance ELT process is effective or not.

Table 15

Frequencies (f), percentages (%), means and standard deviations for Miscellaneous items (negative items unrecoded)

Item		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	Total	M	SD
1	*f*	6	10	9	24	1	50	3.08	1.122
	%	12	20	18	48	2	100		
8	*f*	2	4	7	27	10	50	3.78	.996
	%	4	8	14	54	20	100		
15	*f*	0	1	3	26	20	50	4.30	.678
	%	0	2	6	52	40	100		
19	*f*	1	8	8	22	11	50	3.68	1.058
	%	2	16	16	44	22	100		
22	*f*	1	6	8	21	14	50	3.82	1.044
	%	2	12	16	42	28	100		

In subsection 4.1.7.2 below, for a profound understanding of participants' attitudes towards distance ELT and thereby to contribute to the answer of RQ1, the state-based and foundation-based results are compared:

4.1.7.2. State vs Foundation

In this section, the university-based subscale distributions are compared using the t-test or Mann-Whitney U test depending on their normalities. Although the whole scale and all subscale distributions were seen to be normal, it should be checked if they are still normal when separated into university-based subgroups. But in this current case where sample sizes is less than 50 (40 for state universities and 10 for the foundation one), in order to decide whether a distribution is normal or not, besides skewness and kurtosis values, also the Shapiro-Wilk statistics should be examined. As is known, the Shapiro-Wilk test (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965) is known to be one of the most suitable tests for testing normality of small distributions, especially for those with sample sizes less than 50:

Table 16

University-based Skewness & Kurtosis values and Shapiro-Wilk statistics

Scale	University type	Number of participants	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Shapiro-Wilk	
							Statistic	Sig.
F	State	40	3.1167	.89172	.154	-.955	.957	.133
	Foundation	10	3.5333	.81952	-.038	.016	.933	.475
eF	State	40	3.4000	.92300	-.518	.418	.965	.248
	Foundation	10	3.7250	.74021	.057	-.231	.973	.918
TMA	State	40	3.5625	.75053	-.182	-.870	.952	.092
	Foundation	10	3.5000	.84163	-.044	.157	.932	.465
PF	State	40	3.2875	.77532	-.321	1.259	.939	.031
	Foundation	10	2.7500	1.16070	-.233	-1.306	.898	.206
CM	State	40	2.1083	.84188	.709	.222	.928	.014
	Foundation	10	1.6667	.75359	.649	-1.248	.811	.020
TTF	State	40	1.9563	.70458	.976	1.359	.926	.012
	Foundation	10	1.8750	.95924	1.099	.266	.846	.052
The whole scale	State	40	2.9530	.55053	.333	.736	.979	.664
	Foundation	10	2.8880	.48837	-.584	.199	.964	.833

According to Shapiro-Wilk statistics and skewness and kurtosis values given in the table above except for CM all foundation-based distributions could be assumed to be normal. CM distribution could not be assumed to be normal since its Shapiro-Wilk test significance value (.020) is quite less than .05. As for the state-based distributions, the Shapiro-Wilk test significance value for CM distribution (.014) is quite less than .05. Therefore, the state-based CM distribution could not be assumed to be normal. But, its skewness and kurtosis values (.709 and .222, respectively) lay between –1 and 1. Therefore, its normality may furtherly be examined. But, even if it were assumed to be normal, the t-test could not be used since foundation-based CM distribution is not normal, as just remarked above. The Shapiro-Wilk test significance values for state-based PF and TTF distributions (.031 and .012, respectively) are less than .05. Moreover, although they are between –1.5 and 1.5, the kurtosis values for state-based PF and TTF distributions are not so small (1.259 and 1.359, respectively) and near to 1.5. Therefore, the state-based PF and TTF distributions are not assumed to be normal. But it is worth mentioning here that if these two distributions were accepted as normal and the t-test were used to compare them the same results as those of Mann Whitney U test would be obtained. According to the table all other state-based distributions could be assumed to be normal. As a result, in order to compare the university-based whole scale, F, EF, and TMA distributions the t-test was used. But, to compare university-based PF, CM, and TTF distributions the Mann Whitney U test was used. The the t-test statistics in this respect are as follows:

Table 17

t-test statistics for independent state- & foundation-based subgroups

Scale	University type	Number of participants	M	SD	t-test for equality of means		
					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
F	State	40	3.1167	.89172	-1.341	48	.186
	Foundation	10	3.5333	.81952			
eF	State	40	3.4000	.92300	-1.031	48	.308
	Foundation	10	3.7250	.74021			
TMA	State	40	3.5625	.75053	.230	48	.819

	Foundation	10	3.5000	.84163			
The whole scale	State	40	2.9530	.55053	.341	48	.735
	Foundation	10	2.8880	.48837			

According to the table, all significance values (.186, .308, .819 and .735) are greater than .05. That is to say, the means of the university-based distributions belonging to the whole scale and to the subscales F, eF, and TMA do not differ from each other significantly at the significance level of .05. Therefore, it can be concluded that there does not exist a significant difference between state university instructors' and foundation university instructors' attitudes towards distance ELT regarding the whole scale and the subscales F, eF, and TMA.

As for the subscales PF, CM, and TTF, the Mann-Whitney U test statistics are given below:

Table 18

Mann Whitney U Test Statistics

Scale	University type	Number of participants	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
PF	State	40	26.70	1068.00	152.000	-1.190	.234
	Foundation	10	20.70	207.00			
CM	State	40	26.91	1076.50	143.500	-1.388	.165
	Foundation	10	19.85	198.50			
TTF	State	40	26.26	1050.50	169.500	-.745	.457
	Foundation	10	22.45	224.50			

According to the table above, all significance values (.234, .165, and .457) are seen to be greater than .05. It can therefore be argued that there does not exists a significant difference between state university instructors' and foundation university instructors' attitudes towards distance ELT regarding the subscales PF, CM, and TTF at the significance level of .05.

