

## Prospective Turkish Teachers' Opinions on Distance and Face-To-Face Education

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### ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced many uncertainties into major aspects of global and national society, including education. Therefore, in a bid to support the continuation of education, Turkey, like many other countries in the world, has made it mandatory to shift to distance education in all school levels. But this mode of teaching, i.e. distance education, has also brought many new challenges, especially for students. Pandemic hit the students hardest. Thus, it would be necessary to know what challenges the students face during distance education. To that end, the current study aims to explore the opinions of university students on distance education. The study participants consisted of 94 undergraduate students, prospective Turkish teachers, studying Turkish in Muş Alparslan University in Turkey. The participants were asked to answer some questions. The questions were about the future of distance education, pros and cons of both education systems, and the most effective system for Turkish teaching. The questions were delivered via Google Forms. The data of this qualitative study was collected using a written opinion form developed by the researchers. In the analysis of research data, the descriptive data analysis technique was used. At the end of the study, the following conclusions were reached: distance education will replace face-to-face education; two education systems are not free from flaws; and Turkish classes should not be delivered through distance education.

**Key words:** Distance Education, Face-To-Face Education, Turkish Education

### INTRODUCTION

Education is the act of passing the culture, i.e. values, knowledge and skills, of a society to the next generation (Alkan, 2005). Education also refers to experiences in which children and young people can, directly or indirectly, acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to take their place in society, and develop their personalities, inside or outside the school (Turkish Language Institution, 2009). The details may vary, but these definitions share some common grounds. Among these are the constituents of education. Education at these definitions is commonly based on three pillars: people, knowledge and society (Alkan, 2005). Thus, it is as old as human history. Education dates back to ancient Greek, according to the historical records. In ancient Greek, teachers called 'sophists' thought rich noble boys for money. Therefore, they are considered to be the first professional teachers of the world (Cevizci, 2016, p.32). Apart from this classical education, a type of education called distance education has become widespread recently.

Throughout history, societies have used the classical education while teaching their children. Classical education means education in which teaching takes place between teacher and students where all share physically the same environment. As the students and teacher are physically present

in the same place, it is also called face-to-face education. The history of this education again dates back to ancient Greek. Socrates and Plato are considered to be fathers of classical education. But from that day to Dewey's 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it has persisted in various forms. Initially, this education took place in *madrasa* and *tekke*. But soon after that, they were converted into modern school system (Cevizci, 2016, p. 22).

Distance education, on the other hand, is an educational system in which students and teachers are not physically present. The student corresponds with the school via communication technologies and mail (İşman, 2003). Today, COVID-19 has upended many areas of our lives, one of which is education. Distance education, therefore, has become an integral component of school education. Thus, a closer look at the history and evolution of distance education is of great importance.

It is widely accepted that the first distance education course in the modern sense has been provided by Isaac Pitman in 1840 in the UK (Mshvidobadze & Gogoladze, 2012; cited in Sarıçam et al., 2020). However, according to Clark, its origin dates back to much further, i.e., to the first correspondence-based courses, which have been taken place via letters. Rapid developments in technology, especially radio, television, and computer technology, have had increased the availability of these courses and shifted teaching into the

virtual world. That's why albeit in different formats, this type of education has been used for centuries. Demiray and İşman (2003), on the other hand, assert that distance education has only a 150 years history in the full sense of the word. According to Demiray and İşman, it has been delineated in five stages of development: (I) pre-letter period, (ii) letter period in which printed materials such as books, newspapers, etc. are usually sent by post, (iii) radio and television period in which one-way communication tools as well as printed materials are used as teaching tools, (iv) bi-directional communication period in which interaction between teacher and student begins, and (v) modern distance education period.

Now, we live in the most recent period based on this classification. Today, media channels such as computer, artificial satellites, and other technologies are presenting their potential for distance education.

Distance education in Turkey, on the other hand, is relatively new phenomenon. It has not a long history. The first endeavors goes back to just 1923s -the foundation of the republic. From 1923 to 1970s, more profound scientific studies on distance education have been articulated. These contributions of course have laid the foundation of distance education. After 1970s, the first distance education courses have started at the secondary education levels (Sarıçam et al., 2020). Following this date, it has been applied in many different fields and at all levels of education, e.g., Teaching through Letter, Television School, YAYKUR, YAYÇEP, Open Education Faculty (Karataş, 2003). But in 1974, with the new political structure, new steps have been taken. The consequence of these steps is the foundation of Higher Education by Letter. This institution has been initiated to compensate for the insufficient quota of universities. Although politicians have criticised this system strictly, they have continued to insist on this education system. Consequently, in the period 1975-1976, YAYKUR has been founded. YAYKUR is continuation of the education through letter system (Kaya, 1977).

