

The Self-Assessment of Lecturers Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language Regarding Distance Education in the Covid-19 Pandemic Era

Mete Yusuf Ustabulutⁱ
Bayburt University

Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the instructors' self-assessment about teaching Turkish in distance education. Phenomenology method was used in the current study. The sample of the study is comprised of 26 faculty members from different regions in Turkey. The data collection tool of the research is a self-assessment form consisting of five questions. Content analysis and descriptive analysis were utilized in the data analysis. As a result of the study, it was found that the lecturers achieved the goals of the course and the lesson plans were sufficient in distance education. It has been determined that the lecturers prepare more activities and lesson materials in order to reach the goals of the course. Few of the lecturers gave homework to the students. On the other hand, it has been understood that most of the lecturers are ready for distance education. However, it is possible to talk about the existence of academic staff who need in-service training. In the research, the necessity of digitalization especially in the course materials has been revealed. In addition, it reflected the lecturers' self-evaluation processes regarding distance education in the research.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, Turkish Education, Self-Assessment, Distance Education.

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ⁱ **Mete Yusuf Ustabulut**, Assist. Prof., Education Faculty, Bayburt University

Email: meteustabulut@bayburt.edu.tr

INTRODUCTION

Self-assessment is making a certain judgment about one's own situation. Klenowski (1995, p.145) describes self-assessment as evaluating and thinking about one's own situation on any subject and identifying both strengths and weaknesses in order to increase learning outcomes.

Self-assessment refers to making evaluations about one's learning (Boud & Falchikov, 1989, p.529). In these assessments, the person should approach their work with an honest and critical thinking. While reaching these judgments in self-evaluation, the person making the self-assessment can ask himself the following questions; “How do I compare the work of my classmates with mine?”, “What should I do to improve my quality?” (Fallows & Chandramohan, 2001, p. 3). These questions are effective in reaching a conclusion about the performance of the evaluator.

There are some measurement tools that can be used when self-assessment is performed. These are; Likert scales, skill listings, written tests for development files, audio cassette assessments and interactive systems (Cihanoğlu, 2008, s.34 akt. Pamukçu, 2015).

Self-assessment has many benefits. Dickinson (1987) mentioned these benefits. These are also important elements of student autonomy. Self-assessment allows the teacher to devote more time to helping the student in other parts of the learning process. For instructors, Self-assessments allow us to more accurately identify areas where students need to improve and progress. Overall, in the context of contemporary global interest in teacher evaluation, teachers' self-evaluation is a valid approach, formally valued (Borg & Edmett, 2019). Moreover, the importance of learner autonomy has further increased interest in self-evaluation (Bhatti & Nimehchisalem, 2020). This importance of self-evaluation has made it an essential part of current international education reforms (Yan et al., 2020). Moreover, according to Ratminingsih, et al (2018), “one type of authentic assessment which can be used to assess language competence is self-assessment”. Oscarson (1989) also cited six reasons why self-assessment can be useful in language learning. These include encouraging learning, raising awareness, increasing the tendency to aim, expanding the validity of the assessment, dividing the burden of the assessment, and being useful after the course

One of the points that support the argument of those who want to use the self-assessment method is the idea that it supports the autonomy of learners who can take more responsibility in planning, implementing, monitoring and interpreting their own learning (Mistar, 2011). In addition, it is stated that using different measurement and evaluation strategies in the classroom increases the motivation for success, provides more thinking skills, and ultimately improves academic performance, as well as measuring various characteristics of students (Bahar, Nartgün, Durmuş & Bıçak, 2006).

Distance education is a teaching activity that takes place when the teacher and the learner are far from each other (Schlosser & Anderson, 1994). We name distance education that students can continue their learning activities anytime and anywhere (Wedemeyer, 1975). Compared to formal education, the teaching and learning space in distance education is separate from each other and technology is used instead of face-to-face communication (Johnson, 2003; Moore, 1987). Although it may seem like a disadvantage at first glance that the teacher and the learner are in different places from each other, this situation enables them to use time and place more comfortably and flexibly. Flexibility of time and place provides equality of opportunity for everyone who aims to learn (Bunker, 2003).

On the other hand, distance education applications are rapidly becoming widespread, especially after developments in Information Communication Technologies. The main reason for the rapid spread of distance education is COVID-19. The following features of distance education have come to the fore in the studies on distance education (Altun, 2020);

- Being tidy and systematic

- Focusing on student
- Providing equal opportunities
- Being able to use time and place more comfortably and flexibly

These are the advantages of distance education. Looking at other research conducted with distance education, the points that are considered as a disadvantage of distance education are as follows;

- It is not suitable for individuals if self-regulation is lacking.
- It is necessary to know the technological developments well, it requires good technological knowledge.
- Its cost is high.
- Material and design are limited.
- It is difficult to get feedback (Altun 2020)

In this context, the main problem and sub-problems of the research were formed as follows:

Main Problem Statement: What are the lecturers' self-assessments about teaching Turkish in distance education?