4.2. The Results of the Qualitative Analysis

In this section, the results of the qualitative analysis (thematic analysis) are summarized in terms of research questions. Namely, to find a possible answer to sub-research questions from SRQ2.1 to SRQ2.9 and thereby to research question RQ2, the coded themes and sub-themes of the participants' answers are examined through their frequencies and related percentages. As some exceptions, it is not deemed necessary to search for themes or sub-themes while analyzing the answers to Q4, Q5, and Q9 since they are either approval/disapproval or preference questions. In what follows, P*m*.*n* stands for the answer given by participant P*m* to question Q*n*, i.e., for instance P2.3 will denote the answer given by participant P2 to question Q3. Moreover, Tc, Sc, Sf, Tp and Sp stand for *Theme code*, *Sub-theme code*, *Sub-theme frequency*, *Theme percentage* and *Sub-theme percentage*, respectively:

4.2.1. SRQ2.1) From teachers' point of view, what are the advantages of distance ELT?

In order to answer SRQ2.1, the answers to the first question (Q1) of the semi-structured interview were analyzed and seen that participants' considerations regarding the advantages of distance ELT could be categorized under 4 themes and 11 sub-themes, with a total frequency of 30. These themes and sub-themes, together with their assigned codes and corresponding frequencies and percentages, are summarized in the following table:

Table 19

Themes & Sub-Themes for Advantages of Distance ELT

Tc	Theme	Sc	Sub-theme	Sf	Sp	Tp
TMA	Time Management	TMA-1	Flexibility & Accessibility	8	26.67	40.00

	and Accessibility	TMA-2	Efficient time management	4	13.33	
eF	e-Facilities	eF-1	Online learning tools and technologies	3	10.00	23.33
		eF-2	e-Materials	3	10.00	
		eF-3	Recordability of lessons for future use	1	03.33	
PTL	Productive Teaching and Learning	PTL-1	Variety in teaching/learning methods	3	10.00	20.00
		PTL-2	Productive teaching/learning atmosphere	2	06.67	
		PTL-3	Manageable learning process	1	03.33	
CHA	Comfort, Health and Affordability	CHA-1	Comfort	3	10.00	16.67
		CHA-2	Health	1	03.33	
		CHA-3	Affordability	1	03.33	
Total				30	100	100

Time Management and Accessibility (TMA). The analysis showed that the participants find distance ELT advantageous in TMA, with a total frequency of 12 (out of 30) among all reported advantageous. The theme TMA was seen to be supported by 2 sub-themes:

> ***Flexibility and accessibility (TMA-1)*** that is understood from participants' statements "*changeable class hours*" (P1.1), "*Flexible working hours*" (P4.1), "*Flexible*" (P5.1), "*the convenience - you can teach English when and wherever it is convenient" (P6.1), "accessibility and flexibility of time and place*" (P7.1), "*accessibility of time and place*" (P8.1 & P9.1) and "*a great deal of flexibility*" (P10.1); and ***efficient time management (TMA-2)*** that is understood from their statements "*It's time saving*" (P1.1), "*I had no problem with catching up with the schedule*" (P2.1), "*efficient time management*" (P4.1) and "*not having to spend time going to school and coming back home*" (P7.1).

e-Facilities (eF). The analysis showed that the participants find distance ELT advantageous in eF as well, with a total frequency of 7. eF was seen to be supported by 3 sub-themes:

> Availability of ***online learning tools and technologies (eF-1)*** that is understood from statements "*It is also possible to make the materials more appealing and interactive for the students thanks to variety of applications such as padlet, mentimeter, canva etc."* (P3.1), "*Using and integrating online tools*" (P9.1) and "*the biggest advantage of distance ELT is the chance to implement the use of technology into my lessons ... using interactive web tools&applications,*" (P10.1); availability of ***e-materials (eF-2)*** that is understood from statements "*i could reach every kind of material i needed and benefit form Internet sources easily. I did not need to get the materials copied, ...*" (P2.1), "*Preparing the materials and sharing them with the students are easier in distance education*" (P3.1) and "*to use more digital resources and make students use them more*" (P4.1); and ***recordability of lessons for future use (eF-3)*** that is understood from statement "*lessons are recorded, so students access to these videos later*" (P6.1).

Productive Teaching and Learning (PTL). According to the analysis, distance ELT is also advantageous in PTL, with a total frequency of 6. PTL is supported by 3 sub-themes:

> ***Variety in teaching/learning methods (PTL-1)*** that is understood from participants' statements "*it provides learner autonmy*" (P5.1), "*flexible teaching methods, ..., variety of learning styles.*" (P9.1) and "*implementing distance teaching or hybrid teaching into a curriculum results in … variety in teachers' and students' experience.*" (P10.1); ***productive teaching/learning atmosphere (PTL-2)*** understood from their statements "*i had the silent and calm atmosphere of teaching*" (P2.1) and "*In virtual classrooms it is easier to prevent unnecessary interactions between the Ss*" (P10.1); and ***manageable learning process (PTL-3)*** understood from the statement "*it is easier to monitor Ss. … the teacher is able to check all of the Ss progress ..., simultaneously*" (P10.1).

Comfort, Health and Affordability (CHA). Distance ELT was also seen to be advantageous regarding CHA with a total frequency of 5. CHA is supported by 3 sub-themes:

Comfort (CHA-1), as understood from their statements "*physically less tiring*" (P1.1), "*there is no need to cummute [commute]*" (P4.1) and "*having lessons from the comfort of your home*" (P7.1); ***health (CHA-2)***, as understood from the statement "*safer under these pandemic circumstances*" (P1.1); and ***affordability (CHA-3)***, as understood from the statement "*Affordability* for advantages …*"* (P8.1).

As a result, it can be concluded as an answer to SRQ2.1 that according to the participants *time management and accessibility* is the biggest advantage of distance ELT. Moreover, rich *e-facilities* and *productive teaching and learning* are seen to be its other major advantages. It was also found advantageous in *comfort, health and affordability*.