In the 1982-1983 academic year, Anadolu University Open Education Faculty became the first faculty to provide education at high standards in higher education with the principle of equal opportunity and through open and distance education. In 1993, the faculty expanded its field of education. In 1998, all of the books were redesigned, written and published in parallel with the contemporary developments in the Open Education System.

In line with the content of the books, TV training programs were renewed and CD-ROMs were produced. In 2000, in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education, Preschool and English Language Teaching Undergraduate Programs were opened in the Open Education Faculty. Education programs have been opened in many countries besides Turkey. In addition to associate and undergraduate education, non-thesis master's education programs were also opened. A study was also conducted that gave the opportunity to attend a second university without examination for those who are still university students. This faculty currently has 1 million 170 thousand students in 63 programs.

Open and Distance Education Faculty (AUZEF), which carries out the activities of open education and distance

education programs within the body of Istanbul University, has started to accept students to programs within the scope of distance education since 2009 and open education programs since 2011. This faculty provides services in 53 educational programs.

In addition, Atatürk University Open Education Faculty was established in 2010 by Atatürk University under the name "Ata-aöf". In this faculty, education is given in 47 programs. Distance education is still continuing in these open education faculties and within the body of many universities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has unexpectedly swept the entire world and affected people's health, economies, and by no means education. Therefore, the number of studies on face-to-face and distance education has been shown to increase. These studies have specifically shed light on advantages, disadvantages and impacts of the pandemic (Ali & Kaur, 2020; Zhou & Li, 2020; Teymori & Fardin, 2020).

The key advantages of distance education, on the other hand, are: retrieving information on his/her own, making efforts to obtain the information, struggling to use technology, receiving lessons without having to face to face, etc. However, this type of education again is not free from flaws. The lack of technology infrastructure in some countries, financial difficulties to purchase technology, financial burden of keeping up with rapidly growing technology, the probability of not providing the justice in the measurement and evaluation, the impossibility of delivering applied courses can be cited as deficiencies.

As is seen, both systems have pros and cons, and neither is superior to other. The studies on distance education were prospered after the outbreak of COVID-19, as has been noted before. A closer look at the literature reveals that a great many studies have been dedicated to investigate distance education. Some of them (e.g. Karatayet al., 2021) have focused both pros and cons in their study. But some others have only deal with positive aspects of distance education. According to these studies, the major advantages of distance education are: the ability to reach all children and youth, including vulnerable groups (Khan & Williams, 2007; Odabaş, 2003), promoting gender equality (Ferdousi, 2010), reducing costs and increasing accessibility (Traxler, 2018). Some other studies, on the other hand, have specifically focused on the disadvantages of distance education. For example, Sadeghi (2019) has shed light on the problematic issues of distance education in her study. Sadeghi reported 'the prosperity of possible distractions, the lack of digital competence and physical interaction, and the difficulty of staying in touch with the teachers' as deficiencies of distance education. Zhou and Li (2020), on the other hand, have discussed the challenges of distance education in China. Again, Bergdahl & Nouri (2020) have aimed to capture the challenges faced by the teachers in the early days of the transition from traditional teaching into distance education in Swedesh. Not limited to this alone, there are also some other studies that have focused on problematic aspects of distance education (e.g. Ali & Kaur, 2020; Segura et al., 2020; Teymori & Fardin, 2020; Tunagür, 2021).

### The Importance and Purpose of the Research

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced many uncertainties into major aspect of global and national society, including for education. Therefore, in a bid to support the continuation of education, Turkey, like many other countries in the world, has made it mandatory to shift to distance education in all school levels. But distance education has also brought many new challenges, especially for students. Hence, this situation has prompted the researchers to explore the impacts of the pandemic on education. In these studies, researchers have focused specifically on those issues: the comparison of face-to-face and distance education, the opinions of sufferers (e.g. students, teachers), positive and negative aspects of both education systems. Undoubtedly, pandemic has hit the students hardest. Therefore, it becomes of decisive importance to reveal the opinions of students first. With this in mind, the current study seeks to explore the opinions of prospective teachers studying at the Department of Turkish Language Teaching at Muş Alparslan University. In addition, no study was found in which prospective teachers were asked their opinions about distance and face-to-face education at the relevant university. The fact that this study is the first of its kind in the relevant university adds originality to the study.

The study basically seeks to explore the opinions of prospective Turkish teachers on distance and face-to-face education. It further seeks answers to these questions:

1. Do you think that distance education will replace face-to-face education in the future?
2. What are the positive aspects of distance and face-to-face education for you?
3. What are the negative aspects of distance and face-to-face education for you?
4. Is distance education or face-to-face education more useful in Turkish education (undergraduate education)? Why?

