

## Online Teaching of Productive Language Skills (PLS) during Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) in EFL Classrooms: A Phenomenological Inquiry

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the experiences of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in teaching productive skills during emergency distance learning (ERT) and the COVID-19 pandemic and their recommendations for teaching productive skills online. Phenomenological inquiry, which is one of the qualitative designs, was employed to conduct the study. It took place in the 2020-2021 academic year in Turkey. Participants of the study consisted of 16 English as a Foreign Language teachers. Convenience sampling was executed to designate the study participants. The main data collection tool was semi-structured interview questions and data was collected via individual interviews, a focus group interview and via form by e-mail. Content analysis was administered in the data analysis process. Study results explored teachers mostly agreed on the fact that online education had its advantages such as easy materials access and online tools and some disadvantages such as lack of interaction, lack of scaffolding, internet access problems and learner-related problems. Also, they stated that it was hard to engage learners during the process, so they used games, authentic materials, videos, discussions and web 2.0 tools to provide engagement. Teachers discovered new online platforms and tools to make their lessons efficient. They mostly suggested changing the assessment style, making participation compulsory and conducting activities that can engage learners in the learning-teaching process. Consequently, it was seen that teaching productive skills in ERT was challenging in terms of student participation; however, teachers found solutions to it and they thought it was not a bad idea to teach productive skills online, especially speaking. Accordingly, hybrid education can be considered in the future in teaching English and teaching productive skills.

**Key words:** Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Teaching Speaking, Teaching Writing, Online Education

### INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is known to be a complex process since it includes teaching different skills at the same period and students with very different purposes for learning the language (Harmer, 2007). This complexity led language teaching, linguistic and pedagogy experts to the constant search for new and the most effective ways to teach the language (Demirel, 2014; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Prabhu, 1987). There are different categorizations for approaches of language teaching from traditional to communicative or teacher-centered to student-centered; however, one thing is certain that teaching the language through only one way or grammar is not accepted anymore (Patel & Jain, 2008). There are many approaches and methods such as Direct Method, Audiolingual Method, Total Physical Response, Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, Natural Approach, Communicative Language Teaching, Task-based Instruction and Content-based Instruction; and

the thing they have in common is that they consider the four basic language skills in teaching-learning process (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Especially in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) the emphasis on communicative competence shows the importance of integrating language skills. The figure known as “inverted pyramid” displays the components of communicative competence such as grammatical, discourse, strategic and sociocultural competence which bind them all together in the context (Savignon, 2002). These requirements for communicative competence include teaching language skills equally in an integrated way.

The basic skills are divided into four categories as listening, speaking, reading and writing in language teaching as a discipline (University of Cambridge, 2011). These basic skills are also grouped as receptive and productive. Receptive skills are listening and reading which require receiving knowledge from the content whereas productive skills are speaking and

writing which require some form of production in the scope of the target language (Harmer, 2001; McDonough et al., 2013). Because of the categorization, it may be assumed that they are separate, however, they need to be handled integrated; these skills support each other, they should be taken reciprocal during the teaching process (Birsh & Carreker, 2018; Burns & Siegel, 2018). These skills are not superior to another and the competency level of language learners may differ according to the skills; and speaking skills may not be a problem as always expected. Therefore, a balance should be provided in teaching language skills according to the learners' needs (Birsh & Carreker, 2018, Harmer, 2001; Watkins, 2017). However, speaking and writing are the two skills that can be put on a more visible performance (Burns & Siegel, 2018). Thus, it requires teachers to be active in the class and observe the learners. Of course, language skills are too complex to focus on only one angle, so they need to be planned and taught in a way promoting each other (Birsh & Carreker, 2018; Patel & Jain, 2008).