4.2.2. SRQ2.2) From teachers' point of view, what are the disadvantages of distance ELT?

In order to answer SRQ2.2, again the answers to Q1 were analyzed and it was seen that the answers could be categorized under 3 themes and 8 sub-themes, as summarized below:

Table 20

Themes & Sub-Themes for Disadvantages of Distance ELT

Tc	Theme	Sc	Sub-theme	Sf	Sp	Tp
IP	Instructional Problems	IP-1	Lack of interaction, participation, and feedback	7	21.21	57.58
		IP-2	Lack of motivation and focus	5	15.15	
		IP-3	Difficult classroom management and monitoring	5	15.15	
		IP-4	Lack of training	2	06.06	
TTP	Technical and Technological Problems	TTP-1	Technical and digital problems	8	24.24	27.27
		TTP-2	Unequal technological opportunities	1	03.03	
HP	Health Problems	HP-1	Psychological problems	2	06.06	15.15
		HP-2	Physical problems	3	09.09	
Total				33	100	100

Instructional Problems (IP). Problems related to *instructional issues* are the most frequently reported ones, with a total frequency of 19, out of 33 reported disadvantages. The theme IP was seen to be supported by 4 sub-themes:

Lack of interaction, participation, and feedback (IP-1), as deduced from participants' statements "*less interaction possibility"* (P1.1), "*Student interaction is not as much as it is in f2f environment"* (P4.1), "*it is difficult to provide interaction"* (P5.1) "*Participation is a real problem for online classes"* (P6.1), "*not having face-to-face interaction with students,"* (P7.1), "*difficulty getting immediate feedback"* (P9.1) and "*second major problem I have encountered is being able to motivate Ss to participate in the lessons in a socially active way … to actively take part in the lesson"* (P10.1); ***lack of motivation and focus (IP-2)*** as understood from their statements "*difficult to … get attention of learners"* (P1.1), "*Students can be easily distracted at home"* (P4.1), "*Inability to focus on screens"* (P8.1), "*Difficulty staying motivated"* (P9.1) and "*lower motivation"* (P10.1); ***difficult classroom management and monitoring (IP-3)***, as understood from their statements "*difficult to manage class"*(P1.1), "*Not being able to see students"* (P3.1), "*classroom management is a serious problem in an online environement. Students prefer to participate in online classes without camera, so it is difficult to check what they are doing during class time"* (P6.1), "*difficult to monitor the students' participation (especially while teaching/practicing productive skills)*" (P7.1) and "*they tend to keep their cameras off*

during the lesson. …, this creates a huge problem … Imagine a classroom that the Ss can come in and leave, lie down, sleep, watch a movie or eat any time they feel like it during the lesson. A virtual classroom can easily turn into that …" (P10.1); and ***lack of training (IP-4)***, as understood from statements "*the need for training teachers & students for the distance education process & the required technology"* (P7.1) and "*lack of teacher training"* (P8.1).

Technical and Technological Problems (TTP). According to the analysis, TTP are among leading disadvantages of distance ELT, with a total frequency of 9. TTP was seen to be supported by 2 sub-themes:

Technical and digital problems (TTP-1), as deduced from participants' statements "*technological problems"* (P1.1), "*some technical problems related to the internet connection or pc"* (P3.1), "*the need to use more digital resources ... can also be a disadvantage for lecturers who are naot [not] digital natives."* (P4.1), "*Students need to deal with technological issues. Most of the time, they have internet connection problems. Due to this problem, they miss most of the classes"* (P6.1), "*facing technical/internet-related problems"* (P7.1), "*Technology issues,"* (P8.1), "*technical problems"* (P9.1) and "*The internet speed and the quality of service that internet service providers offer, directly affects the quality and stability of distance teaching."* (P10.1); and ***unequal technological opportunities (TTP-2)***, as understood from the statement "*students' lack of equal facilities for distance learning (Internet access, a computer etc.)*" (P7.1).

Health Problems (HP). According to some participants, distance ELT came with some *health problems*. The total frequency of HP is 5 and it is supported by 2 sub-themes:

Psychological problems (HP-1), as deduced from their statements "*i had quite an emotional distance with my students because they shied away from using cams and speaking"* (P2.1) and "*Sense of isolation*" (P8.1); and ***physical problems (HP-2)***, as understood from their statements "*sitting for long hours in front of the computers"* (P3.1), "*health problems (eye strain & neck strain etc.)*" (P7.1) and "*overall screen time*" (P8.1).

To sum up, it can be concluded as an answer to SRQ2.2 that, according to the participants, *instructional problems* is the biggest disadvantage of distance ELT. In this regard, *technical and technological problems* is its another major disadvantage and this is followed by *health problems* including *psychological* ones.

4.2.3. SRQ2.3) What are teachers' concerns about the distance ELT if exists any?

In order to answer SRQ2.3, the answers to Q3 of the semi-structured interview were analyzed and it was seen that participants' concerns about distance ELT were categorized under 3 themes and 8 sub-themes, as summarized in the following table:

Table 21

Themes & Sub-Themes for Teachers' Concerns about Distance ELT

Tc	Theme	Sc	Sub-theme	Sf	Sp	Tp
IC	Instructional Concerns	IC-1	Lack of interaction, participation, and feedback	4	26.67	80.00
		IC-2	Lack of motivation and focus	1	06.67	
		IC-3	Difficult classroom management and monitoring	1	06.67	
		IC-4	Ineffective teaching environment	2	13.33	
		IC-5	Lack of self-discipline	2	13.33	
		IC-6	Difficulty in teaching the four skills	2	13.33	
HC	Health Corcerns	HC-1	Psychological concerns	2	13.33	13.33

MD Mandatory Distance ELT	1	06.67	06.67
Total	15	100	100

Instructional Concerns (IC). The analysis revealed that IC are the most frequently reported concerns about distance ELT, with a total frequency of 12 out of 15. The theme IC was seen to be supported by 6 sub-themes:

Lack of interaction, participation, and feedback (IC-1), as deduced from participants' statements "*…, I feel concerned about the limited interaction between me and learners."* (P1.3), "*Participation is a real problem for online classes ... Most of the students can easily miss many classes, so this problem affects their learning process to great extent."* (P6.3), "*lack of interaction between students/peer learning"* (P8.3) and "*My concern is students' unwillingness to turn their camera on.*" (P9.3); ***lack of motivation and focus (IC-2)***, as understood from the statement "*They lose motivation and focus, which makes the learning process difficult*." (P9.3); ***difficult classroom management and monitoring (IC-3)***, as understood from the statement "*during the exams and the tasks, monitoring could be a problem."* (P3.3); ***ineffective teaching environment (IC-4)***, as understood from statements "*I don't think teaching English fully online will be as effective as teaching English face-to-face."* (P7.3) and "*effective teaching"* (P8.3); ***lack of self-discipline (IC-5)***, as understood from statements "*For students who dont have autocontrol, it is painful."* (P5.3) and "*online learning requires self-discipline*" (P6.3); and ***difficulty in teaching the four skills (IC-6)***, as understood from statements "*I believe teaching some skills are really difficult in distance education such as speaking and listening"* (P3.3) and "*For skill-based classes reading can be hard to cover"* (P5.3).

Health Concerns (HC). Two participants were seen to have some ***psychological concerns (HC-1)*** which is deduced from their statements "*In a world where People avoid each other and isolate themselves from the rest of the world, online education is highly likely to have an adverse effect on the emotional connection between individuals and make us more isolated and lonely*."(P2.3) and "*… I sometimes get the feeling that I am talking to myself without seeing and hearing students*." (P9.3).

Mandatory Distance ELT (MD). One participant's concern is ***Mandatory Distance ELT (MD)***, as understood from his/her statement "*I only have concerns regarding mandatory or "emergency" distance ELT. ... I think that we don't need to have any concerns when distance ELT is a given choice to willing Ss.*" (P10.3). MD has no sub-theme.

As a result, it can be concluded as an answer to SRQ2.3 that most of the participants have some *instructional concerns* about distance ELT. Moreover, they were seen to have some *psychological concerns* and to have concern about *mandatory distance ELT*.

4.2.4. SRQ2.4) In teachers' opinions, does the distance ELT lack face-to-face practicing?

In order to answer SRQ2.4, the answers to Q4 were analyzed. Since Q4 is an approval/disapproval question it was contented with the following report:

According to the answers, all participants, except P5, seemed to either definitely agree or agree to some extent that distance ELT lacks the needed face-to-face practicing, especially lacks the speaking skill. This is due to some shortcomings of distance ELT including *students' hesitation to ask their questions in an online environment* (P1.4), *insufficient transfer of facial expressions* (P2.4), *participation in classes without cameras* (P6.4), and *hardness of working on phonology due to insufficient hardware* (P10.4). For some participants, *lack of motivation* (P3.4), *lack of interaction* (P3.4, P4.4, and P8.4) and *ineffective teaching environment* (P9.4) go hand in hand with the lack of face-to-face

practicing. But according to P4 and P8, all these problems could be overcome via *breakout rooms* to some degree. For P5, on the other hand, *it completely depends on the teacher himself/herself to manage and provide any kind of interaction through distance education*.

To sum up, it can be concluded as an answer to SRQ2.4 that according to the participants, although could be prevented to some extent, distance ELT lacks face-to-face practicing basically due to its characteristic distance-based shortcomings mentioned above and due to some hardware-based technical problems.

4.2.5. SRQ2.5) From teachers' points of view, regarding ELT, is it possible to achieve all learning goals and objectives through distance education?

In order to answer SRQ2.5, the participants' answers to Q5 were analyzed. Since Q5 is an approval/disapproval question, like Q4, it was contented with the following report:

According to the answers, five of the participants (P1, P2, P4, P6, and P9) find it impossible to achieve all learning goals and objectives through distance education, regarding ELT. For two of them this is because *distance ELT lacks feedback and communication which play key roles in teaching* (P1.5) and *online speaking is short of creating a real life atmosphere and therefore dialogues are not life-like* (P2.5). Three participants (P3, P7, and P8), on the other hand, find it not *completely impossible to achieve all learning goals and objectives* in distance ELT. For P3 *not all but some goals and objectives might be achieved if the education is efficient enough*, while it is *really difficult* for P7. According to P8, *some of the goals and objectives, especially social skills cannot be achieved properly through distance education*. The rest two participants (P5 and P10) find it possible to achieve all learning goals and objectives, in distance ELT, *in an ideal setting* (P10.5) and *by motivating the learners and supporting them in how to study in distance education* (P5.5).

To sum up, it can be concluded as an answer to SRQ2.5 that according to the participants, although not completely impossible, it is not so easy to achieve all learning goals and objectives in distance ELT.

4.2.6. SRQ2.6) In teachers' opinions, what are the most outstanding positive sides of distance ELT?

In order to answer SRQ2.6, the answers to Q6 were analyzed. Since stated positive sides of distance ELT are closely related to its advantages the themes and sub-themes determined for SRQ2.1 were re-used here. In this respect, according to 4 participants, the most outstanding positive side of distance ELT is its efficiency in ***Time Management and Accessibility (TMA)***. 3 of them emphasized its ***flexibility and accessibility (TMA-1)***, as understood from their statements "*Flexibility*" (P5.6), "*the convenience-you can teach English when and wherever it is convenient"* (P6.6) and "*the convenience and flexibility it offers"* (P7.6), while one participant points out its ***efficiency*** *in* ***time management (TMA-2)*** stating that "*It's definitely time saving. You just focus on your lesson and you don't spend your energy on other things"* (P1.6). For 3 participants the most outstanding positive side of distance ELT is its precedence in ***e-Facilities (eF)***. For one of them its most outstanding positive side is the avalibility of ***online learning tools and technologies (eF-1)***, as understood from his/her answer "*Combining all the online components to the teaching process*" (P8.6), while for two of them it is the availability of ***e-materials (eF-2)***, as understood from their answers "*Easy access to materials*" (P2.6) and "*The convenience of preparing interactive and appealing materials and sharing them with the students fast and easily without the need of photocopy*" (P3.6). For 3 participants the most outstanding positive side of distance ELT is the ***Productive Teaching and Learning (PTL)***. Two of them pointed

