

Views of High School Students on The Effectiveness of “English” Course by Means of a Distance Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to provide an insight into the views of students related to the effectiveness of the “English” course using distance education. This qualitative study has been carried out by phenomenological research design. The sample group of this study consists of 10 students studying at formal high schools. They were determined using criterion sampling technique. Data was collected by a semi-structured interview method. The data collected was analysed by a descriptive analysis technique. Students have expressed that, according to them, distance education means education using technology, education resulting from the pandemic and inefficient, insufficient education and waste of time for students.

Furthermore, students have expressed that they think web2 tools are useful, EIN is insufficient technical installation and resources, and the English course is more fun and attention-grabbing via web2 tools in learning English. Students have listed the following recommendations for obtaining necessary skills in the English language during the distance education period: Writing and translation homework should be assigned to students and students should be provided with more writing exercises for writing skills, students should be provided with more reading comprehension texts and exercises for reading skill, technological obstacles should be removed for speaking skill, teachers should ask random questions to random students so that students get a chance to speak to obtain the speaking skill and more listening exercises should be presented to the students. Lastly, the students have made suggestions like Web2 tools should be used, a number of videos, visual materials and resources should be increased, internet infrastructure should be improved, teachers should give the floor to the students more frequently, E-twinning projects should be run, students should focus on the course, the number of English courses should be increased, students should be motivated by their teachers to increase the effectiveness of English course in the distance education period. In line with the findings, the researchers have concluded that learning English during distance education may become more effective via web2 tools and connection problems should be removed. Therefore, suggestions that have been made by high school students should be taken into consideration and put into practice during the distance education period.

Keywords: English, Distance education, EIN, Web2 tools, Skills in learning English

Introduction

Distance education is an educational system model that does not require teachers and students to be present at the same place and in which educational activities are carried out using postal services and information-communication technologies (İşman, 2011). According to Türker and Dündar (2020), distance education has always been considered the complement or backup of face-to-face communication. Still, it can be said that there is no more alternative to distance education due to the exceptional circumstances that the entire world has been experiencing nowadays. Educational Informatics Network (EIN) which has been on air since 2012 and 3 EIN TV channels (EIN TV for elementary school, EIN TV for secondary school, and EIN TV for high school) which were established in cooperation with Turkish Radio Television Corporation (TRT) have recently been used during the distance education period in Turkey (MEB, 2020a).

In EIN online class application, the school administrators can assign a course to the concerned teachers and the classes can be held on the determined date and time; a notification related to the course is sent over EIN to the teachers and classes; and teachers and students can have an online course simultaneously in the virtual environment at the time determined for the course (MEB, 2020b).

Language is one of the most significant criteria in being an individual, a nation, being able to think, building a bridge between the past and future, and literally in defining one's existence (Kolaç, 2008). The importance of communication among societies has been felt much more via globalisation and technological advances in recent years. In this respect, people are not only in need of learning both their languages and other languages but also using those languages effectively (Özer & Korkmaz, 2016). English is globally a common language in the economic, social, political, artistic, and scientific fields results in teaching English intensely in our country as a second language or as a foreign language. The general aim in the process of teaching English as a second language is to provide those who learn English with grammatical and communicative skills (Aydm, 2006).

How the foreign language education can be provided using distance education? Except for the online applications provided by institutions, various web pages like zoom, adobe connect also make it possible for teachers and students to come together over the computer. As it is seen in many applications, you can start a video conference; you can invite those whom you would like to meet via e-mail, you can see them if they have a cam and you can share your screen and your presentations with other participants. Language classes in which interaction, communication, and speaking based activities are required to be performed can be managed using distance education due to the above-mentioned qualities of the programs (<https://www.egitimtercihi.com>). Because distance education at high schools has been experienced newly in our country, the number of studies carried out by getting the views of high school students is quite limited. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide an insight into the views of high school students related to the

effectiveness of “English” courses using distance education.

Literature Review

The matters of distance education, EIN Educational Informatics Network (EIN), web2 tools and four requirements for learning a foreign language have been addressed under this title.

Distance Education

There are various definitions related to distance education. Separating teacher and learner, the effect of an educational organisation, using media to ensure the communication between the teacher and learner, having a two-way communication and implementing an individualised instruction are included in most of those definitions. Considering the use of new interactive technologies, recent definitions of distance education emphasise that distance education takes place simultaneously but in different places (Simonson, 2019). According to Macteer (2011), the pedagogy, technology, and instructional system designs are taken into consideration in the field of distance education. In this education, it is aimed to provide students who are not present “on-site” in a traditional class, with education. Distance learning is a modern and effective learning style that can be offered independent from place and time, that can enable individuals to structure and update educational materials electronically in an appropriate and flexible way, that can include different technologies in the learning process, and that can be used 24/7 (Yamamoto & Altun, 2020). As it can be understood from the above definitions, distance education can be defined as a system that enables teachers and students have courses in different places but at the same time.