In a regular classroom, the most effective way to teach speaking and writing skills is to get students to produce. Activities such as modeling, using video and audios as an ice-breaker, using sample text, posters and games, group activities are amongst the effective ways to teach those skills interactively (Burns & Siegel, 2018). However, the global COVID-19 pandemic crisis affected the education system and caused some changes in the teaching environment. Recent studies on teaching productive skills in an online environment revealed that students and teachers did not find the online learning environment efficient to learn English as they faced many technical challenges and interaction problems (Astuti & Solikhah, 2021; Erarslan, 2021; Mahyoob, 2020; Payne, 2020). However, some studies revealed that teaching speaking was not very challenging when the students were motivated (Alzamil, 2021; Kusumavati, 2020). Another issue is that, teaching productive skills can be challenging even in a face-to-face classroom environment. Especially in Turkey, teaching speaking and writing in English has always been challenging because of lack of effective coursebooks, lack of materials and students' anxiety (Demirel & Fakazlı, 2021; Maviş-Sevim & Dursun, 2021; Tekir, 2021). According to the studies, speaking anxiety level of Turkish EFL students are specifically high (Gürbüz & Cabarroğlu, 2021; Tekir, 2021). Therefore, this situation leaves a question mark on how teachers taught productive skills in the EFL context online which is complex and requires solid interaction (Birsh & Carreker, 2018; Harmer, 2007). Since productive skills require interaction and teachers should provide feedback constantly (Burns & Siegel, 2018), teachers' experiences in teaching both speaking and writing skills should be revealed. Also, as the teachers are exposed to unforeseen and inexperienced teaching for the first time in the Pandemic, it is essential to explore their experiences and implications for future teaching practices. In this sense, this study aims to explore the experiences of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in teaching productive skills during emergency distance learning (ERT) and the COVID-19 pandemic and their recommendations for teaching productive skills online. The findings of this study are expected to shed a light on effective

teaching and contribute to innovative pedagogical practices of teachers. According to this aim, the research question of the study is determined as:

1. What are the experiences of EFL teachers in teaching productive skills during ERT and the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What are EFL teachers' suggestions for teaching productive skills in an online environment?

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study aims to explore the experiences of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in teaching productive skills during ERT and the COVID-19 pandemic and their recommendations for teaching productive skills online. It took place in the 2020-2021 academic year in Turkey. During this study, teachers were teaching English completely online. This study was designed as a phenomenology study which is one of the qualitative research approaches. When the main focus of the study does not depend on numbers but the words and their meanings, it means that the study has a qualitative tendency (Maxwell, 1996; Neuman, 2017). Especially if the study aims to reveal the experiences, feelings, and unique views of the participants, phenomenology studies serve that purpose (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Since this study aims to discover experiences and suggestions of EFL teachers on teaching productive skills online, the phenomenological inquiry was executed. As the current study focused on the EFL teachers' individuality on the mentioned phenomena, deep and meaningful data collection and analysis are required which are one of the main principles of phenomenology studies. Hermeneutic phenomenology was adopted since the obtained data was aimed to be both presented and interpreted within the frame of participants' exact quotes. In line with the nature of hermeneutic phenomenology, a semi-structured interview (SSI) was administered to obtain deep and detailed data (Van Manen, 2016).

### Participants

This study consisted of 16 EFL teachers. The main criterion in the selection of participants was that the participants were English teachers who taught online. At the beginning of the research, it was challenging to find volunteers because teachers were mostly exhausted from teaching online; they did not want to attend online meetings anymore. Thus, reachable teachers were included in the study. Accordingly, convenience sampling, which is one of the techniques of purposive sampling, was employed to designate participants (Creswell, 2013). Teachers teaching at elementary school, high school (HS), and school of foreign languages (SFLs) were included in the study. The demographics of the participants are presented at the following in Table 1.