out that distance ELT *shows the importance of independent learning for students* (P4.6) and brings about a *customized learning atmosphere* (P9.6), thus emphasizing the ***variety in teaching/learning methods (PTL-1)***. For the third one, ***manageable learning process (PTL-3)*** is its most outstanding positive side, as understood from his/her statement "*being able to gather data about Ss engagement and progress easily*" (P10.6). For some participants, its ***affordability (CHA-3)*** and its contribution to ***Professional Development (PD)***, a new theme having no sub-theme, are also among the most outstanding positive sides of distance ELT, as understood from their answers "*Affordability and ….*" (P9.6) and "*Professional development and …*" (P4.6), respectively.

As a result, it can be concluded as an answer to SRQ2.6 that, according to the participants, the most outstanding positive sides of distance ELT are its efficiency in *time management and accessibility*, its precedence in *e-facilities*, its positive effect on *productive teaching and learning*, and also its *affordability* and its contribution to *professional development*.

4.2.7. SRQ2.7) In teachers' opinions, what are the most outstanding negative sides of distance ELT?

In order to answer SRQ2.7, the answers to Q7 were analyzed. Since stated negative sides of distance ELT are closely related to its disadvantages the themes and sub-themes determined for SRQ2.2 were re-used here. In this respect, for many of the participants, the most outstanding negative side of distance ELT is the ***Instructional Problems (IP)*** it gives rise to. Some of them pointed out the ***lack of interaction, participation, and feedback (IP-1)*** it causes, as understood from their statements "*students who need f2f intarcation [interaction]*" (P4.7), "*lacking face-to-face interaction"* (P7.7), "*lack of … peer interaction.*" (P8.7) and "*and lack of communicational skill*." (P9.7). For some participants it is the ***lack of motivation and focus (IP-2)*** it brings about, as understood from their statements "*Demotivated students*" (P4.7), "*working form [from] home can be distracting"* (P5.7), "*lack of motivation*" (P8.7) and "*Motivating students during the lessons for active participation and after the lessons for autonomous learning"* (P10.7). One participant emphasized the ***difficult classroom management and monitoring (IP-3)*** in distance ELT, especially the difficulty in exam management, stating that "*Assessing: Administrating exams and trying to avoid both the possibility of cheating and the possible problems that sts can experience during/before the exam."* (P3.7). For two participants, the most outstanding negative side of distance ELT is related to ***Technical and Technological Problems (TTP)***. One of them pointed out ***technical and digital problems (TTP-1)***, by his/her answer "*technical problems such as internet connection*." (P6.7), while the other mentioned ***unequal technological opportunities (TTP-2)*** students have, stating that "*All students cannot have the same environmental and financial opportunities. However, all students are expected to successfully complete their preparatory class without considering their situations. Students' conditions should be taken into account or they should be provided with the same opportunities.*" (P1.7). Lastly, for 2 participants, the most outstanding negative side of distance ELT is ***psychological problems (HP-1)*** it brings about, as understood from their answers "*Emotional connection between students and teachers*" (P2.7) and "*Sense of isolation* and …" (P9.7).

As a result, it can be concluded as an answer to SRQ2.7 that, for most of the participants, the most outstanding negative side of distance ELT is the *instructional problems* it gives rise to - especially the *lack of interaction, participation, motivation and focus* and difficult *exam monitoring*. Besides, some *technical and technological problems* and some *psychological problems* were also reported among its most outstanding negative sides.

4.2.8. SRQ2.8) In teachers' opinions, how could the distance ELT be made more effective?

In order to answer SRQ2.8, the answers to Q2 of the semi-structured interview were analyzed and seen that participants' considerations in this respect could be categorized under 5 themes and 13 sub-themes, as summarized in the following table:

Table 22

Themes & Sub-Themes for Ways of Making Distance ELT More Effective

Tc	Theme	Sc	Sub-theme	Sf	Sp	Tp
IPc	Instructional Precautions	IPc-1	Requiring cameras to be turned on	3	08.82	26.47
		IPc-2	Multiple teaching/learning methods	2	05.88	
		IPc-3	Fun atmosphere and breakout rooms	2	05.88	
		IPc-4	Flexible class hours	1	02.94	
		IPc-5	Curricula, Rules, and Regulations	1	02.94	
ePc	e-Precautions	ePc-1	Using interactive online tools	3	08.82	20.59
		ePc-2	Providing additional e-materials	4	11.76	
TTPc	Technical and Technological Precautions	TTPc-1	Continuous technical support	3	08.82	29.41
		TTPc-2	Hardware, Software, and Internet support	5	14.71	
		TTPc-3	Infrastructural improvement	2	05.88	
TE	Training and Education	TE-1	Training & Guidance	5	14.71	17.65
		TE-2	Dedication & Responsibility	1	02.94	
ID	Improving Distance ELT			2	05.88	05.88
Total				34		100

Instructional Precautions (IPc). The analysis showed that IPc are of the prominent precautions, for making distance ELT more effective, with a total frequency of 9 out of 34. The theme IPc was seen to be supported by 5 sub-themes:

> According to some participants, distance ELT could be made more effective through ***requiring cameras to be turned on (IPc-1)***, as understood from their statements "*it should be a must for students to turn their camera on during class*" (P1.2), "*I have encouraged sts to keep their cameras on"* (P3.2), and "*It should be compulsory for students to participate in class with camera. So, teacher and learners can have real communication"* (P6.2); using ***multiple teaching/learning methods (IPc-2)***, as deduced from their statements "*Hybrid learning can be a better option for students.* (P6.2) and "*The use of synchronous and asynchronous teaching can save a great deal of time for the skills that require a more hands on, face to face type of practice."* (P10.2); creating a ***fun atmosphere and*** using ***breakout rooms (IPc-3)***, as understood from their statements "… *used break out rooms a lot*" (P3.2) and "*By creating fun atmosphere*" (P5.2). Moreover, according to the statement "*being flexible in terms of timing and class hours could make this process more effective"* (P3.2) some more ***flexible class hours (IPc-4)***, and according to the statement "*..., rules and regulations must be standardized… . Specifically, every ELT department must work on a major overhaul of their curricula. ..., delving into learning analytics can provide the departments with more effective ways to implement curriculum changes*" (P10.2) improving the ***curricula, rules, and regulations (IPc-5)*** would be useful.

e-Precautions (ePc). According to the analysis, distance ELT could be made more effective through some *e-precautions*. With a total frequency of 7, ePc was seen to be supported by 2 sub-themes:

> According to some participants, distance ELT could be made more effective through ***using interactive online tools (ePc-1)***, as deduced from their statements "*By using tools and applications such as answer garden and google docs for collaboration among students.*" (P5.2), "*Using online and interactive tools is a way to make it more effective"*

(P9.2) and "*checking their progress using online tools during the lessons is an easier and more effective way to facilitate practice*" (P10.2); and through ***providing*** students ***additional e-materials (ePc-2)***, as understood from their statements "*Students should be provided with enough materials*" (P1.2), "*… prepared extra materials that can keep them on the task"* (P3.2), "*students who are equipped with digital tools to … learn on their own and interact with each other more"* (P4.2) and "*providing Ss with exercises that are suitable to their levels …*" (P10.2).

Technical and Technological Precautions (TTPc). According to the analysis, distance ELT could be made more effective through some TTPc. With a total frequency of 10, TTPc was seen to be supported by 3 sub-themes:

Continuous technical support (TTPc-1) to both teachers and students, as understood from participants' statements "*helping students in need by providing technical support…*" (P3.2), "*technical support related to internet connection or other tech problems should be provided"* (P6.2) and "*having better/instant technical support when there is a problem*" (P7.2); ***hardware, software, and internet support (TTPc-2)***, as deduced from their statements "*appropriate environment and devices to join classes*" (P1.2), "*As long as each and every student has access to Internet it can be pretty effective*" (P2.2), "*helping students in need by providing… equipment for them, …, can have the potential to make this process more effective*" (P3.2), "*providing students with better facilities for distance English language teaching*" (P7.2), and "*high-band internet service should be widespread in affordable prices, necessary hardware should be more affordable for students*" (P10.2); and ***infrastructural improvement (TTPc-3)***, as deduced from their statements "*having better technical infrastructures & online learning management systems*" (P7.2) and "*internet infrastructure must be improved*" (P10.2).

Training and Education (TE). Some participants emphasized the importance of TE. With a total frequency of 6, TE was seen to be supported by 2 sub-themes:

Training & guidance (TE-1), as understood from their statements "*educations and workshops should be increased for digital immigrant students and teachers*" (P1.2), "*There is also a necessity for a training programme for teachers on how to use online education"* (P2.2), "*It requires a dedicated teacher … to guide*" (P4.2), "*guiding students for selfstudy*" (P5.2) and "*training teachers for the distance education process & the required technology*" (P7.2); and ***dedication & responsibility (TE-2)***, as understood from the statement *"It requires a dedicated teacher and responsible students …"* (P4.2).

Improving Distance ELT (ID). This is the last theme with no sub-theme and with a total frequency of 2. For two participants, distance ELT could be improved through determining and removing current problems, as understood from their statements "*By focusing on and trying to solve disadvantages of distance education*" (P8.2) and "*Student interaction can be a great source to determine what is working and what can be improved*" (P10.2).

As a result, it can be concluded as an answer to SRQ2.8 that, according to the participants, distance ELT could be made more effective by taking above-metioned *instructional, technical, technological, and digital precautions*. Besides, *determining and focusing on current problems* would be useful. Furthermore, *training and guidance* for both teachers and students and *having dedicated teachers and responsible students* are of great importance in this regard.

4.2.9. SRQ2.9) Which one do teachers prefer? Distance ELT or traditional one? Why?

To answer SRQ2.9, the answers to Q8 were analyzed and summarized below:

Face-to-face training (traditional ELT). According to the answers, 6 of the 10 participants (P1, P3, P6, P7, P8, and P9) stated to prefer face-to-face training. For some of them, this is because, in a classroom environment, teachers can *control the learning process easier*, as understood from their answers "*it is much easier to practise your class in class environment by walking around, checking students' answers to questions, asking follow up questions etc.*" (P1.8), "*I have the opportunity to connect with, problem-solve, and network with other students in a face to face classroom*" (P6.8) and "*I can also navigate teaching and learning better in a classroom.*" (P9.8). This is also because a physical classroom offers the *opportunity for social interaction*, thereby increasing the *self-confidence and motivation* of both teachers and students and enabling *permanent language learning*, as understood from their answers "*My self confidence and motivation increase when I see my students, their needs, their motivation.*" (P1.8), "*English need to be practised socially in a classroom environment.*" (P8.8) and "*I can gain greater understanding of my students' behaviour*." (P9.8). Moreover, for one of the participants, face-to-face training increases the *feeling of job commitment*, as deduced from his/her statement "*In other way, it is just so systematic and you dont really feel commitment to your job*" (P1.8) for distance ELT, and one of them lays emphasis on *technologically supported face to face training* (P8.8).

