The Views of Turkish Language Teachers on Distance Education and Digital Literacy during Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Distance education, which provides flexibility in the learning environment, is an important learning model that complements face-to-face education. However, during the unanticipated Covid-19 pandemic, the distance education model was employed as an alternative instruction model, albeit temporarily, and certain problems were experienced in this process. In this context, the views of the Turkish language teachers on distance education and digital literacy in Turkey, where average population is quite young and the impact of the pandemic was substantial, was investigated in the present study. The study was conducted with the phenomenological design, a qualitative research method, and the study group included middle school Turkish language teachers who conducted distance education during the four months of the pandemic process. In the study, a semi-structured interview form, developed by the authors, was employed as the data collection instrument, and the collected data were analyzed with content analysis. The study findings revealed problems such as student attendance; digital problems such as Internet connectivity, infrastructure, and system; interaction, interest and commitment; literacy problems such as inability of distance education to improve written expression skills of the students; inadequate synchronous/online class count and duration, and poor parent-student-teacher cooperation. Based on these findings, it was recommended to design multimedia material that allow bidirectional interaction and improve inter-institutional cooperation to solve digital problems.

Key words: Covid-19, Distance Education, Turkish Language Teachers, Digital Literacy

INTRODUCTION

Natural disasters, diseases, migrations, etc. are important events that deeply affect human life and force changes. In this context, the COVID-19 pandemic, which spread from Wuhan city in the Hubei province of China, could be considered as the most important event of recent years that profoundly affected the humankind. The COVID-19 pandemic was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) on March 11, and led to serious problems and concerns (Huang et al., 2020; Lin, 2020; Tanhan et al., 2020). Due to this pandemic that completely changed the global lifestyle, important decisions were made, and changes were implemented in the field of education. Several countries temporarily closed schools due to the pandemic. Globally, more than 91 percent of students, nearly 1.6 billion children and teenagers were removed from the educational environment (Miks & McIlwaine, 2020). All these have affected people from biological, psychological, social, spiritual, and economic perspectives and led serious issues in overall life and education (Arslan et al., 2020; Tanhan, 2020). As of 31

March 2020, face-to-face education has been suspended in 185 nations and alternative methods were adopted. Turkey adopted the distance education model on March 23, EBA (Network of Educational Information Systems) and television (TRT TV EBA) took over the learning process (Sarıçam et al., 2020).

Distance education is described as an education model that allows geographically distant learners to access the learning process (Moore et al., 2011). In this model, which largely depends on individual activities, pedagogical materials that are planned and developed by an educational institution are employed (Holmberg, 1986; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2016). Distance education could be independent of space and provides an opportunity to develop a time-independent learning environment. Distance education allows the learners to learn based on their individual pace and at any time they want.

Distance education, which became globally popular since it has potential to provides equal opportunity in education systems while also has potential to increase social justice gap if not mindfully considered (Tanhan, 2020), is not

a novel approach. Although distance education applications have evolved significantly due to technological advances, it dates back to the 1700s. Initially, educational materials were sent by mail to students who could not attend the schools for various reasons, especially due to physical disabilities, in the 1830s. After the introduction of satellite and cable broadcasting, radio and television became an important instrument in distance education. After the 1990s, great changes were observed due to the popularity of personal computers and the Internet, expanding the scope of distance education (Varol & Türel, 2003; Kırık, 2014; Turan, 2019; Telli, 2020).

The most important feature of the distance education model in learning is its flexibility (UNESCO, 2002; Bates, 2005; Open and Distance Learning Quality Council, 2012). The flexible access in distance education not only removed time and space limitations, but also eliminated physical, psychological or interactive barriers between the learners and learning resources (Bozkurt et al., 2019). In Tanhan's study (2020), in which the author utilized an innovative research method called Online Photovoice (OPV), the participants reported online or distance education as one of the most important facilitators for their life and education during the pandemic.

Distance education includes multidimensional operations that are provided via educational technologies and conducted over long distances. Programmed texts, TV shows, computer software, web-based learning are the prominent media that serve distance education. Successful implementation improves conventional face-to-face education and makes the instruction more personal, valid, accessible and economical (İşman, 2015).

The characteristics of distance education could be listed as follows (Paulsen, 2002; Sayın et al., 2017):

- Unlike face-to-face education, learner and educator are physically distant.
- Learners require higher levels of self-regulation skills.
- A computer is required for the transmission of educational content and communication.
- Learners could establish two-way, simultaneous or asynchronous communication with teachers, peers or other stakeholders via computers.