### Data Collection Tool and Data Collection Process

In this study, individual interviews, written data collection and a focus group interview took place to collect the data. The main

**Table 1.** Participant demographics

|            | Gender | School Level | Teaching Experience | Level of Education          |
|------------|--------|--------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Teacher 1  | Female | Elementary   | 18                  | Degree                      |
| Teacher 2  | Female | Elementary   | 2                   | Degree                      |
| Teacher 3  | Female | Elementary   | 3                   | Degree                      |
| Teacher 4  | Female | Elementary   | 10                  | PhD student                 |
| Teacher 5  | Female | HS           | 15                  | Master's Degree             |
| Teacher 6  | Female | SFLs         | 5                   | PhD student                 |
| Teacher 7  | Female | SFLs         | 3                   | PhD student                 |
| Teacher 8  | Male   | SFLs         | 4                   | PhD student                 |
| Teacher 9  | Female | SFLs         | 10                  | PhD student                 |
| Teacher 10 | Female | SFLs         | 4                   | Master Student              |
| Teacher 11 | Female | Elementary   | 8                   | Master's Degree PhD Student |
| Teacher 12 | Male   | HS           | 25                  | Degree                      |
| Teacher 13 | Male   | Elementary   | 9                   | Degree                      |
| Teacher 14 | Female | HS           | 5                   | Degree                      |
| Teacher 15 | Female | HS           | 18                  | Degree                      |
| Teacher 16 | Female | Elementary   | 4                   | Master Student              |

data collection tool was semi-structured interview questions. As it is suitable to the nature of phenomenology design because the data source is the participants, their experiences and feelings, interviews were seen proper in this context (Berg & Lune, 2017; Merriam, 2009). Out of 16 participants, 5 of them participated individual online interviews; 6 of them were sent the form of the semi-structured interview questions, answered and sent their answers via e-mail and 5 of them attended an online focus group interview. Participants who answered the questions in a written form were gotten in touch to ask additional questions and get confirmation on their answers. For the focus group interview, seven people accepted however two of them canceled it. Interview protocols were sent before the interview so that participants could have pre-information on the study. The interview protocol included participants' demographic information such as their educational background, the institution they work and their professional experiences. The interview questions were prepared by the researchers. The researchers obtained expert reviews from three experts in educational sciences. The experts found the questions suitable. After that, one pilot interview took place to find out if there was any problem in conducting the interview. During the pilot interview, there was no problem and alternative questions were not required. After the participants were selected, meetings were set. They were told about the purpose of the study beforehand and questions were sent as well. The interviews took place as planned. No interruption and problem occurred during the interviews. Individual interviews lasted between 15-20 minutes whereas the focus group interview lasted nearly 90 minutes.

**Data Analysis**

In this study, content analysis was administered in the data analysis process. Content analysis is a data analysis approach aiming to form the qualitative data in a meaningful and systematic way. It is adopted to present significant details that

may not be seen at first glance (Bryman, 2016). In phenomenology studies, the findings are shaped depending on the personal meanings of the participants. In this sense, depending on the participants' statements, the data were formed around the themes by creating the categories and codes. The data was manually analyzed in line with the strong suggestion of Saldaña (2009). During the data analysis process, phenomenological data analysis steps were followed. First, the horizontalization process was conducted, which requires the researcher to highlight significant statements in each participants' answers (Moustakas, 1994). Subsequently, descriptions were written for all the significant statements equally; then the essence of the phenomenon was identified according to the participants' common experiences (Creswell, 2013). According to the procedures mentioned, codes, categories and themes were obtained. The Discovery of the codes, categories and themes was completed cyclically. In the following, an example of data analysis is demonstrated.

**Validity and Reliability of the Research**

In this study, certain precautions were taken in order to provide validity and reliability. In qualitative studies, precautions, which are called ensuring credibility, transferability, consistency and confirmability, taken for validity and reliability are different from quantitative studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2013). In order to ensure credibility, member-checking and data triangulation took place. After participants shared their opinions, the researcher presented her notes and asked participants for confirmation. Participants were selected by purposive sampling to ensure transferability. Consistency review was conducted by another expert and the method of the study was depicted in detail and transparently; also, a pilot interview was conducted to ensure consistency and confirmability.

### Role of the Researchers

Two researchers took part in this study. One of them was in charge of writing the manuscripts, conducting interviews and analyzing the data. During the interviews, the researcher's role was merely to ask questions without any interference. During the data analysis process, the researcher's role was analyzing the data by participants' sole answers, forming codes, categories and themes depending on the quotes, interpreting the data within the frame of participants' answers and presenting the data. The other researcher was in charge of reviewing the process, stating opinions and reviewing the data analysis.