Educational Informatics Network (EIN)

Educational Informatics Network (EIN) contains rich contents like visual, video, course, book, document, animation, simulation individual learning materials, in-class learning materials, applications, and games; and it is also a social network with its document, sound, video sharing, and discussion parts (Kuloğlu & Bay, 2019). Teachers can send study materials to their students and can follow

the performances of their students both on those materials and on the course subjects in detail by examining the analysis reports obtained depending on students' use of EIN system (<http://fatihprojesi.meb.gov.tr/icerik.html>). EIN which is one of the known educational platforms all over the world with its number of contents was the term looked for the most in 2016 by Turkish people on Google which is accepted as one of the biggest search engines (EBA, 2017). Teachers and students can always be in interaction with each other thanks to EIN system. While there was no obligation for teachers and students on the use of EIN system at the beginning, now the number of users of the system has increased due to the risks that can result in the interruption of face-to-face educational activities (Doğan & Koçak, 2020). EIN can ensure the interaction between teachers and students, and students may understand the course subjects better thanks to its rich content.

Web2 Tools

Web2 tools which have now become one of the essential necessities of the globalizing World should accompany the traditional learning and teaching methods. When web2 tools accompany the traditional methods like visual content, music, drama, pair work groups and the methods based on the peer coaching, they create a meaningful integrity (<https://www.bilimsenligi.com/web-2-ile-ingilizceye-hayat-ver.html>). According to Grosseck (2009), Web2 technology that is based on the interaction enables its users to produce active content, to generate knowledge and to share such knowledge by means of a mutual cooperation (Özerbaş & Mart, 2017). The contributions of web2 tools to the educational environments have been listed in literature as follows: habit of group study, metacognitive thinking skills, information literacy, effective learning, student convenience (appealing), personal development, and taking responsibility (Karaman, Yıldırım & Kaban, 2008). Including audio-visual materials in learning process and supporting it with the visuals, movies, animations, and other channels concerning the subject matter that is being taught enables learning within a shorter period of time and in a more effective way (Deniz, 2004). Some of the web2 tools used for English language teaching are:

- Liveworksheets,
- Flipgrid,
- Quizziz,
- Wordwall (<https://tr.padlet.com/aylinleventoglu/web2>).

These web2 tools can attract students' attention and they can make learning much fun.

Four Requirements for Learning a Foreign Language

In foreign language teaching, it is sought to provide learners with four basic skills which are "reading", "writing", "listening", and "speaking" (Bayrak, 2013). It is expected from those learning a language to obtain the communication and interaction skills in target language, to reach a certain level in reading, writing, listening and speaking skills which are the basic skills of a human being, and to have a command of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary knowledge in a target language (Doğan, 2008).

As regards to reading skill, Yalçın (2006) emphasized that we obtain 80 % of our knowledge by means of reading. According to Özdemir (1987), this skill is like the backbone of the school programs, and reading is required almost in every lessons. As for writing skill, it indicates the power of observation, imagination, and reasonable thinking of students; and it shows the students' skills of transferring knowledge, review the thoughts and using their language (Akyol, 2000; Belet, 2008). Hidi and Boscolo (2006) stated that writing is meaningful for students when it becomes a tool of expressing their ideas, feelings, and personal experiences related to the class activities and when it becomes a tool of communication. The most required one among the language skills is the listening skill (Yeşil, 2020). Listening skill means to comprehend, interpret, evaluate the ideas put forward during the conversation and to determine the relations among them and to mark out those we find worth keeping in our minds (Taşer, 1996). Concerning the speaking skill, Özbay (2003) stated that speaking forms the foundation of language skills. It is the base of reading, writing, and listening. Speaking is one of the most significant signals of an individual's personality. In this respect,

our speech becomes effective in our social relations before our ideas.

The Purpose of this Study

In this study it is aimed to provide an insight on the views of students related to effectiveness of “English” course by means of a distance education. In line with this purpose, the answers have been sought to be found to the following questions:

- What is distance education?
- What are the views of students on learning English language by using EIN and web2 tools?
- What should be done in order to make students obtain the necessary skills in English language by means of a distance education?
- What should be done in order to increase the effectiveness of English course in the distance education period?