Distance education could be conducted either simultaneously or asynchronously. In simultaneous learning, the teacher and the learner are in the learning environment at the same time. This model was described as synchronous distance learning. In asynchronous distance learning, it is possible for the teacher and the learner to be in the learning environment at different times (Zhang & Nunamaker, 2003; Sayın et al., 2017; Turan, 2019).

Distance education model has benefits such as the adaptation to the changing, developing and transforming world, an opportunity for lifelong independent learning, improvement of learner's responsibility to learn, access information, improvement of entrepreneurial and decision-making skills, strengthening the learning environment, providing flexibility and diversity in instructional objective, method and technique. However, it also has certain limitations. These limitations include inability to acquire affective and psychomotor behavior, and in applied disciplines, it adversely affects socialization, could lead to problems in technological product use, and inadequate face-to-face communication and interaction levels (Uşun, 2006). In Tanhan's (2020) study some of the participants reported that not having the Internet, personal computer, personal room to study and lack of face-to-face experience to gain practical skills as some of the most important barriers for their life and especially their education process during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The most basic feature that separates the distance education process from face-to-face education is the learning environment. Differences in learning environments undoubtedly affect the skills used by individuals. The scope of the skills used in the learning process either expands or new concepts emerge. In this respect, digital literacy can be expressed as an increasingly important skill that integrates with new generation learning environments.

The concept of digital literacy refers to a wider scope considering the technological possibilities used to receive and transmit information, with reading and writing skills at its centre. The American Library Association defines digital literacy as "the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create and communicate information requiring both cognitive and technical skills" (Heitin, 2016, p. 1). In this context, it is possible to say that distance education and digital literacy skills are in a very close relationship.

Popularization of distance education and digital literacy in 2020 due to the global impact of the Covid-19 pandemic required novel studies on self-regulated learning environments. Digital educational environments where learners control their own learning experiences, reflect on self-learning, and take the responsibility to learn became prominent. The pandemic led to a need for self-sufficient digital educational environments based on access and interaction, and materials that could be employed in these environments (Erol, 2020). The extent that these requirements were met in distance education could be measured by the effectiveness and interactivity of the process, and how it removed communication barriers between the participants (İşman, 2015). Some other researchers also exclusively examined mental health state of teachers in Turkey and found the teachers facing critical issues (Çiçek et al., 2020). The researchers suggested further research on teachers and education during the pandemic (Çiçek et al., 2020; Tanhan, 2020). Thus, it could be suggested that the views of the teachers, who are one of the active actors in the process, are important in eliminating or solving the problems observed in distance education.

The literature review revealed that there were studies where the teacher views, an important element in several national education systems, were obtained to improve the efficiency of the distance education model during the Covid-19 pandemic (Almanthari et al., 2020; Bakioğlu & Çevik, 2020; Burke & Dempsey, 2020; Doghonadze et al., 2020; Doğan & Koçak, 2020; Fidan, 2020; Hebebci et al., 2020; Karakuş et al., 2020; Sintema, 2020). However, it was determined that there were only a few studies where the views of Turkish language teachers or pre-service Turkish language teachers

on the distance education model were obtained (Bayburtlu, 2020; Sarıçam et al., 2020; Karakuş et al., 2020; Yürektürk & Coşkun, 2020). The review of these studies on distance education in Turkish language education demonstrated that these studies focused on certain particular dimensions such as the EBA system, basic language skills, and general problems experienced in distance education. The present study, unlike previous studies, aimed to investigate various dimensions such as the general characteristics of the distance education model, the EBA system, the Turkish language instruction, the development of basic language skills in the context of digital literacy and synchronous/online courses in depth.

The Aim of the Study

The study aimed to determine and describe the views of Turkish language teachers on distance education conducted on various platforms in Turkey during the Covid-19 pandemic. For this purpose, the following research questions were determined:

1. What are the views of Turkish language teachers on distance education activities?
2. What are the views of Turkish language teachers on the effectiveness of the course in distance education?
3. What are the views of Turkish language teachers on the development of basic language skills in distance education?
4. What are the views of Turkish language teachers on the use of the EBA platform in distance education?
5. What are the experiences of Turkish language teachers on the EBA platform that they employed in distance education?
6. What are the views of Turkish language teachers on synchronous/online instruction of the Turkish language course?
7. What are the views of Turkish language teachers on student participation in synchronous/online classes?

METHODOLOGY

The present study employed the phenomenology design, a qualitative research method. Phenomenological research method aims to reveal a more general understanding about a phenomenon or situation by investigating the participants' personal experiences about a phenomenon or situation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In this research design, which is based on philosophy and psychology, the individual experiences are described by a universal explanation. In other words, the method aims to make sense of the true nature of the topic (Creswell, 2017; Creswell, 2018).