### Ethical Considerations

In this study, certain ethical rules were taken into consideration as it is a requirement of a scientific study. In the use of scientific sources and articles, somebody else's sentences, ideas or works are not replicated. All the ideas that belong to someone else have been indicated with references. Regarding to qualitative inquiry, participants were involved in the study by their consent. No voice or video record was done without the consent of the participants during the interview. Participants were informed about the scope and objective of the study beforehand. Participants were assured that they could leave the interview any time without excuse. During the interviews, no comment or interference was made by the researchers. Without any change, participants' quotes were presented exactly. Personal information, voice or video records of the participants were kept confidential and were not shared with anybody else.

### FINDINGS

The findings of the study presented in three themes: Teachers' interpretations, teachers' practices and teachers' expectations. The summary of findings is presented at the following Table 2.

#### Teachers' Interpretations

Depending on the teachers' statements in the interviews, materials and content, learner, learning environment and accessibility categories were obtained. In the materials and content category, "easy access to teaching materials", "contribution of online tools", "availability of the content support" codes were obtained. Statements of the teachers are presented below.

*For speaking, the textbook that I have been using includes a lot of speaking activities, content, videos and audios etc. for me to use in the class. I usually open a discussion about a video or an illustration about the topic they have learned or are about to learn. For writing, I still find it difficult to teach this skill online. I try to be clear when I'm explaining. The fact that it is online, teaching writing needs and improves the speaking skills according to my evaluations. I show some materials or videos about the writing topic and let them read*

*it or watch so that they can have a better understanding. We also use a graphic organizer so that it can be organized and clear while demonstrating. (Teacher 2 Elementary/Contribution of Online Tools- Availability of the Content Support)*

*One of the best aspects of online teaching is that it is very rich in terms of games and activities, so I can make the student talk about any subject or have short writing. For example, after watching a short video about our topic, we can talk about it or I can have them write a summary. (Teacher 3 Elementary/Easy Access to Teaching Materials)*

*During online teaching, it is easier to design an activity for speaking. The Zoom application enables us to use breakout rooms, which help foster the students' speaking skills. Furthermore, it is easy to use role-plays and dramas, watching videos, and asking follow-up questions. (Teacher 4 Elementary/Easy Access to Teaching Materials)*

As it is clear in teachers' expressions, online education has its advantages such as easy access to materials and many online tools. They find the online tools such as break-out rooms, videos and graphic organizers very helpful. However, one of the teachers underlined that sometimes the effectiveness of the lesson depends on the availability of the content support given to the teacher. Even if they can reach many materials, subject-related materials can be needed.

In the learner category, "lack of learner motivation" and "diverse learner group" codes were obtained. Statements of the teachers are presented below.

*In speaking, many learners turn off their cameras. So, the teacher cannot monitor students. They can't make fruitful conversations and dialogues when their cameras are off. We cannot go beyond that unfortunately. (Teacher 1 Elementary/Lack of Learner Motivation)*

*For speaking skills, during online teaching, it becomes so overwhelming that sometimes I speak on my own. In my institution, students don't have to turn on their cameras during the lesson and they mute themselves as well. So, it is like teaching the ghosts in the classroom. (Teacher 7 SFLs/Lack of Learner Motivation)*

*Online sessions with 10+ students are quite hard, especially for the productive skills. I would try to divide the classes according to their levels in these skills. I think this would be beneficial because I have students in different levels of English and find it hard to maintain them in the same class while trying to teach these skills. (Teacher 2 Elementary/Diverse Learner Group)*

Statements of teachers present that learners need to be motivated for online teaching. Especially for speaking, they stated that students do not turn their cameras on and they feel like they talk on their own. One of the teachers emphasized that students have diverse levels; it is not efficient to conduct the lesson in a class full of diverse learners especially online.