Method

The method of research, research design, study group, researchers’ roles, and data collection and analysis have been addressed under this title.

Method of Research

This study has been carried out within the framework of the qualitative research method. Qualitative research seeks answers by regularly examining the different social environments and groups or individuals forming these environments. Therefore, qualitative researchers are interested in how people adjust themselves and their environments, and how those living in these environments make sense of their environments by symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles etc. (Berg, 2001). Qualitative research focuses on the facts in the pace of life and it tries to examine them at first-hand (Maxwell, 1992). Researchers have a flexible and dynamic field of study during the designing and carrying out qualitative researches. Flexibility which is defined as enabling the researchers to develop new methods and approaches in the research process and to make new arrangements that will increase the effect of the research is one of the basic qualities that the qualitative research offers to the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). Qualitative research tries to understand a

situation within relation connections. It finds out the variables affecting an event (Kurt, 2013). In qualitative research process, it is sought to explain perceptions and cases related to a matter so that truth in the environments which is peculiar to them can be reflected; and in this process, different data collection techniques such as observation, interview and document analysis are being used (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Finding out people’s subjective points of view concerning an event is aimed at in qualitative research (Storey, 2007). How the events are perceived by people; in other words, how the events are described by people are the matters that qualitative research is interested in (Dey, 1993).

Research Design

This study has been prepared by using phenomenology research design that is one of the research designs of a qualitative research. The purpose of the phenomenological approach is to define the phenomenon according to the perceptions of people who are experiencing a situation and to enlighten people. In other words, it is defining the phenomenon with the experiences had (Lester, 1999; Waters, 2010). Phenomenological studies are questioning strategies of the researcher that are implemented to find out human experiences about a fact that is defined by the participants (Cresswell, 2007). According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenology is a philosophy and procedure seeking to understand the experiences had and it is a method that includes examining limited number of matters by means of a comprehensive and long-term concentration in order to develop pattern and meaning relations. In the phenomenology design, defining the facts is important; there is no purpose of generalization (Akturan & Esen, 2008). Phenomenological studies may not present generalizable results. However, such studies may present examples, explanations and experiences providing results that will be helpful in identifying and understanding a fact better (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The purpose of studies using phenomenology design is to define the different ways people use to experience, interpret, comprehend, or conceptualize a certain aspect of a fact (phenomenon) or a truth. In this way, understandings on a certain fact are

revealed, and these understandings are classified according to the conceptual categories (Çepni, 2010).

Study Group

The study group of this study consists of 10 students, who are studying at a high school. They were determined via criterion sampling technique. Criterion sampling is a study to be carried on all situations that meet a range of predetermined criterion (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Its logic is to revise and examine all cases which meet some of the predetermined criterion of significance. It is widely-used for quality assurance endeavors (Patton, 1990). It enables us to obtain detailed information from fewer amounts of samples. Since the information to be obtained from samples which will be obtained by applying multiple criteria can be useful for multiple purposes, we can save time and money via the criterion sampling method (<https://www.mathstopia.net/sampling/purposive-sampling-and-its-types#criterion>). Observation units in a research to be conducted by criterion sampling may consist of people, incidents, objects, or situations that have certain qualifications. In this case, units (objects, incidents etc.) which meet the criterion determined for the sampling shall be included in the sampling (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2018). The criteria for students to take part in this study were: they should study in high schools and they should get at least 70 from the English exam hold in their schools. 10 students took part in the research and their identities were kept secret. Students were coded S1, S2, S3,..... and S10 in a way that each one represents a different student. Some of the answers which were given by students were written in the findings and interpretation part as citations.

Table 1 Demographic Information related to Participants

		f	%
Gender	Female	7	70
	Male	3	30
Total		10	100
Age	14 age old	4	40
	15 age old	4	40

	16 age old	1	10
	17 age old	1	10
Total		10	100
Grade	9th grade	4	40
	10th grade	4	40
	11th grade	1	10
	12th grade	1	10
Total		10	100

As seen in the Table 1, 7 of the participants are female students and 3 of the participants are male students; they are aged between 14 and 17. Besides, 4 of the participants are studying in the 9th grade; 4 of them are studying in the 10th grade; 1 of them is studying in the 11th grade and 1 of them is studying in the 12th grade.

The Researchers' Roles

The first researcher gives some of his course works since 2014 by distance education. From that time to so far, he has experienced the advantages and disadvantages of distance education. Especially, he wonders how it becomes in English education. Therefore, he is willing to make this research.