The Study Group

The study group included middle school Turkish language teachers who conducted distance education activities during the four months of the pandemic. Participants were assigned with the purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling entails non-random assignment of the subjects where

the members are determined based on study objectives (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016). For a researcher conducting research on any topic, sample could provide the best answers for research problems (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The participating Turkish language teacher demographics are presented in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, eight (40%) Turkish language teachers were females and 12 (60%) were males. The teacher age varied between 25 and 60. Among the age groups, it was observed that most teachers [10 (50%)] were between 31 and 40. It was determined that most teachers [8 (40%)] were in service for 6 - 10 years.

Data Collection and Analysis

The study data were collected with a semi-structured interview form developed by the authors. First, the interview form questions were developed, and a pilot scheme was conducted with five subjects. Based on the results of the scheme, the interview form questions were reorganized. The finalized interview form was employed in the study.

The study data were analyzed with content analysis. In content analysis, qualitative data collected with observations, interviews or documents are analyzed in four stages: data coding, determination of the themes, organization of the codes and themes, description and interpretation of the findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In the present study, themes and codes were determined based on the teacher responses to the questions. Then, the themes and related codes were organized and presented in tables. The interpretations and analyses were conducted on the findings based on the themes and codes.

To determine the reliability and validity of the study, initially, teacher responses to the interview questions were analyzed by two experts to obtain the themes and codes. The intercoder reliability coefficient was calculated with Miles and Huberman's (2016) formula (agreement / agreement + disagreement). Both coders agreed on 54 codes, and disagreed on five codes and the intercoder reliability coefficient was calculated as 0.91. According to this formula, the intercoder agreement should be 90% and above in qualitative studies for reliability.

Table 1. Participant demographics

	Frequency	**%**
Gender		
Female	8	40
Male	12	60
Age		
25-30	4	20
31-40	10	50
41-50	4	20
51-60	2	10
Seniority (years)		
1-5	2	10
6-10	8	40
11-15	5	25
16-20	3	15
21 and above	2	10

FINDINGS

The findings of the study that aimed to determine the views of Turkish language teachers on distance education are presented in the order of the interview form questions.

The Views of Turkish Language Teachers on Distance Education Activities

To determine the views of Turkish language teachers on distance education activities, they were asked the question "What are your views on distance education? The data collected based on the responses are presented in Table 2.

Based on the Table 2, two themes and eight codes were obtained for the views of teachers on distance education activities. The review of teacher views revealed that those in the positive (44.4%) theme included class attendance (18.1%), alternative education (11.1%), rich content (8.3%), and facility (6.9%) codes. The negative (55.6%) theme included lack of attendance (22.2%), Internet/connection problems (19.5%), frivolity (9.7%), and infrastructure/system problems (4.2%) codes. Thus, it could be suggested that although the teachers considered distance education somehow beneficial, they also stated that it had certain significant limitations.

Certain positive views of the teachers on distance education were as follows:

- *Although distance education is not like face-to-face classes, I think it is beneficial for students to concentrate on and follow the course (P12).*
- *As an alternative to the face to face instruction of Turkish language course, online education on EBA and similar platforms is a positive development for education and instruction (P6).*
- *I believe that platforms such as EBA and internet could provide rich content and these content are useful in reaching the students (P18).*

Certain positive views of the teachers on distance education were as follows:

- *Distance education put off both teachers and students. Especially the insufficient number of classes, the attendance problem, connection problems were the causes (P1).*
- *I think student-teacher interaction is not sufficient in distance education. I cannot talk comfortably with all the students (P7).*

- *In my opinion, it is a disadvantage that distance education reduces the importance and seriousness of the class for the students (P15).*

The Views of Turkish Language Teachers on the Effectiveness of the Course in Distance Education

The question "What do you think about the efficiency of Turkish language course in distance education?" was asked to Turkish language teachers. The data collected based on teacher responses are presented in Table 3.

The review of Table 3 demonstrated that seven codes were obtained in two themes on the effectiveness of Turkish language classes in distance education. The theme that distance education is efficient included moderate (27.8%), good (14%), and sufficient (7%) codes, and the theme that distance education is inefficient included inefficient (18.6%), face to face is better (14%), insufficient (11.6%), and poor interaction (7%) codes. Thus, it could be suggested that Turkish language teachers did not consider distance education, which is used as an alternative education model during the Covid-19 pandemic, fully efficient.