In the learning environment category, "time-saving", "lack of social interaction", "lack of scaffolding" and "getting help from online teacher platforms" codes were reached. Expressions of the teachers are presented below.

**Table 2.** Summary of findings

| Theme                        | Category              | Codes  |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 1- Teachers' interpretations | materials and content | easy access to teaching materials<br>contribution of online tools<br>availability of the content support   |
|                              | learner               | lack of learner motivation<br>diverse learner group  |
|                              | learning environment  | time-saving<br>lack of social interaction<br>lack of scaffolding<br>getting help from online teacher platforms                                     |
|                              | accessibility         | internet access problems   |
|                              |                       |  |
| 2- Teachers' practices       | speaking practices    | authentic materials<br>discussion<br>student-centered activities<br>games<br>storytelling<br>performing drama<br>Using extra-curricular activities |
|                              | writing practices     | brainstorming<br>demonstration<br>web 2.0. tools<br>authentic subjects   |
|                              |                       |  |
|                              |                       |  |
|                              |                       |  |
| 3- Teachers' expectations    | learning environment  | student attendance<br>class size   |
|                              | teaching process      | assessment type<br>engaging activities   |

*Teaching productive skills has always been difficult. But I think online teaching is not an obstacle in teaching productive skills. It may even help. Because you can give quick feedback on writing and speaking. You can assign homework to students asynchronously. You can put students into small groups easily. They can talk without being exposed to the classroom's noise. One negative aspect might be that it is less interactive. In the classroom, the teacher is more autonomous to do any kind of classroom activities. (Teacher 8 SFLs/Time-saving- Lack of Interaction)*

*For speaking, positive and negative things depend on the characteristics of the students. Some students say when their camera is turned off and nobody can see them, they can speak freely. But for some students not being able to see each other is a negative aspect when it comes to speaking. As a teacher, I feel like there should be no difference between face-to-face and online. But for example, group activities became harder to control. In the classroom, you can visit each group and make sure they are speaking English and everybody is doing their job. But online, I see most students turn off their microphones and try to type in the chatbox. (Teacher 6/ Lack of Interaction- Lack of Scaffolding)*

*It is time-saving and good for introverted students who don't want to be in front of a real crowd. At the same*

*time, online teaching is disadvantageous as you can't see students' body language or facial expressions clearly. (Teacher 9 SFLs/Time-saving- Lack of Interaction)*  
*After all those years of face-to-face teaching, especially the drama, roleplays with the characters and materials I enjoyed and grew together. I feel lonely. All those shopping scenes and the costumes I opened the door through and my students filled in. The restaurant dialogues, with those gentlemen and ladies. The airport telephone conversations were supported with the ring of a kid. (Teacher 5 High School/Lack of Interaction)*

Also, since they cannot be with the students physically, they cannot scaffold them efficiently. One of the teachers explained this as follows:

*It causes students to stop developing the needed communication and writing skills. Especially for these skills, I believe there should be a proper class environment where the teacher can scaffold and help the students rather than a virtual way. Students also have a hard time learning these skills online because there should be a teacher next to them guiding the students' every move especially in writing. (Teacher 2 Elementary/Lack of Scaffolding)*

One of the teachers expressed since it was a new teaching environment, she tried to get help from online teacher

platforms, and she sought help from her community about what to do and how to do it.

*First, I consulted our Facebook group, I thought they may have ways. They shared an online academy program on how to use Web 2.0 tools with examples. Every week I attended there and followed the courses. It was very beneficial. (Teacher 14 High School/Getting help from online teacher platforms)*

In the accessibility category, “internet access problems” code was accessed. Explanations of the teachers are presented in the following.