The second researcher has been working as a permanent English Teacher for 7 years within the scope of Ministry of National Education, and she has found an opportunity to work in two different high schools within this period. Due to the pandemic period that has been experienced all around the world, she had a chance to experience and observe some disadvantages and some interesting advantages of distance education for English course with high school students at first hand. Therefore, she has decided to make this research.

Data Collection and Analysis

Researchers collected the data of this study by using a semi-structured interview technique. Thanks to this technique, the researcher can be provided with more systematic and more comparable information. Before the interview, the researcher prepares an interview protocol, and during the interview, s/he follows that interview protocol; therefore, it becomes more convenient for the researcher (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In a semi-structured

interview technique, the researcher prepares the questions beforehand but this technique also allows the researcher to rearrange the questions, which are prepared beforehand, during the interview (Ekiz, 2003). The important point in this technique is that questions should be articulate and the questions shouldn't be multidimensional or leading. This should be taken into consideration while the questions are being prepared (Altunay, Oral, & Yalçinkaya, 2014). An interview form consisting of 9 questions that serve to the purpose and the questions of the study was prepared. The questions were finalized by receiving the opinions of three experts, the two of whom pedagogues are and one of whom a Turkish academician is, and by making arrangements according to the feedbacks given by them. Semi-structured interviews were held via zoom program at time when the participants (interviewees) are available. Interviews took 25-40 minutes. At first, the consents of the participants were received then their voices were recorded. Afterwards, the answers given by the participants were transferred to the word document and no changes were made on them.

Data collected were analyzed by means of a descriptive analysis. It is stated that descriptive analysis is a method employed frequently by researchers to get summary information about different facts and incidents on which they would like to study (Büyüköztürk, et. al, 2008). Direct quotations are included frequently in descriptive analysis to reflect the views of those with whom the interview is held conspicuously. Data collected are described systematically and explicitly for this purpose. Then descriptions in question are explained and interpreted; cause and effect relations are examined, and the researcher comes to some conclusions (Timuroğlu, 2017). Descriptive analysis includes four stages as follows:

- Creating a framework,
- Processing data according to the framework in question,
- Identifying the findings,
- Interpreting the findings obtained (Altunışık, Coşkun, Yıldırım, & Bayraktaroğlu, 2010).

In this study, the opinions of experts were taken; participants were made to read the interview forms that had been transferred to the word document; wrong or missing discourses were tried to be corrected in this way. Credibility (internal validity) was tried to be reached by the opinions of experts and confirmation of participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). On the other hand, participants are included in the study in line with the purposive sampling; findings in this study were supported by direct quotations taken from the data collected during the interviews held with the participants in question. External validity (transmissibility- transferability) is hereby sought to be reached in this study carried out by means of descriptive analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Besides, the researchers expressed their experiences about the subject matter of the study even though partially, and some information about those who participated in the study was shared; external reliability was sought to be ensured in this way. Internal reliability was sought to be ensured by requiring the confirmation of results from the other researcher during the descriptive analysis and data analysis process (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; as cited in Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

Findings and Interpretation

Findings obtained in this study are explained according to the research questions. The first research question of this study was “What is distance education?”.

When the answers received from the students were analyzed, it was seen that the students have the following perceptions on distance education: 1) education by means of technology, 2) education resulting from the pandemic, 3) and inefficient, insufficient education and waste of time for students. Related findings were indicated in the following table.

Table 2 Perceptions on Distance Education

Theme	f	%	Example sentence
Education by means of technology	5	50	“As for me, distance education is an education model which can be carried out over the internet without imposing any obligation on teachers and students to be at the same place; which can be realized audio-visually and which sometimes has good or bad sides. I mean which has some advantages and disadvantages.” (S8)
Education resulting from pandemic	3	30	“Learning lessons from home compulsorily due to the situation we are in because of the pandemic.” (S9)
In efficient, insufficient education and waste of time	2	20	“Although for me distance education means that education can be carried out irrespective of place, it doesn’t mean that it is efficient.” (S4)
Total	10	100	

As seen in Table 2, 50% of students think that distance education means education by means of technology, 30% of students think that it means

education resulting from the pandemic, and 20% of them think that it means inefficient, insufficient education and waste of time for them.