Most Turkish language teachers described the efficiency of distance education as moderate, mediocre, not bad. Although these statements were considered in the efficient category, they did not fully reflect satisfaction. Certain teacher views on the topic were as follows:

- *I believe Turkish classes were moderately productive in distance education. Since it was the first time we experienced this process, it was not better than face-to-face education because we have always been teaching face to face. However, under the present conditions, we tried to conduct distance education. When I asked the students, they said that they were satisfied with the way the courses were instructed (P1).*
- *I think it was normal, moderately efficient. Because in these adverse conditions, this opportunity could not be considered negative. It also ensured that the students were not distanced from the courses. However, I think it cannot replace face-to-face instruction (P18).*

Expressing the inefficiency of distance education, teachers compared this model with face-to-face education and stated that there were problems in learner-teacher relationship and interaction. Certain teacher views on the inefficiency of distance education were as follows:

Table 2. The views of Turkish language teachers on distance education

Theme	Code	Frequency	%	Total
Positive	Attendance	13	18.1	44.4
	Alternative education	8	11.1	
	Rich content	6	8.3	
	Facility	5	6.9	
Negative	Attendance problem	16	22.2	55.6
	Internet/connection problems	14	19.5	
	Frivolity	7	9.7	
	Infrastructure/system problems	3	4.2	
Total		72	100	100

*Since the participants expressed more than one view, the number of responses is greater than the number of participants

Table 3. The views of Turkish language teachers on the effectiveness of the course in distance education

Theme	Code	Frequency	%	Total
Distance education is efficient	Moderate	12	27.8	48.8
	Good	6	14.0	
	Sufficient	3	7.0	
Distance education is inefficient.	Inefficient	8	18.6	51.2
	Face to face is better	6	14.0	
	Insufficient	5	11.6	
	Poor interaction	3	7.0	
Total		43	100	100

*Since the participants expressed more than one view, the number of responses is greater than the number of participants.

- *I do not think that distance education is more efficient than education at school, I think it is not very efficient in student monitoring and control (P5).*
- *It is obvious that it cannot replace face-to-face education. Students attended less and assignments were difficult to follow. Thus, distance education is not efficient (P15).*
- *Turkish language course requires high interaction with the students. Distance education limits interaction. I work in the outskirts. One, at most two students from a class of 40 can attend in distance education classes (P3).*
- *Considering the students who can attend, I think that it is a little efficient when compared to other courses since it is a verbal course, but it was incomplete, especially because eye contact with the student was not possible (P17).*

The Views of Turkish Language Teachers on the Development of Basic Language Skills in Distance Education

The Turkish language teachers were asked the question "What are your views on the development of basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in distance education?" The data collected based on teacher responses are presented in Table 4.

As seen in Table 4, there were three themes and four codes associated with the development of basic language skills in distance education. Participants stated that distance education was effective in the development of listening (31.2%) and speaking (25%) skills and it was less effective in the development of reading (14.1%) and writing (29.7%) skills. Thus, it could be suggested that Turkish language teachers thought that verbal expression skills of the students developed in distance education; however, their written expression skills did not improve that much. The views of Turkish language teachers on the development of basic language skills in distance education were as follows:

- *I think it was more productive in speaking and listening skills. Students generally listened during this process (P1).*
- *The listening and speaking basic language skills improved. I especially taught poetry during this period. I also had difficulties in reading the texts ... The least developed skill was the writing skill (P8).*

Table 4. The views of Turkish language teachers on the development of basic language skills in distance education

Theme	Code	Frequency	(%)	Total
Effective	Listening	20	31.2	
	Speaking	16	25.0	56.2
Less effective	Reading	9	14.1	
	Writing	19	29.7	43.8
Total		64	100	100

* Since the participants expressed more than one view, the number of responses is greater than the number of participants

- *I think reading skills and writing skills were the less developed skills. Because, I found it difficult to get students to read or write a text in this process. The reason for this was both lack of time and the inability to see the student face to face (P15).*

Turkish language teachers stated that listening and speaking basic language skills developed during the distance education process, and reading activities were usually conducted on the screen and accordingly, their screen reading skills improved a little. They stated that the least developed skill was writing.

The Views of Turkish Language Teachers on the Use of the EBA Platform in Distance Education

The Turkish language teachers were asked the following question on the use of EBA, a technology-based instruction platform: "What are your views on the use of EBA in distance education?" The data collected based on teacher responses are presented in Table 5.

As seen in Table 5, 13 codes were obtained in three themes about the use of EBA in distance education. The Turkish language teachers considered the use of distance education platform as beneficial (12.7%), interesting (9.2%), reinforcing (8.2%), suitable for repetition (6.9%), successful (3.4%) in the theme of "content sharing"; indicated non-completion of the assignments (14.9%), disinterest (6.9%), lack of sanctions (4.6%), insensibility (3.4%), difficult to monitor (3.4%) codes in the theme of "assignment fulfillment"; too much and boring (13.8%), unknown (6.9%), positive (3.4%), and rich content (2.3%) codes in the theme of "quantity and quality of assignments".