*Online teaching also requires students to have high-speed internet at their home, which can cause complications if it is not available. This distracts the students even more than they are and wastes time. (Teacher 1 Elementary/Internet Access Problems)*

*At the university where I teach, the internet background is a huge problem and I have to give the lecture from the university although it is online. I disconnect a lot. Also, the online system of the university is not very efficient. Students get disconnected all the time for some reasons we cannot solve. (Teacher 10 SFLs/Internet Access Problems)*

### Teachers’ Practices

In this theme, teachers’ practices of teaching productive skills during online education are presented. The practices were explained under categories of speaking practices and writing practices. In the speaking category “authentic materials”, “discussion”, “student-centered activities”, “games”, “storytelling”, “performing drama”, “using extra-curricular activities” and “involving parents” codes were found. Teachers’ statements are explained below.

*For example, I give a command, they do that with their cameras on, if they are on, we can do that kind of activity as long as it goes. Also, I try to bring fun fact kind of text. I chose them to be realia. We talk about those facts. (Teacher 1 Elementary/Games, Authentic Materials)*

*For speaking, I try to make it more student-centered and try to bring real-life activities to motivate them more. As I mentioned before, problem-solving activities work better during the online speaking classes (Teacher 7 SFLs/Authentic materials)*

*We mostly watched videos and predicted events from visuals. After watching the video, we talked about the subject, and over the pictures, we talked about the event in the picture or how the people in the picture could be, I found a video or picture according to what our topic was about. (Teacher 3 Elementary/Discussion)*

*In speaking lessons, in the beginning, I chose the topics and activities and I realized they are not very motivated to do my activities. Now I let them choose the topic and activity. For example, one week they wanted to watch “Toy Story 4” and talk about it. Another week they said, “Let’s do a speaking activity where we can use Past tenses”. They know what they need and I do as they say. I try to use group activities and contests. Each*

*group tries to say as many sentences as possible about a topic or picture. (Teacher 6 SFLs/Student-Centered Activities- Games)*

*Co-created story writing. It is a whole class activity. Each student has to say a sentence to create a meaningful story which develops attention, writing, speaking, grammar and vocabulary. Each student takes notes and submits their own stories. Asking students to be the teacher in the last ten minutes of the lesson. Students have control of the lesson and try to continue fully speaking in English. (Teacher 9 SFLs/Storytelling)*

*Mostly, I use drama, brainstorming, and role-play activities. In July, the students will perform Cinderella, Sleeping, Tin Soldier, The Country Mouse, and City Mouse. (Teacher 4 Elementary/Performing Drama)*

*I have found an app called podbean. We did a radio broadcast, I connected even parents. We broadcast as the highs cool and it became very popular that another high school next to us attended too. Yes, I did it as an extracurricular activity. (Teacher 15 High school/Using Extra-curricular Activity)*

As it is apparent from the statements of teachers, no matter which grade they teach, they agree on the practicality of games, student-centered activities, authentic materials, using videos to start a discussion. One of the teachers states that she combines speaking and writing with storytelling activity; however, the activity is a speaking-driven activity which she finds very practical. Also, one teacher states that drama can be operated during the process and as a product. Lastly, one of the teachers has discovered a broadcast web 2.0 tool called podbean in which she can involve many people including parents, she expresses that it was very useful and became popular.

In the writing category, “brainstorming”, “demonstration”, “web 2.0. tools” and “authentic subjects” codes were explored. Teachers’ explanations are presented at the following.

*For writing, after brainstorming and students decide their arguments, I show a sample essay on the screen and point thesis statement, main ideas, how to conclude etc. by highlighting the sentences and it really works. (Teacher 7 SFLs/Brainstorming- Demonstration)*

*In writing, I am out of ideas. At the beginning of the term, I used padlet to make them write paragraphs. It works but then it becomes boring. Now we mostly read an essay type and analyze each paragraph. After that, they have a writing task. (Teacher 6 SFLs/Web 2.0 Tools)*

*I tend to make students actively engage in the lesson so I choose topics that they are interested in. For example, I want them to write about their favorite TV shows with details, talk about their experiences in quarantine etc. (Teacher 8 SFLs/Authentic Subject)*

The teacher emphasized that they used brainstorming as a writing warm-up, they demonstrated to students the basic structure of writing. Some teachers stated that they got help from web 2.0. tools and they chose authentic subjects to get learners to engage in the lesson process.