One of the students who stated that distance education means an education by means of technology expressed his/her idea as follows:

“It is a sort of visual talk (facetime) for me. I mean we may think it as the combination of listening courses on YouTube and visual talk (facetime).” (S3)

One of the students who thinks that distance education means education resulting from the pandemic, made the following statement:

“According to me, distance education is an education provided remotely due to the fact that our schools are closed while the world is fighting with covid-19 virus.” (S5)

A student who stated that distance education means a waste of time for him/her, made the following definition for distance education:

“Distance education means an additional waste of time for me.” (S6)

The second question of the study was “What are the views of students on learning English language by using EIN and web2 tools?”. When the answers received from the students were analyzed, it is realized that students think that Web2 tools are useful, EIN is insufficient in terms of technical installation and resources, and English course is more fun and attention-grabbing via web2 tools.

Table 3 The views of students on learning English language by using EIN and web2 tools

Theme	f	%	Example sentence
Web2 tools are useful	8	40	“Web2 tools are good; we are conducting useful activities I mean we learn more knowledge.” (S7)
EIN is insufficient in terms of technical installation and resources ...web2 tools have helped us learn the things in course much better since it contains many different resources and we always come across with different things, we do tests, play games on them, but EIN has not been useful because it has had resource problem for English course. (S9)	7	35	“Sometimes EIN website cannot be opened due to the rush to the website, it gives trouble; you know, this becomes a problem for both teachers and students.” (S8)
English course is more fun and attention-grabbing via web2 tools	5	25	“... We have used web2 tools pretty much. I think they were fun; they had visuals and question. Our teacher has hold knowledge contests over web2sites. While we were enhancing our knowledge, we were also having fun.” (S1)
Total	20	100	

One of the students who think that web2 tools are useful stated that:

"In terms of English course, web2 tools are more useful and efficient for us in learning English when compared with the school, but we could not use EIN efficiently because sometimes we had difficulty in logging in the EIN, and we had troubles in connecting to the course on EIN." (S10)

On the above-mentioned matter, another student made the following explanation:

"I think web2 tools made a great difference. I think web2 tools were good. They made it easier for us to understand English better." (S9)

Likewise, another student listed the benefits of using web2tools in learning English as follows:

"Web2 tools are quite good. At first, since we do activities over web, it affects our use of technology. Secondly, it improves our English because we prepare the puzzles in English. Thirdly, it enhances our culture because we are given a problem or a theme while we are required to prepare puzzles or doing crosswords. And while we are doing those crosswords, we are enhancing our culture, as well. So, they are superb and we improve our vocabulary by means of web2tools." (S4)

On the matter of "EIN is insufficient in terms of technical installation and resources", one of the students stated that:

"There were those who had hard times because of their computers or those who did not have an internet connection. Those who did not have such materials had difficulty in receiving lessons over EIN. Furthermore, EIN system was constantly kicking us out of our virtual classroom. Therefore, I think that EIN system is bad." (S7)

On the afore-mentioned matter, one of the students made following explanation:

"At first, I would like to begin with EIN. I think purpose of creating EIN website is terrific. I mean they have realized that the technology has advanced, and they wanted to do something on this matter in order for both teachers and students to use technology. But I think EIN is like a demo version of an app. I

mean it is like a toddler. I visited EIN website out of curiosity and searched for what I would do on that website. The things I could do were limited and I did not find them easy. Even some of our teachers give our homework over EIN. But as much as I would like to send my homework, I can't send, submit it over EIN system because that site has so many errors and bugs. It does not allow me to send it. I think that's why they should place much importance on EIN and they should improve EIN site. In my opinion the logic for the site is good; its design is good, as well. Good but it needs to be improved." (S4)

One of the students who think that English course has become more enjoyable by means of web2 tools stated that:

"I do not find EIN sufficient in general, but I find web2tools sufficient. Because when we were at school, we did not have so much time to use such tools, we were busy writing the board down, but in online education, web2tools helped us understand the subject better and enabled us to have a nice, funny course." (S3).

On the matter of "English course is more fun and attention-grabbing via web2 tools", one of the students stated that: *"Web2 had a way to attract our attention; it was better at creating a willingness to take part in the course."* (S6).

The third question of the study was "What should be done in order to make students obtain the necessary skills in English language by means of a distance education?". When the answers received from the students were analyzed, it was seen that the students had made recommendations as follows: 1) Writing and translation homework should be assigned to students and students should be provided with more writing exercises for writing skill, 2) Students should be provided with more reading comprehension texts and exercises for reading skill, 3) Technological obstacles should be removed for speaking skill, 4) Teachers should ask random questions to random students so that students get a chance to speak in order to obtain speaking skill, and 5) More listening exercises should be presented to the students.