### METHOD

The study has employed qualitative research design. Qualitative research is a type of research in which qualitative data collection tools such as document analysis, interview and observation are used, and a process in which holistic and realistic perceptions of events in natural environments is followed (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The 'basic qualitative research' is, on the other hand, is a qualitative research that is primarily based on interpretation and analysis. It does not include qualitative studies like historical analysis, ethnographic, implicit (embedded) theory, phenomenology, etc. In qualitative research, data are collected through observations, interviews or document analysis (Merriam, 2013).

The current study has discussed the various aspects of Turkish prospective teachers' opinions on distance and face-to-face education. The findings have been vigorously reported through the use of direct quotations and interpreted through descriptions.

### Participants

The study group of the research consists of randomly selected 94 Turkish teacher candidates studying in the Turkish

language teaching department of Muş Alparslan University, one of the state universities in Turkey. Of the participants, 34 of them are first-grade, 24 are second-grade, 21 are third-grade, and 15 are fourth-grade students. Again, 58 are female and 36 are male students.

### Data Collection Tool

In this study, the researchers prepared "Written Opinion Form" in accordance with three experts' opinions. First, the researchers drafted interview questions based on the literature review. Then, we requested two experts to check whether the questions were comprehensible or there was a need for deletion or supplementary questions. The experts were both associate professors and had PhD degrees. One was an expert in Turkish education, and the other in measurement and evaluation education. Based on the feedback received, the final form was developed. The final Written Opinion Form had four questions.

### Data Collection

During the data collection process, the researchers first contacted the volunteer participants. Then, "Written Opinion Form" was sent to the participants via Google Forms. The participants were asked to give written answers to the questions.

The participants were provided with detailed information about the study in advance. Again the researchers contacted them about the misunderstood points during the implementation.

### Data Analysis

In the analysis of research data, the descriptive data analysis technique has been used. The data analysis processes are: identifying the themes in the data, separating the data based on the themes, evaluating/interpreting the findings. In order to increase the reliability of the arguments, the participants' example sentences have also been included. Again, the participants have been given code names and their real names have not been recorded. The following codes have been used to reference individual participants: P1, P2...P94.

### Validity and Reliability (Reliability of the Study)

In the study, the phenomenon was investigated as it existed naturally, and no attempt has been made to manipulate the participants. Two Turkish education experts were called in for advice at every stage of the study from formulating hypothesis, conducting research on the subject of study, determining method, formulating questions and to writing and interpretation of findings, etc. In addition, in case of need, other specialist experts were also consulted.

For reliability, the consensus between coders was measured. A certain percentage of the data (30%) was analyzed together, and the experts and researchers reached consensus. The remaining data was analyzed by the researchers

themselves. After the analysis, the two researchers reviewed and evaluated the data again before reporting the results.

## FINDINGS

### Findings Related to the 1<sup>st</sup> Research Question

In the study, prospective Turkish teachers were first asked the question “Do you think that distance education will replace face-to-face education in the future?”

The findings are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the majority of prospective Turkish teachers (59.57%) believe that distance education will replace face-to-face education in the future.

### Findings Related to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Research Question

In the study, following the first question, prospective Turkish teachers were asked “What are the positive aspects of distance and face-to-face education for you?”. The findings are shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2 shows that prospective Turkish teachers point to many positive aspects of distance education. The most cited advantage among these is time saving nature of distance education (f=66). The other opinions include: ‘There is no space problem’ (f=64), ‘it is affordable’ (f=64), ‘it gives maximum control and pace over the education’ f=47), ‘it ensures equality of opportunity in education’ (f=38), and ‘it delivers education for large audiences’ (f=36). Here, some parts of these opinions have been presented in the form of direct quotation:

*Students will be able to learn how to use technology in the most beneficial way. (P83)*

*Students with physical disabilities normally experience various difficulties when they go to school. But this situation is not experienced in distance education. (P88)*

*Distance education can be used anywhere and anytime. So an individual can meet the need for information about everything. (P9)*

*The most positive aspect of distance education is that it saves time. We have the opportunity to participate the lesson from wherever we want. I find it useful to have the opportunity to participate the lesson we are responsible for from our home, workplace, or anywhere. In addition, the chance to listen to the lessons we missed is another positive aspect. (P44)*

*It is environmentally friendly. It prevents trees from being cut down and saves nature. (P5)*

*Your education has to cost a fortune in the face-to-face education. It is also rather expensive initiative for the state due to the economic constraints. But you save your money in the distance education. It allows the state to get rid of many burdens, such as building school buildings, employing staff, paying various bills and fuel expenses. Therefore, it is economical. (P72)*