## Teachers' Expectations

In this theme, teachers' expectations are presented. Teachers made suggestions on the learning environment and teaching process. In the first category, "student attendance" and "class size" codes were explored. In the teaching category, "assessment type" and "engaging activities" were detected. Teachers' remarks are presented below.

*First of all, I would make it compulsory to turn on their cameras during the lessons, otherwise, I would mark them absent. Maybe this is not an agreeable way but at least it prevents them from doing unrelated things during the lessons. Next, I would change the assessment style. I would employ more formative assessment tools to make students more active during the lessons. I would give weight to class participation like 15% to the total average. These kinds of implementations make them speak more I guess. (Teacher 7 SFLs/Student Attendance- Assessment Type)*

*In online teaching, where time is limited and students are distracted, the number of students in the class is too many. This should be decreased. (Teacher 3 Elementary/ Class Size)*

*I would want them to present Webinars or Ted talk type of things. Webinars have been very popular with quarantine days. This way they might feel responsible and creative. When they feel they are free to reflect their ideas on a product I think they are more eager. (Teacher 8 SFLs/Engaging Activities)*

As it can be seen, teachers suggested that student attendance and turning on the cameras should be compulsory. Also, the assessment type should be changed to more formative assessment techniques. Some other teachers suggested the class size should be smaller. A few teachers suggested activities such as webinars and ted talk style talking activities; besides, students should be given chance to choose what to talk about.

## DISCUSSION

This study aims to explore the experiences of EFL teachers in teaching productive skills during ERT and the COVID-19 pandemic and their recommendations for teaching productive skills online. Teaching productive skills during the emergency distance education process was examined under teachers' interpretations of teaching productive skills online, teachers' practices of teaching productive skills online and teachers' expectations of teaching productive skills online themes. First of all, teachers were from different grades such as elementary school teachers, high school teachers and SFLs teachers. However, they seemed to interpret teaching productive skills online similarly. Besides, their practices showed similarities as well regardless of which grade they taught. Teachers mostly agreed on the fact that online education has its advantages and some disadvantages. Also, they stated that it was hard to engage learners during the process so they got help from games, authentic materials, videos, discussions and web 2.0 tools. They mostly suggested doing a formative assessment, making participation compulsory

and conducting activities that can engage learners in the learning-teaching process. The results are discussed below by themes.

In the first theme, materials and content, learner, learning environment and accessibility categories were found. Firstly, teachers think that online education has its advantages such as easy access to materials and many online tools. They especially stated that online tools such as break-out rooms, videos and graphic organizers were very helpful. However, one of the teachers mentioned that sometimes the effectiveness of the lesson depends on the availability of the content support given to the teacher. Even if they can reach many materials, subject-related materials can be needed. One of the interesting findings was that a teacher expressed since it was a new teaching environment, she tried to get help from online teacher platforms, she sought help from her community about what to do and how to do it.

As for the learner aspect, teachers think that they need to be motivated for online teaching to teach efficiently. Especially for speaking, they stated that students do not turn their cameras on and they feel like they talk on their own. This experience of teachers is supported with other recent studies. Many teachers faced this problem that students are less motivated and participated less (Chowdhury & Zannat, 2021; Meşe & Sevilen, 2021). However, some teachers found teaching speaking easier and more efficient than writing. This result is similar to a few studies available in the literature (Alzamil, 2021; Kusumavati, 2020). Some teachers found teaching speaking easier, whereas some teachers found teaching writing easier. In this case, it is thought that teachers' experiences may differ according to the student participation. Similarly, one of the teachers emphasized that students have different levels; it is not efficient to conduct the lesson in a class full of students with different levels especially online. Also, since they cannot be with the students physically, they cannot scaffold them efficiently. Similarly, it was found hard to help students online with their writing and speaking tasks in Chowdhury and Zannat's study (2021). This was one of the important findings since language teaching requires effective scaffolding as it is a complex process (Birsh & Carreker, 2018). One of the participants expressed that group activities were not as efficient as they were in face-to-face education and they were hard to control since not all students turn on their cameras and microphones. Another research shows that active student participation was low during this ERT process (Lukas & Yunus, 2021). This result also discloses that student engagement and academic level play an important role in achieving the efficiency of the course. Another issue is that teachers emphasized the accessibility problems which students face with the internet connection. They stated that these problems can hinder the learning-teaching process. These disadvantageous situations are compatible with the recent studies on the COVID-19 pandemic process (Astuti & Solikhah, 2021; Chowdhury & Zannat, 2021; Mahyoob, 2020; Payne, 2020).