Table 4 Recommendations for making students obtain the necessary skills in English language by means of a distance education

Theme	f	%	Example sentence
Writing and translation homework should be assigned to students and students should be provided with more writing exercises for writing skill.	5	36	“We should read as many texts as possible and we may translate them; on the matter of writing, we may write our own sentences.” (S3)
Students should be provided with more reading comprehension texts and exercises for reading skill.	4	29	“Reading a book. When we read a book, it also enriches our vocabulary in English.” (S7)
Technological obstacles should be removed for speaking skill.	3	12	“...because sometimes EIN tries our patience. It does not accept us to the system; it kicks us out of the system. For one thing, in order for us to have conversations with our teacher, EIN system shouldn't have any connection problems.” (S2)
Teachers should ask random questions to random students so that students get a chance to speak in order to obtain speaking skill.	1	7	“Well, our teacher was asking us random questions related to a random student; we were giving answers to those questions. While we were giving answers, both our speaking skills were improving and we were learning how to establish a dialogue.” (S1)
Listening exercises should be presented to the students.	1	7	“On the matter of listening, we listened to so many texts at the course. Therefore, listening was really good.” (S8)
Total	14	100	

When the Table 4 was examined, it was found out that 36 % of students think that writing and translation homework should be assigned to students and students should be provided with more writing exercises for writing skill, 29% of them think that students should be provided with more reading comprehension texts and exercises for reading skill, 21% of them think that technological obstacles should be removed for speaking skill, 7% of them think that teachers should ask random questions to random students so that students get a chance to speak in order to obtain speaking skill, and 7% of them think that listening exercises should be presented to the students.

On the matter of “writing and translation homework should be assigned to students for writing skill”, one of the students stated that:

“I think subjects may be taught over websites like quizizz so that they can stick in our mind by having fun. We should read as many texts as possible and we may translate them; on the matter of writing, we may write our own sentences. For speaking, we may create dialogues with our friends.” (S3)

Another student stated that:

“Just speaking for writing, I can say that our teacher could have asked us to write in English what we had learned at that course; it could have been about any subject or the theme we had learned at that course. If she had given us homework for writing, it would have been better. For example; we could have taken the photos of what we had written and then we may have sent them to the teacher.” (S1)

Another student also stated on the above-mentioned matter that:

“Homework given by our teacher and the activities done during the course are very didactic and they stick in our mind.” (S8)

On the matter of “students should be provided with more reading comprehension texts and exercises for reading skill”, one of the students expressed that: *“If we have more listening texts and read more reading passages at the course, it will be much productive.” (S10)*

Similarly, another student also stated that:

“Apart from that, we had so many reading passages for reading. They were about the units we had read and there were questions related to those questions.” (S1)

On the matter of “technological obstacles should be removed for speaking skill”, one of the students stated that:

“At first, I do not expect everything from teachers because sometimes EIN tries our patience. It does not accept us to the system; it kicks us out of the system. For one thing, in order for us to have conversations with our teacher, EIN system shouldn’t have any connection problems. It should have a well connection. It needs to be a good platform. For example; in order for us to be good at speaking, such platforms are required to be much better. They should be of high quality. They should be better.” (S2)

Another student also stated that:

“But since our teacher does not open her webcam during the course, we have difficulty in pronunciation. We cannot see her mouth, so we have problems in pronouncing the words correctly. We do not know how to pronounce them. But except for that, course turns out productive when we revise the course.” (S10)

On the matter of “teachers should ask random

questions to random students so that students get a chance to speak in order to obtain speaking skill”, one of the students stated that:

“Well, our teacher was asking us random questions related to a random student; we were giving answers to those questions. While we were giving answers, both our speaking skills were improving and we were learning how to establish a dialogue.” (S1)

On the matter of “listening exercises should be presented to the students”, one of the students stated that:

“On the matter of listening, we listened to so many texts at the course. Therefore, listening was really good.” (S8)

The fourth and the last question of the study was “What should be done in order to increase the effectiveness of English course in the distance education period?”. When the findings received from the students were analyzed, it was seen that the students had made the following recommendations, respectively: 1) Web2 tools should be used, 2) Number of videos, visual materials and resources should be increased, 3) Internet infrastructure should be improved 4) Teachers should give the floor to the students more frequently, 5) The number of English courses should be increased, 6) E-twinning projects should be run, 7) Students should focus on the course, and 8) Students should be motivated.