The views of Turkish language teachers on content sharing in EBA in distance education process were as follows:

- *I consider interactive sharing beneficial since they attract more attention (P13).*
- *While sharing the contents, I focused on the topics the students were interested in (P1).*
- *I included tests in my assignments. I focused on testing in file sharing that aimed reinforcement and repetition (P7).*

The teachers considered that content sharing on the EBA was beneficial for students. Furthermore, the teachers stated that content was shared on the platform to reinforce and repeat the learning. The views of Turkish language teachers on the follow-up of the assignments in distance education platform were as follows:

- *Middle school students cannot be educated with distance assignments. Especially children of families with low education could not be assigned homework in distance education. Because they do not (P3).*
- *Students did not show much interest since there were no sanctions (P7).*
- *When we obtain a report on the EBA, it shows us who did or did not do the assignments. Due to reasons such as the lack of parental support, limited technology access, inability to establish emotional bonds with students due to the distance, and motivating the students without interest, the follow-up of assignments in distance education is not as effective as face-to-face education (P17).*

The teachers stated that the students mostly did not complete the homework assigned on the EBA platform, they experienced difficulties in assignment follow-up, the students were not interested in the assignments, and the parents did not pay attention. Furthermore, the teachers considered that the lack of sanctions decreased the completion rate of the assignments and student interest. The views of Turkish language teachers on the quality and quantity of homework assigned on the EBA were as follows:

- *Assignments increased the student load. Students often did not complete the homework. I believe that constant homework assignments bored the students (P9).*

- *There were more assignments, but we did not know much about how they did their homework (P11).*
- *I sent outcome evaluation tests associated with the courses I instructed via the EBA. I also sent essays. I think it was associated with the achievements, and the parents and students provided positive feedback since I assigned homework only a few days a week (P20).*

The teachers stated that most students could not complete the assigned homework since there were too many assignments in distance education platforms and the teachers could not be informed about how the assignments were completed. Certain teachers stated that students did their homework and they received positive feedback since they assigned homework based on the achievements and only periodically.

The Views of Turkish Language Teachers on their Experiences in the EBA Platform Employed in Distance Education

The Turkish language teachers were asked the following question "What were your experiences when using the EBA platform in distance education?" The themes and codes determined based on the teacher responses are presented in Table 6.

As seen in Table 6, the views of Turkish language teachers on their experiences in the employment of the EBA platform in distance education led to one theme and five codes. The views of the teachers included first synchronous instruction (36%), digital competence problem (20%), connection problems (16%), system, infrastructure problems (12%), affective factors such as concern, anxiety, etc. (6%) codes. Teachers expressed their experiences, the difficulties they experienced in distance education conducted through synchronous instructions on the EBA platform. Most teachers stated that they did not instructed a course with distance education before, and this was their first experience. Furthermore, most teachers stated that they never attended a course on distance education. Certain teacher responses are presented below:

Table 5. The views of Turkish language teachers on the use of the EBA platform in distance education

Theme	Code	Frequency	(%)	Total
Content sharing	Beneficial	11	12.7	40.4
	Interesting	8	9.2	
	Reinforcing	7	8.2	
	Allows repetition	6	6.9	
	Successful	3	3.4	
Assignment fulfillment	Non-completion of assignments	13	14.9	33.2
	Disinterest	6	6.9	
	Lack of sanctions	4	4.6	
	Insensibility	3	3.4	
	Difficult to monitor	3	3.4	
Quality and quantity of the assignments	Too much and boring	12	13.8	26.4
	Not known	6	6.9	
	Positive	3	3.4	
	Rich content	2	2.3	
Total		87	100	100

* Since the participants expressed more than one view, the number of responses is greater than the number of participants

- *I never instructed a course like this before. It was the first time I instructed a synchronous course. Of course, I was inexperienced, but I got experienced throughout the process (P12).*

When the teachers explained their experiences in EBA, they emphasized connection problems and the infrastructure problems associated with the EBA platform, the lack of knowledge in using the EBA synchronous course system, and technological problems. Teachers mentioned the following experiences and difficulties:

- *There were moments when I had a hard time. I sometimes felt that the students could not understand me during the synchronous classes, despite I was always prepared for the class. Sometimes I could not decide which topic to instruct. Especially disconnections were difficult for me (P1).*
- *I had difficulties with connections and installing the software (P13).*
- *I do not experience any problems in EBA lectures, only disconnection problems during the classes can sometimes lead to hardships due to the poor EBA infrastructure (P16).*

The teachers also stated that they experienced difficulties when using the application at the beginning of synchronous courses in distance education. The views of certain teachers were as follows:

- *Early in the process, it was difficult. For example, the students constantly scratched the screen during synchronous courses, and I recognized how to prevent this after a few classes. In fact, an online seminar would have helped avoid such events. Later, when I grasped the software features, it became simpler (P6).*
- *I experienced problems when using the system. During instruction, the students were talking at the same time and I could not prevent it inability, and then I learned the system in time. But I believe that there are still several things I do not know yet (P17).*

Teachers stated that they are technologically incompetent in utilizing distance education tools, and they experienced certain difficulties in learning the related concepts and terms.