Hybrid ELT. 3 participants (P2, P4, and P5) stated to prefer a hybrid education. According to P2, hybrid education is the best because, on one hand, social interaction and affection are among the necessities of effective language learning and this can only be ensured in a classroom environment, and, on the other hand, teachers should not lag behind to benefit from the virtues of the digital world. For P4, both methods have advantages and disadvantages and going back to completely face-to-face instruction would be a huge loss of experience and a waste of time for students and lecturers, and therefore blended learning would be better. According to P5, hybrid education is the ideal one, but he/she also stated to prefer distance education if he/she has to choose one.

Distance ELT. One of the participants (P10) stated to prefer the distance ELT for its advantages, pointing out that *education has been heavily affected by technology in this modern era* and that *in a near future language education will be assisted heavily by the use of AI (Artificial intelligence) technologies* (P10.8).

To sum up, for the above-mentioned reasons, 6 interviewees prefer face-to-face training, 3 of them prefer a hybrid education and the rest one prefers the distance ELT.

4.2.10. RQ2) What are the personal attitudes of teachers towards distance English language teaching?

In order to answer RQ2, all of the above-mentioned findings should be considered together. In this regard, it can be concluded that teachers find distance ELT advantageous in some aspects. Namely, they find it advantageous especially in *time management and accessibility*, *e-facilities*, *productive teaching and learning*, and in *comfort, health and affordability*. According to the participants, it has also serious disadvantages. Namely, it brings about some *instructional*, *technical*, *technological, and health problems* as detailed above. In relation to these problems, the participants were seen to have some *concerns* - especially *instructional* and *psychological*- about distance ELT. Moreover, according to the participants, although could be prevented to some extent, distance ELT seriously *lacks face-to-face practicing* due to *its characteristic distance-based shortcomings* and *some hardware-based technical problems*. For some participants, the lack of face-to-face practicing is accompanied by the *lack of interaction and motivation* and thus causes the *teaching efficiency to decrease*. But they also think that all these problems could be partially overcome, *distance*

ELT could be made more effective and all learning goals could be achieved to some degree by taking some instructional, technical, technological and digital precautions and by training and guidance. And finally, having dedicated teachers and responsible students is very important. As a result, the participants were seen not to prefer a full distance ELT. Rather they were seen to prefer a face-to-face or a hybrid ELT.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The results of the present study suggest that teachers have both positive and negative attitudes towards distance ELT. First and foremost, they find it advantageous in *time management and accessibility*, especially in *accessibility of time and place*, *working-time flexibility, easiness and quickness in basic teaching affairs*, and thus in *saving of time* and *efficient time management*. Similarly, the studies conducted by Godzhaeva & Tochilina (2021), Demir et al. (2021), Kamal et al. (2021), Oliveira et al. (2018), and Koppelman & Vranken (2008) proved that *saving of time*, especially *flexibility* and *accessibility of time and place* are among the foremost advantages of distance teaching and learning. Secondly, teachers find it advantageous in *e-facilities*, especially in *availability of didactic and interactive e-materials*, *convenience of preparing and sharing them*, *availability of online teaching/learning tools and technologies*, and *recordability of lessons for future use*. In this connection, the study conducted by Öztürk Çalık & Altay (2021) has showed *the importance of preparing higher quality authentic materials that are well-designed in color, text*, etc., in distance ELT. Moreover, in line with our findings, the study conducted by Koppelman & Vranken (2008) revealed that *recordability of lessons for future use* is a prominent advantage of DE. According to the teachers, distance ELT paves the way for implementing *various productive teaching/learning methods* including *hybrid methods*, and thus offers an *effective and more manageable teaching/learning environment*. It also enables *autonomous and independent learning* and thus helps *professional development*, and is more *affordable*. In a similar study conducted by Xiao & Hurd (2007), students appeared to shift to a more autonomous learning and to take more responsibility for their studies. Furthermore, it offers a comfortable and safer teaching/learning environment. In line with this result, the study conducted by Kamal et al. (2021) revealed that distance ELT offers more comfortable conditions for learning.

According to the teachers, distance ELT has serious disadvantages, as well. First of all, it has some instructional disadvantages including *lack of interaction*, *participation*, *motivation*, *focus*, and *self-discipline*. Moreover, *teaching the four skills* - especially *speaking*, *listening*, and *reading* - *is difficult* in distance ELT. In particular, it is *hard to work on phonology due to insufficient hardware*. *Learners' hesitation to ask their questions in an online environment*, *difficulty in getting immediate feedback*, *insufficient transfer of facial expressions*, *stilted online dialogues*, and also *participation in classes without cameras* are some other problems reported in this respect. And these are all why *the online teaching environment is ineffective* and why distance ELT *lacks the gains of face-to-face practicing* and even *causes communication skills to deteriorate* in time. Supporting our findings, it was remarked in a previous study that "The application of distance learning system to foreign language teaching is a great challenge. The greatest problem is the lack of face-to-face communication with peers and the teacher" (Trajanovic et al., 2007). Also, the study conducted by Goodfellow et al. (1996) showed that a form of interaction that is closely comparable to a face-to-face discussion could not be achieved, through distance language education, since it lacks some important features of face-to-face communication and in particular since its technology distorts the normal use of body language required to manage interaction. Another disadvantage of distance ELT is the difficulties it brings about in *classroom management*. In

particular, *ensuring students' online attendance*, *keeping their attention alive* and *monitoring their participation* during distance ELT and *monitoring them in exams and tasks* are quite difficult. In this respect, *students' unwillingness to turn their cameras on* during distance ELT is a common problem for almost all kinds of online education. *Various technical and technological problems* mainly consisting of *infrastructural and internet-related ones* and *hardware- and software-based ones*, *some instant problems like a power or connection loss during distance ELT*, *unequal technological opportunities*, and *unfair competition caused by digital nativism and poverty* are also among essential disadvantages of distance ELT. It maybe for such reasons that many instructors do not find planning and conducting a distance ELT easier and call attention to the lack of *teacher and student training for distance education and its technology*. Accordingly, the studies conducted by Demir et al. (2021) and Koppelman & Vranken (2008) have revealed that *technical and technological problems* are of major and common problems in distance education. Several *health problems*, such as eye and neck strains due to *sedentary work* in front of computers for hours, and several *psychological problems*, such as *senses of emotional distance, isolation*, and *loneliness*, are some other disadvantages reported. These are probably why many instructors find distance ELT boring.