Table 5: Recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of English course in the distance education

Theme	f	%	Example sentence
Web2 tools should be used	10	32	“I do not find EIN sufficient in general, but I find web2tools sufficient. Because when we were at school, we did not have so much time to use such tools, we were busy writing the board down, but in online education, web2tools helped us understand the subject better and enabled us to have a nice, funny course” (S3)
Number of videos, visual materials and resources should be increased	5	16	“But EIN has not been useful because it has had resource problem for English course. However, web2 tools were very useful. The games you had us play, contests you prepared over them had a great impact on our learning.” (S9)
Internet infrastructure should be improved	4	13	“Internet infrastructure needs to be changed.” (S6)

Teachers should give the floor to the students more frequently	3	10	“When my friends were reluctant to speak, our teacher did not place much importance on speaking. But I had really wanted to improve my pronunciation. The teacher should have given the floor to us more frequently.” (S2)
E-twinning projects should be run	3	10	“e-Twinning was also very effective for me. I did not speak English much in the 9th grade, but thanks to e-Twinning, my vocabulary knowledge has enhanced, now I can speak. Since we learn the words better, I understand them easily. I mean projects like e-Twinning may be carried out; it is very important.” (S7)
Students should focus on the course	3	10	“We need to join the courses regularly. We should not be engaged in doing something else during the course. We should be fully concentrated to the course.” (S9)
The number of English courses should be increased	2	6	“I think, the number of English courses should be increased in the first place.” (S5)
Students should be motivated	1	3	“In my opinion, if teachers do the things for increasing the effort and will of a student or a person who wants to learn English, if they motive him/her, if the course becomes enjoyable, it will be better for the one learning English.” (S4)
Total	31	100	

When the Table 5 was analyzed, it was seen that 32% of students think that in order to increase the effectiveness of English course in the distance education period, web2tools should be used, 16 % of them think that number of videos, visual materials and resources should be increased, 13 % of them think that internet infrastructure should be improved, 10% of them think that teachers should give the floor to the students more frequently, 10% of them think that e-Twinning projects should be run, 10% of them think that students should focus on the course, 6% of them think that the number of English courses should be increased, and 3% of them think that: students should be motivated.

One of the students made the following explanation on the matter of “web2tools should be used”:

“Like I said before, web2 tools have helped us learn the things in course much better since it contains many different resources and we always come across with different things, we do tests, play games on them, but EIN has not been useful because it has had resource problem for English course. However, web2 tools were very useful. The games you had us play, contests you prepared over them had a great impact on our learning.” (S9)

Likewise another student stated that:

“Our vocabulary knowledge enhances by means of web2 tools, and there are words I have learned while using them. For instance; I can encounter with the words I will not be able to see during the course because those web2 sites contain much more vocabulary. During the course, we only have a chance to learn the words related to the unit we have. So, I think that web 2 tools have improved our vocabulary. (S4)”

On the matter of “number of videos, visual materials and resources should be increased, one of the students stated that:

“The number of visuals may be increased for English course because English language can not be learnt only by reading a text. Since it appeals to visual memory, the number of visuals may be increased.” (S6)

Another student focused on the following issue on the above-mentioned matter that:

“I think there are not many resources available on EIN concerning the English course. The number of English resources may be increased on EIN. Our teachers have actually done their best.” (S2)

One of the students also focused on the below-mentioned issue on the matter of “number of videos, visual materials and resources should be increased.”

“And for fun, we may watch videos on YouTube. If learning normal English is boring for students, our teacher may have us watch videos on YouTube and s/he may make learning English more enjoyable.” (S4)

On the matter of Internet infrastructure should be improved, one of the students stated that:

“The advantage of English was that we had encountered with too many visuals. For example; when we were at school, the smart board could not be opened sometimes, but in online education, our teacher was able to send us links related to the subject. I mean we could reach all the visuals, we played online games. Internet connection may be listed as a disadvantage. Sometimes we had connection problems in hearing our teacher. Sometimes the voices got mixed.” (S6)

Another student stated on the afore-mentioned matter that:

“There may be connection losses over the Internet or interruptions resulting from zoom. We really have difficulties because of them.” (S8)

On the matter of “teachers should give the floor to the students more frequently”, one of the students stated that:

“In fact, I really wanted to speak during the course. But when my friends were reluctant to speak, our teacher did not place much importance on speaking. But I had really wanted to improve my pronunciation. The teacher should have given the floor to us more frequently.” (S2)

Likewise another student suggested that:

“Students may be tasked mutually; teacher may make them have a conversation, a dialogue.” (S1)

Another student also stated that:

“Our teacher gives us a text to read and then s/he tells us to send our voices while reading the text aloud over the internet. When s/he gives such homework and when we read such texts during the course before our teacher and friends, the course will be more productive. We sent our voices to our teacher but since a large number of students send the homework, our teacher may forget where we make mistakes in pronunciation. When we do such tasks during the course, our teacher can interfere in directly, and it will be better. We may improve our

pronunciation by reading those texts aloud during the course. If our teacher make us read more texts aloud and if s/he reads the text aloud before making us read aloud, the course will get better.” (S10)

On the matter of E-twinning projects should be run, one of the students stated that:

“E-twinning was effective. I had a chance to meet different people. It made a great contribution to me. It enabled me to pluck up my courage and try to speak English. I liked it. Therefore, e-Twinning projects may be carried out.” (S3)

In a similar way, another student stated that:

“I think the number of English courses may be increased and web2 tools may be generalized. In my opinion, e-Twinning may make a great difference because we used all web2tools in our e-Twinning project. Designing logos etc. we learned many things. We both learned how to use the computer and how to speak English, at the same time. For example; we prepared that thing, an online dictionary; it improved our English. We learned the meanings of words that we hadn't known before.” (S9)

On the matter of “students should focus on the course”, one of the students stated that:

“For instance, we may take notes of the words we have learnt during the course. Asking for the floor during the course becomes more important in speaking. When we are given the floor, we want to speak more and the course becomes easier. Reading a book. When we read a book, it also enriches our vocabulary in English. And we should join the lesson in a more focused way.” (S7)

On the matter of “the number of English courses should be increased”, one of the students stated that:

“We are more relaxed in online education because we have courses at our home. I do not say it only for English but also for other courses in general. However, since the duration and number of courses are short, I think it is bad for us.” (S9)

Another student stated that:

“According to me, the number of English courses should be increased in the first place. In addition to this, the number of speaking activities may also be increased for pronunciation. And activities on writing may be conducted.” (S5)

On the matter of “students should be motivated”, one student stated that:

“I think students lost their will and passion in online education and it is a thing that the distance education has brought along because focusing on the lesson and getting organized for the lesson is more difficult. In my opinion, if teachers do the things for increasing the effort and will of a student or a person who wants to learn English, if they motivate him/her, if the course becomes enjoyable, it will be better for the one learning English.” (S4)

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

When the findings obtained in this study are compared with some studies in the literature, it is seen that they have some similarities. For example, Berge (2002) mentioned in his study that effective teachers should motivate their students for the lesson in online learning. Young (2006) also stated in his study that motivating students may increase the connection between the teacher, student, and course content. It is also observed in this study that students have difficulty in focusing on the course during the distance education and they expect to be motivated by their teachers. Sümer (2016) stated in his study that technological infrastructure has a great importance and it causes students to leave the course. Likewise, Ersoy (2015) expressed in his study that students would like to have face to face education more instead of distance education because of the technological inadequacies. It is also seen in this study that students are required to log into EIN to have a course and they expressed that sometimes they cannot log into EIN or they are kicked out of the course due to the connection problem and so, they find the technological infrastructure inadequate. Furthermore, students mentioned that this problem affects the effective learning and because of this, they cannot focus on the course from time to time. Richter (2002) mentioned in his study that digital media and tools present a different learning style by means of various materials that can become collaborative, flexible, and interactive in preparing students for a digital world as denoted in his study by Kerres (2018). However, it is seen in this study that teachers are familiar with tools like web2 tools and similarly, they think that such tools help their learning process.

In conclusion, according to the students, distance education means education by means of technology, education resulting from the pandemic and inefficient, insufficient education. Students’ views on learning English language by means of EIN and web2tools are as follows, respectively: Web2 tools are useful, EIN is insufficient in terms of technical installation and resources, and English course is more fun and attention-grabbing via web2 tools. Students think that writing and translation homework should be assigned to them and they should be provided with more writing exercises for writing skill, they should be provided with more reading comprehension texts and exercises for reading skill, technological obstacles should be removed for speaking skill, teachers should open their webcams during the course in order for students to obtain speaking skill, teachers should ask random questions to random students so that students get a chance to speak in order to obtain speaking skill, and more listening exercises should be presented to them so that they can obtain the necessary skills in English language. When the related literature on the effectiveness of English course in distance education is examined, it is seen that similar results have been obtained from the students. Therefore, researchers make the following recommendations from the points of views of students on the matter of increasing the effectiveness of English course in the distance education period:

- Web2 tools should be used,
- Number of videos, visual materials and resources should be increased,
- Internet infrastructure should be improved,
- Teachers should give the floor to the students more frequently,
- E-twinning projects should be run,
- Students should focus on the course,
- The number of English courses should be increased, and
- Students should be motivated by their teachers.

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