- *At first, I experienced technological difficulties when using the application. Especially when lecturing on Zoom, it was really difficult for me since the terms were in English. But then I got used to it (P3).*
- *Although I struggled at first, I adapted later and experienced difficulties only in learning technological terms and applications (P11).*

Teachers stated that it was necessary to attend seminars before the distance education process. Furthermore, they stated that they were worried about using the technology, instructing the topics and implementing the curriculum online for the first time:

- *I have never instructed that way before. When this process began, I wondered if I could. Because I had some concerns about using the technology. However, when the distance education process started, all my worries were gone. I was really happy to instruct the course and reach the students (P7).*
- *When distance education was introduced, I was concerned about how I would instruct the course and whether I could tackle the topics in accordance with the curriculum. These concerns were not unfounded either. Because the Ministry of National Education did not have any guidelines about how to instruct the topics online. Thus, I can say that we instructed a little based on curriculum and a little independently (P19).*

The Views of Turkish Language Teachers on Synchronous/Online Instruction of the Turkish Language Course

The participating Turkish language teachers were asked the following question: "What are your views on the instruction of Turkish language course online?" The themes and codes determined based on the teacher responses are presented in Table 7.

As seen in Table 7, 11 codes were obtained in five themes about the synchronous instruction of Turkish language course in distance education. The Turkish language teachers stated that they selected the topics based on the curriculum (14.1%), student competence (6.5%), and uninstructed topics (3.8%), they stated that they adhered to the curriculum (17%), while some did not (1.9%). The teachers considered that synchronous course hours were insufficient (11.3%) and sufficient (7.6%), and the number of synchronous course hours was insufficient (15.1%) and sufficient (3.8%), and they stated that they did not (17%) and did attend previous seminars (1.9%).

In conducting synchronous Turkish language classes in distance education, Turkish language teachers expressed various views about preparation for the classes and selection of the topics. Selected teacher views are as follows:

We tried to adhere to the curriculum. Of course, it lacked the facilities available in school environment. In other words, distance education, in my opinion, is like a person trying to eat something he would normally eat to prevent death. In other words, we maintain distance education because we

Table 6. The views of Turkish language teachers on their experiences in the EBA platform employed in distance education

Theme	Code	Frequency	%
EBA synchronous instruction experience	First synchronous course instruction	18	36
	Digital competence problem	13	20
	Connection problems	10	16
	System, infrastructure problems	6	12
	Anxiety, concern, etc. affective factors	3	6
Total		50	100

* Since the participants expressed more than one view, the number of responses is greater than the number of participants

have to. Distance education will not make much sense after the pandemic is over (P2).

- *In the classes, I prepared activities and questions on the topic. I instructed based on the curriculum and exam topics. I employed EBA assignments during the activities (P9).*
- *I tried to select the topics I thought the students needed (P1).*
- *I prioritized uninstructed topics (P13).*
- *Sometimes I instructed the topics in the order included in the curriculum. Sometimes I determined my own road map and acted accordingly. I determined the topic that would be most beneficial for the students and instructed the class accordingly (P20).*

It was observed that Turkish language teachers predominantly determined the class topic based on the curriculum, the exam topics and student competence. Furthermore, the majority of the teachers stated that they instructed the classes based on the curriculum.

The views of the Turkish language teachers on synchronous class hours and weekly Turkish language classes were as follows:

I think there was enough time for 1 class hour, but giving 1 or 2 weekly hours on the EBA system was insufficient for Turkish language course. Thus, we instructed with the Zoom software ourselves (P2).

- *The duration of synchronous classes was 30 minutes, and this period should be 40 or 45 minutes. Sometimes we could not complete the course (P5).*
- *Thirty minutes is an adequate time for a class, but the student participation was not the same and the time consumed during connection problems took half of the 30 minutes. Furthermore, the constant disconnection problems during the EBA synchronous course disrupted the flow of the course. These reasons led to insufficient instruction (P16).*

Based on teacher views, teachers often considered the synchronous course duration and the number weekly classes insufficient.