In consequence, due to all the above-summarized problems, teachers have serious concerns about distance ELT and believe that it is almost *impossible to achieve all learning goals and objectives through distance ELT*. They find it easier to conduct a lesson and control the learning process in a classroom environment and believe that *a physical classroom offers the opportunity for social interaction and affection and increases self-confidence and motivation*, which are essential for permanent language learning. That is why the vast majority of them do not prefer to teach English language only through distance education. Instead, most of them prefer the traditional ELT or a hybrid model. Nevertheless, the results of the present study suggest that it may still be possible to remove or at least to minimize some problems and thereby make the distance ELT more effective through

- ✓ establishing a productive teaching environment in an ideal setting enriched by modern teaching/learning methods, interactive online tools, and e-materials,
- ✓ creating an engaging teaching atmosphere that is supported by breakout rooms, thereby enabling peer interaction and thus far from being boring,
- ✓ ensuring students' attendance in online classes and encouraging them to turn their cameras on,
- ✓ motivating students to participate in online lessons and to engage in learning activities and tasks, and encouraging them to interact more and to give immediate feedback,
- ✓ keeping students' attention alive and helping them to deal with distraction,
- ✓ creating a life-like environment in online lessons as much as possible,
- ✓ improving the four skills, especially the speaking, listening, and reading skills, focusing on phonology, and thus developing communication skills,
- ✓ increasing the quality of online dialogues by taking any needed precautions,
- ✓ helping students to not lose their existing social skills and even to develop them,
- ✓ helping both students and teachers to deal with such psychological problems as senses of emotional distance, isolation, and loneliness,
- ✓ helping both students and teachers to get rid of health problems caused by sitting for long hours in front of computers,

- ✓ providing all teachers and students with continuous and instant technical and technological support, and in particular, supporting them with essential hardware and software and providing them with easy internet access,
- ✓ helping students in how to study and supporting them to gain self-discipline,
- ✓ revising and improving the curricula, rules, and regulations according to up-to-date needs and requirements,
- ✓ providing some more flexibility in timing, especially in class hours, as much as possible,
- ✓ training and guiding both teachers and students for distance education and for its technology, and thereby removing the unfair competition caused by digital nativism and poverty,
- ✓ educating dedicated teachers and responsible students, and
- ✓ determining and focusing on current problems.

However, beyond these, the results of the present study suggest as well that the effectiveness of distance ELT depends entirely on the teacher himself/herself. But, *virtual and traditional teaching environments involve different skills and responsibilities and therefore those language teachers trained for face-to-face classrooms could not be expected to become effective in an online teaching platform* (Compton, 2009). Therefore, training teachers for distance education and for its technology is of great importance. This is a lack of many teacher training programs in fact. In a study conducted by Mirici et al. (2022), for instance, the ELT students pointed out *the inability of the ELT program in training digital literate teachers.* In this regard, some customized professional development programs for ELT teachers would also be considered. But, in order a professional development program to be effective enough *it is essential to design and implement the program in harmony with the needs and expectations of teachers, learners, and the learning environment* (Canaran & Mirici, 2019). Furtherly, the results of the study suggest that having dedicated teachers is probably what we really need. In this respect, the study conducted by Hismanoglu (2019) revealed that *having interest in his/her job and feeling responsibility for teaching* is among the five most important qualities of effective EFL teachers from the perspectives of preparatory program Turkish EFL learners.

Then, the question is that should we insist on distance ELT or leave it completely? At this point, based on the above-mentioned problems, one could justifiably argue that distance ELT should be left, and it should be turned back to the traditional one as soon as possible. However, the results also suggest that some advantages of distance ELT cannot be met by the traditional one - especially, its advantages in *efficient time management, accessibility of time and place, flexibility, availability of e-materials, availability of online teaching/learning tools and technologies, variety in productive teaching/learning methods*, etc.

It is an undeniable fact that we live in the digital era, and it can not be thought to isolate ourselves from this digital world and not to benefit from technological opportunities. As a matter of fact, it is already impossible to keep the new generation, the generation Z, out of this virtual world completely. So, if this is the case, we could convert it into an advantage and one of the ways would be to channel their digital energies into distance language learning. This would also probably protect them, to some extent, from any kind of digital harm - physical, psychological, or cognitive. On the other hand, all schools, teachers, and students have become substantially experienced in DE, and more particularly in distance ELT, during the pandemic period. Accordingly, going back to completely face-to-face instruction would be a huge loss of experience and a waste of time for everyone. Besides, it should always be borne in mind that, in today's world, there always exists a probability of returning to DE for

such inevitable reasons as the Covid pandemic. That is also why these experiences should not be lost and even should always be kept alive.

Therefore, it is suggested by the results of this study that neither the traditional (face-to-face) nor the distance ELT is the ideal method alone. Instead, a hybrid ELT model consisting of both traditional and distance teaching methods and customized according to the specific needs and objectives, such as blended and flipped learning ones, would be the best.

6. Suggestions for Further Studies

The present study was conducted to reveal only teachers' attitudes. Whereas, the main pillars of an educational program are not only teachers but also learners as well. Therefore, a further study could be conducted to reveal university preparatory class students' attitudes towards distance ELT. Moreover, the families cannot be excluded from this discussion. The distance education process experienced during the pandemic period affected not only students and teachers but also their families as well. Therefore, in a separate study, their attitudes towards distance education could also be searched for a possible contribution to the field. Furthermore, similar studies could be conducted at other levels of education such as primary, secondary or high school levels.

7. Ethical Text

The research was ethically approved by the Ethics Committee of Hacettepe University with the decision numbered E-35853172-300-00001569526 on 17.05.2021. There is no conflict of interest between the authors.

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