As for teachers' practices of teaching productive skills, no matter which grade they teach, they agree on the usefulness of games, student-centered activities, authentic

materials, using videos to start discussion activities. One of the teachers states that she combines speaking and writing with storytelling activity. Another interesting result was that one of the teachers has discovered a web 2.0 tool called podbean which she used to conduct speaking activities. It is a broadcast tool and this way she can involve many people including parents, students from other high schools. She expressed that it was very useful and became popular. Some teachers emphasized that they use brainstorming as a writing warm-up, they demonstrate to students the basic structure of writing. Many teachers stated that they get help from web 2.0. tools and they chose authentic subjects to get learners to engage in the lesson process. Especially the use of padlet for writing is emphasized by some teachers. A line of studies also shows that web 2.0 tools, online games and ICT help are utilized during online teaching (Bahiri & Oifa, 2020; Jong, 2021; Ploj Virtic et al., 2021). Also, one teacher states that drama can be used during the process and as a product. This can be interpreted as teachers tried to maintain an active environment even if they had obstacles. Besides, storytelling, drama, authentic materials, games and web 2.0 tool are the activities used during face-to-face education in language teaching as well (Burns & Siegel, 2018; Harmer, 2007; Nunan, 1989; Stevens & McGuinn, 2004; Tomlinson, 2008). This reveals that online teaching does not necessarily stop regular activities from happening.

Lastly, teachers made some suggestions and expressed their expectations for online teaching. They especially suggested that student attendance and turning on the cameras should be compulsory. They do not turn their cameras on and unfortunately, it is not an obligation for them to attend. Also, the assessment type should be changed to more formative assessment techniques. Some other teachers suggested the class size should be smaller. They did not directly state that crowded classrooms were a problem in online education. However, this may be because it is widely known that classrooms in Turkey are mostly crowded. Instead, they made a recommendation for a smaller class size. The negative effect of crowded classrooms on online teaching is also seen in other studies (Chowdhury & Zannat, 2021; Sundarwati & Pahlevi, 2021). However, this suggestion may not be an easy implementation to make when we consider the context of Turkey's education. Another thing is that a few teachers suggested activities such as webinars and ted talk style talking activities; besides, it will be better if the students are given chance to choose what to talk about. This also shows teachers' student-centered approach, and the fact that they would like to include learners in the teaching process during online teaching.

## CONCLUSION

The research literature on education during the COVID-19 pandemic has been emerging at present. Thus, the lack of studies that can be associated with the findings of the research in the discussion section is the limitation of the research. To conclude all the teachers' experiences and practices, the study eventually highlights teachers can find ways to teach even if it is unexpected and challenging; they can

find solutions to the problems by trial and research. Besides, online teaching has both its advantages and disadvantages. The efficiency of online teaching may change according to learner profile, teachers' resource and the support they get.

Recommendations of the study are compatible with teachers' suggestions on the subject. Student attendance should be compulsory and they should be assessed by their portfolios, product, performances rather than test at the end of the term. Teachers should be supported to conduct engaging activities such as webinars, discussions, drama performances or poster presentations. If it is not suitable to conduct these activities during the lesson process, these activities can be embedded as extra-curricular activities. Lastly, as it is seen, online teaching has both its advantages and disadvantages, hybrid education models can be adapted according to students' needs. Both face-to-face and online teaching seems to be proper for teaching English. By evaluating the pros and cons of the situation, online teaching always can be an option from now on.

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