Teachers were asked whether they attended seminars on distance education and similar fields before conducting distance education. Most teachers stated that they did not attend seminars. Only two teachers stated that they did.

- *I previously addended an introduction seminar on instruction tools, however did not attend one on distance education (P10).*
- *Yes, I did, but it did not help much because they did not provide detailed information on online education in the seminar (P4).*

Certain teachers stated that they attended seminars on distance education before the pandemic. However, they emphasized that these seminars did not help them much.

The Views of Turkish Language Teachers on Student Attendance in Synchronous/Online Classes

The participating Turkish language teachers were asked about their views on student participation in synchronous/online classes and the themes and codes determined based on the responses are presented in Table 8.

As seen in Table 8, one theme and five codes were determined based on the views of Turkish language teachers on student participation in online classes. The teachers views on student participation included insufficient (48.8%), limited resources (20.9%), disinterest (16.3%), and disinterest of the parents (14%) codes.

The views of Turkish language teachers on student participation were as follows:

- *The number of participating students was insufficient. Thus, as we cannot reach everyone, the topics should be repeated face-to-face (P5).*
- *Three classes were defined simultaneously for synchronous instruction. At most 25 students attend the course that I should conduct with 80 students. It seems impossible to reach all students. When we asked the parents, we realized that there were 3 students in a house and I could reach only one or two students with distance education since the classes were organized at the same time (P9).*
- *Student participation in online classes was not sufficient. There are several reasons for this. There are those who cannot attend because they do not have the means.*

Table 7. The views of the teachers on synchronous/online instruction of the Turkish language course

Theme	Code	Frequency	(%)	Total
Topic selection	Based on the curriculum	15	14.1	24.4
	Based on student competence	7	6.5	
	Based on uninstructed topics	4	3.8	
Adherence to the curriculum	Yes	18	17.0	18.9
	Sometimes	2	1.9	
Synchronous instruction duration	Insufficient	12	11.3	18.9
	Sufficient	8	7.6	
The number of synchronous instructions	Insufficient	16	15.1	18.9
	Sufficient	4	3.8	
Seminar experience	No	18	17.0	
	Yes	2	1.9	18.9
Total		106	100	100

*Since the participants expressed more than one view, the number of responses is greater than the number of participants

Table 8. The views of Turkish language teachers on student participation in synchronous/online classes

Theme	Code	Frequency	(%)
Student participation	Inadequate	21	48.8
	Limited resources	9	20.9
	Students are disinterested	7	16.3
	Parents are disinterested	6	14.0
Total		43	100

*Since the participants expressed more than one view, the number of responses is greater than the number of participants

There are those who voluntarily miss the classes. There are students who do not attend due to the negligence of their parents (P13).

Teachers found student participation in online classes insufficient. Teachers generally attributed the insufficient student participation to the lack of the equality of opportunity, and the negligence of the student or the parents.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 epidemic, declared as a "pandemic" by WHO (2020) on March 11, 2020, deeply affected the world and introduced global changes. The pandemic, which completely changed the flow of daily life, required various changes in education and instruction processes. In the early days when schools were closed around the world, educational activities were temporarily suspended, and then, based on the fact that education is one of the most important dynamics in human life, distance education model was adopted. Thus, the present study aimed to determine and describe the views of Turkish language teachers on the distance education and digital literacy adopted in Turkey, a nation with a predominantly young population, using various digital platforms, during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the study, it was observed that the views of Turkish teachers on the use of the distance education model during the Covid-19 pandemic were grouped into two categories: positive (44.4%) and negative (55.6%) views. On the other hand, it was determined that the teachers considered the efficiency of Turkish language lessons instructed with distance education as efficient (48.8%) or inefficient (51.2%). Thus, it could be suggested that the participants generally considered the distance education model negative when compared to face-to-face education, despite its advantages. Student participation problems, digital problems such as Internet/connection and infrastructure/system, limited interaction, student disinterest and frivolity when compared to face-to-face education were among the important findings. These findings are similar to Tanhan's (2020) study. Although certain teachers stated that distance education served as an alternative instruction model during that difficult period and facilitated education in an emergency, most Turkish language teachers praised the efficiency of distance education using term that did not reflect a full satisfaction such as moderate, mediocre, and not bad. Thus, it could be suggested that distance education was considered as an insufficient standalone education model alone and a complementary model to face-to-face education by participating Turkish language teachers. The fact that students and teachers do not have digital competence and cannot use their digital literacy skills adequately is an important factor in the emergence of this view. Literature review demonstrated that studies conducted in Turkey, Indonesia, Ireland, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iraq, Nigeria, and Ukraine on Covid-19 pandemic (Almanthari et al., 2020; Bakioğlu & Çevik, 2020; Burke & Dempsey, 2020; Doghonadze et al., 2020; Hebebci et al., 2020; Karakuş et al., 2020; Tanhan, 2020) reported that problems induced by the digital competence of students or teachers, digital infrastructure and course material were significant. However, in certain studies (Bakioğlu & Çevik, 2020; Bayburtlu, 2020; Fidan, 2020; Sintema, 2020; Karakuş et al., 2020; Tanhan, 2020), it was concluded that the participation, interest and seriousness of the students were inadequate, and the interaction was poor in online education. Based on these findings, it could be suggested that the findings of the studies conducted in various countries and Turkey were consistent and most nations were caught unprepared.