Sub-problems:

1) *What are the self-assessments of the teachers regarding the attainability of the goals of the Turkish course in distance education?*

2) *What are the lecturers' self- assessments regarding the Turkish lesson plan in distance education?*

3) *What are the self- assessments of the instructors regarding the teaching process they carry out in achieving the goals of the Turkish course in distance education?*

4) *What are the lecturers' self- assessments regarding the content and goal consistency of the Turkish course in distance education?*

5) *What are the lecturers' self- assessments about the rearrangement of Turkish course content in distance education?*

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Method

The Descriptive Phenomenology method is the method chosen to answer research questions. "Husserlian descriptive phenomenology as a research methods is widely used in the social sciences, one in which it aims to explore and describe the lived experience" (Christensen et al., 2017). Indeed, researchers use the method of phenomenology when they aim to study the experiences of individuals. In this context, the phenomenology method was used in the study because the research questions were directed to the experiences of the individuals (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p.383; Ersoy, 2016, p.55).

Study Group of the Reserch

There are some important criteria in determining the study group in qualitative research designs. In the present study, the aim of the researcher is to reveal the Turkish teaching experiences of the lecturers in the distance education process. However, the formation of the study group in this study is on a voluntary basis. Thus, 26 academics from different regions of Turkey have been reached. The names of the lecturers participating in the study are not disclosed, thus they are referred to as LECT1, LECT2, LECT3...

Data Collection

In the study, a self-assessment form (5 questions) was used to determine whether the lecturers understand distance education practices or not. The form in question was developed by the researcher in view of the relevant literature. The validity of the data collection tool was confirmed by two academicians who are experts in their field. The reliability of the data collection tool was verified by 4 educators. The analysis form was collected from lecturers online on a voluntary basis. The questions in the self-assessment form are as follows:

- 1) *Did I reach the goals of the lesson in the distance education process?*
- 2) *Was the plan I prepared in the distance education process sufficient?*
- 3) *What have I done in relation to the goals in the distance education process? What should I have done?*
- 4) *Was the content I prepared in the distance education process consistent with the goals? Why?*
- 5) *If I were to rearrange the content in the distance education process, what would I do?*

Data Analysis

Two different data analysis techniques were used in the analysis of the research data. The first of these is content analysis. Content analysis is mostly preferred by historians and men of letters especially in qualitative research designs (Merriam, 2013, p.144). In addition, the answers given to the self-assessment form of the academic staff participating in the study constitute the data of the study (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 259). Categories and codes were used due to the nature of the content analysis. Descriptive analysis was used as a qualitative analysis together with content analysis to increase the validity and reliability of the study. On the other hand, the validity and reliability of the content analysis were determined by expert opinions and inter-coders. The harmony between coders is 82% (Bilgin, 2014: 12 (Miles & Huberman, 2015, p.64; Muijs, 2004, p.73). From this point of view, it can be thought that sufficient reliability is provided in data analysis.

FINDINGS

Below, the findings of the lecturers regarding the goals of the course are given as frequency (f) and percentage (%). The self-assessment of the lecturers regarding the achievement of the course objectives are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Self-assessments of the course objectives

Categories	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
I achieved the goals of the lesson	23	88,46
I did not reach the goals of the lesson	-	-
I relatively reached or did not reach the goals of the course	3	11,54
Total	26	100

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that 88,46% of the lecturers (f = 23) have reached the goals of the course and 11,54% (f = 3) stated that they relatively reached or did not reach the goals of the course. In addition, sample sentences from the self-assessments of the instructors regarding the goals of the course in distance education are presented below.

LECT5: "I reached my goal with the students who followed the lesson seriously. I partially or never reached my goals with the others. "

LECT12: "My goals in distance education are to use the subject covered in accordance with the new technology, to use applications to support and reinforce knowledge, and I think I can achieve my goals."

Self-assessments of the lesson plan of the teachers are given as frequency (f) and percentage (%).

Table 2. Self-assessments of the lesson plan

Categories	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
My lesson plan was sufficient	22	84,62
My lesson plan wasn't sufficient	4	15,38
Total	26	100

When Table 2 was examined, 84,62% (f = 22) of the lecturers stated that the lesson plans were sufficient and 15,38% (f = 4) stated that the lesson plan was not sufficient. Sample sentences from the self-assessments of the lecturers regarding the syllabus in distance education are presented below.

LECT8: "*The plan I prepared was sufficient. Because when I implement what I planned, all the students understood the subject I was covering. "*

LECT13: "*It was not sufficient. Because I am not used to the distance education system, the plan was shaped and changed throughout the process. "*

Lecturers' self-assessments of the goals are given as frequency (f) and percentage (%).

Table 3. Self-assessments of the teaching process carried out in achieving the goals

Categories	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
I prepared activity and lesson material	22	84,62
I gave homework	4	15,38
Total	26	100

When Table 3 is examined, 84,62% (f = 22) of the lecturers stated that they prepared activities and course materials in order to reach their goals. In addition, 15,38% (f = 4) of the lecturers stated that they gave homework in classes in order to reach their goals. Sample sentences from the self-assessments of the lecturers regarding the syllabus in distance education are presented below.