In the study, listening (31.2%) and speaking (25%) codes were determine in the effective development of basic language skills theme based on the participant views. Reading (14.1%) and writing (29.7%) codes were determined in the less efficient theme. Participants also stated that reading activities were usually conducted on screen during the process, and accordingly, screen reading skills improved a little, and writing skill was the least developed skill. Thus, it could be suggested that Turkish language teachers considered that students improved their verbal expression skills in distance education; however, the development of written expression skills was not sufficient. The inadequate digital literacy level of students and teachers is a major factor in the emergence of this idea. In the literature, Karakuş et al. (2020) reported that Turkish language teachers considered that the distance education process contributed most to listening and least to writing skills. In a study by Sarıçam et al. (2020), it was concluded that listening skills could be improved in distance education, but psychomotor skills such as speaking, reading and writing could not be adequately structured. On the other hand, Yürektürk and Coşkun (2020), in a study that aimed to determine teacher views on the effectiveness of Turkish language course instructed with technological means, concluded that technology use mostly had a positive effect on listening skill, and partially affected the reading and speaking skills. Thus, it could be suggested that the present study findings on the development of basic language skills in distance education were consistent with previous study findings.

Turkey adopted distance education model on March 23 and the instructions have been conducted on the EBA (Education Information Network). Participants expressed certain systemic problems along with digital competence, connectivity and infrastructure problems associated with the EBA system. On the other hand, since they conducted a synchronous course for the first time, they experienced

certain emotions such as concern or anxiety. These findings are similar to Tanhan's (2020) study regarding how students and teachers feel anxiety and concerned due to lack of resources related to technology. Teachers who had the opportunity to share and present useful and interesting content on the EBA system reflected their discomfort due to incompletion of the assignments by the students, their negligence, and difficulty to monitor student assignments. In a study conducted by Doğan and Koçak (2020), significant infrastructure and technological problems were mentioned among the systemic EBA problems. It was mentioned that the system was slow, could not be accessed in every device, and not all students had internet access or the required devices. Similarly, Türker and Güven (2016) concluded that the most important reason why teachers did not use EBA efficiently was the lack of infrastructure. Thus, it was observed that the system had certain problems for a long time that were not resolved. Doğan and Koçak (2020) also concluded that students were indifferent in their study. Also, Sarıçam et al. (2020) concluded that distance education was insufficient for feedback and teacher-student interaction was quite limited. Thus, it could be suggested that the present study findings were consistent with the literature and contributed to the literature on topics such as assignments and assignment follow-up.

On online courses, the analysis of the participant views demonstrated that they considered the number and duration of synchronous classes insufficient, they instructed these courses without any prior training, and they try to conduct the activities based on the curriculum, although no instructions were provided. On student level in the course, the teachers stated that they experienced difficulties due to the indifference of the students and the parents, and limited facilities available for some students. In a study by Hobson and Puruhito (2018), it was emphasized that motivation is an important requirement in online education. In a study by Fırat, Kılınç, and Yüzer (2018), it was reported that intrinsic motivation is an important determinant in online education. In a study by Fidan (2020), the teachers stated that parents could not contribute to parent-teacher and parent-student relationships in distance education. Thus, the parent-teacher-student relationship should be considered important in the distance education process. In sum, all these findings aligning with larger literature review indicate that distance or online education has some advantageous and disadvantageous as found by some other researchers. Tanhan (2020) highlighted paying attention to provide equal opportunities to all and especially to communities with disprivileges. Tanhan et al. (2020) also cautioned how acontextual approaches and interventions could increase inequalities among groups and especially for individuals with little privileges.

The following could be recommended based on the study findings:

- Digital infrastructure problems could be resolved with cooperation between the institutions.
- Training could be provided to develop digital skills of teachers and students.
- Systemic problems in the current EBA system could be determined and resolved or updated based on successful distance education systems employed in other countries.
- Various interesting material that would improve reading and writing skills in digital media could be developed.
- Multimedia material that allow mutual interaction could be developed to meet student interests, requirements, and needs in distance education.

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