LECT5: "*I used the internet, youtube, news websites, computer games. I should have prepared more interactive lessons. "*

LECT6: *"I prepared materials with Web 2.0 tools and different computer programs."*

LECT13: *"I learned the use of Web 2.0 tools to keep students active and improve their language skills, I completely changed my materials and my lesson plan."*

The self-assessments of the lecturers regarding the consistency of content and goals are given as frequency (f) and percentage (%).

Table 4. Self-assessments of consistency of content and goals

Categories	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Consistent	26	100,00
Not consistent	0	0
Total	26	100

When Table 4 was examined, 100,0% (f = 26) of the lecturers stated that their content and goals were consistent. Sample sentences from the self-assessments of the lecturers regarding the consistency of content and goals are presented below.

LECT4: *"Yes, it was consistent because the Turkish levels of my students were what I aimed at the end of the course."*

LECT11: "Yes. Because I took care that the content I prepared was suitable for my goals. "

LECT15: "Yes, I was able to get the desired level of feedback. For this reason, I could see that I prepared consistent content. "

The instructors' self-assessment about the reorganization of the content are given as frequency (f) and percentage (%).

Table 5. Self-evaluations of the reorganization of content

Categories	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
I would prepare more visual content	12	46,15
I would produce different and comprehensive material	9	34,62
I would produce content that is interactive and for all levels	5	19,23
Total	26	100

When Table 5 is examined, lecturers made a self-assessment as follows; 46,15% (f = 12) of the lecturers "I would prepare more visual content", 34,62% (f = 9) of them "I would produce different and comprehensive materials" and at last 19,23% of the them "I would produce content that is interactive and for all levels". Sample sentences from the self-evaluations of the lecturers on the reorganization of the content are presented below.

LECT6: "Maybe I could make more visual designs or videos."

LECT4: "I think every course I teach is beneficial for the students, but I also think that I can prepare different materials for some of the topics I have covered in the course."

LECT5: "I would put in more games and activities where the student could be active."

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In the study, the majority of the lecturers stated that they achieved the goals of the course in their self-assessment of distance education. In another study on distance education, only some of the Science teachers stated that the curriculum in distance education could be completed. This difference

is due to the opinions of teachers who think that the laboratory applications and workshops courses in Science cannot be completed with distance education (Bakioğlu & Çevik, 2020; Markova, 2021). It can be said that the distance education process has mostly created problems in lessons with practice. After the Covid 19 pandemic, complementary courses and in-service trainings should be considered for lessons with practice.

However, most of the lecturers stated that the lesson plans were sufficient. Again, most of the academics participating in the research stated that they prepared activities and course materials in order to achieve their goals. This result can be explained by the increase in e-learning activities of the COVID-19 process (Mulenga & Marban, 2020). Less of the lecturers stated that they gave homework in classes in order to reach their goals. The researches stated that most of the lecturers are ready for the distance education process. However, it is not possible to underestimate the proportion of educators who are not ready for distance education. In this context, in-service training courses regarding the execution of distance education process operations (use of technology, preparing teaching materials, etc.) are recommended (Durak, Çankaya & İzmirli, 2020; Karadağ, & Yücel, 2020; Goh & Sandars, 2020). In this way, those who are ready for this process are provided with more professionalization and the processes of preparing those who are not ready at all are completed. When it comes to giving homework, it should be taken into account that in distance education, students have difficulties in focusing on homework (Serçemeli, & Kurnaz, 2020). In this context, homeworks should be easier to focus. In addition, educators should consider socio-economic and availability of technology status of students (Žižanović, Pranjić & Radovanović, 2021). In other words, educators should consider the opportunities students have in distance education applications.

In addition, all of the lecturers stated that their content and goals were consistent. However, considering the self-assessments of the lecturers regarding the re-arrangement of the content, it is seen that there are three different self-assessments. These have already been listed as “preparing more visual content”, “producing different and extensive material”, and “producing content that is interactive and for all levels”. In fact, this result shows that lecturers are caught unprepared in distance education teaching and digitalizing course contents. However, it is possible to see similar results in other studies on the subject. The Covid-19 process, contrary to popular belief, has shown that universities in the world and in Turkey are not digitalizing enough (Karadağ & Yücel, 2020; Syahria, 2021). However, the globalizing world has experienced such a pandemic for the first time. Therefore, it can be understood that distance education practices are caught unprepared for this process. These experiences will constitute an important memory of the education history.

In the same study, students stated that they were dissatisfied with digital content/teaching materials. In this context, it can be considered that the criticism of the lecturers participating in the research towards the teaching materials and their content is also theoretically meaningful. At the same time, it is obvious that not only educators but also most of the students are caught unprepared for the digitalization process (Karakuş, Ucuzsatar, Karacaoğlu, Esendemir, & Bayraktar, 2020).

As a result of the research, the lecturers reflected the stages mentioned in the literature on self-assessment in the current research. These stages are being aware of their own distance education processes, looking critically at the teaching processes and expressing these processes (Şahin & Abalı Öztürk, 2012; Kösterelioğlu & Çelen, 2016). Therefore, self-assessment applications are an important tool to reveal the shortcomings of distance education.

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