*Some low-income families that can't afford to reach normal education (especially university) now should not be upset anymore because there is a much lower cost of education in distance education, and perhaps all members of society will be able to reach education in this way. (P23)*

Table 3 shows that prospective Turkish teachers also point to many positive aspects the same as distance education. The most cited advantage is the improvement of

**Table 1.** Opinions of prospective Turkish teachers on whether distance education can replace face-to-face education in the future

| Codes | f  | %     |
|-------|----|-------|
| Yes   | 38 | 40.42 |
| No    | 56 | 59.57 |
| Total | 94 | 100   |

**Table 2.** The positive aspects of distance education from prospective Turkish teachers' perspectives

| Number | Codes   | f  |
|--------|---|----|
| 1      | It saves time   | 66 |
| 2      | There is no space problem/There is no space limitations   | 64 |
| 3      | It is affordable/It is economic   | 64 |
| 4      | It gives maximum control over the education.  | 47 |
| 5      | It ensures equality of opportunity in education/ It allows everyone to reach the education                  | 38 |
| 6      | It delivers education for large audiences   | 36 |
| 7      | It allows you to use technology better and more usefully  | 18 |
| 8      | It motivates the students psychologically   | 17 |
| 9      | It allows you to access further information faster  | 16 |
| 10     | It allows to use technology more in education   | 14 |
| 11     | It supports individual study/learning opportunities   | 14 |
| 12     | It gives you the chance to participate the lesson at any time   | 13 |
| 13     | It allows you to spend more time with your family   | 7  |
| 14     | Distance education has no deficiency  | 3  |
| 15     | It provides rich learning content   | 3  |
| 16     | It can be used in extraordinary social situations (epidemic, war, natural disaster, etc.)                   | 3  |
| 17     | It is learner-centric   | 2  |
| 18     | It is environmentally friendly  | 2  |
| 19     | It ensures lifelong learning  | 2  |
| 20     | It ensures permanent learning   | 2  |
| 21     | It develops appropriate attitudes and skills for those wishing to take an impartial approach to the student | 1  |
| 22     | It supports digitalization in society   | 1  |
| 23     | It gives the chance to meet people of different cultures  | 1  |
| 24     | It provides an opportunity for parents to engage in education   | 1  |
| 25     | It's easier to pass the course  | 1  |
| 26     | Classroom management is easier  | 1  |

Some participants expressed more than one opinion

**Table 3.** The positive aspects of face-to-face education from prospective Turkish Teachers' perspectives

| Number | Codes   | f  |
|--------|---|----|
| 1      | It improves communication/relationship between teacher and student                                      | 74 |
| 2      | It provides instant feedback  | 68 |
| 3      | There are more opportunities for socialization  | 66 |
| 4      | The student is more disciplined/responsible   | 55 |
| 5      | The student has the chance to ask incomprehensible issues in the course to teacher comfortably          | 52 |
| 6      | It makes the student an active learner  | 51 |
| 7      | It makes learning permanent   | 40 |
| 8      | Learning environment is more disciplined  | 28 |
| 9      | It is more effective for training practical skills  | 27 |
| 10     | There is a friendly, warm and welcome environment   | 26 |
| 11     | It provides the opportunity for experiential learning   | 16 |
| 12     | The student can better understand the topic   | 15 |
| 13     | Teacher can use body language more effectively  | 15 |
| 14     | Exams are typically delivered regularly   | 14 |
| 15     | It enriches the course content by using different materials and methods such as oral presentations etc. | 13 |
| 16     | It develops the ability to empathize  | 13 |
| 17     | You can better monitor student's development  | 13 |
| 18     | It develops the personality   | 13 |
| 19     | There are more opportunities for collaborative learning   | 13 |
| 20     | Instructions take into account existing programme or curriculum requirements                            | 9  |
| 21     | You can express your opinion without fear   | 8  |
| 22     | It prepares the student for life  | 4  |
| 23     | Classroom management is easier  | 2  |
| 24     | It reduces anxiety  | 2  |
| 25     | It develops critical thinking   | 1  |
| 26     | It motivates the student to learn more  | 1  |
| 27     | It contributes to good health   | 1  |

Some participants expressed more than one opinion

communication/relationship between teacher and student time (f=74). The other opinions according to their frequency are: 'It provides instant feedback' (f=68), 'there are more opportunities for socialization' (f=66), 'the student should be more disciplined/responsible' (f=55), 'the student has the chance to ask incomprehensible issues in the course to teacher comfortably' (f=52), 'it makes the student an active learner' (f=51), 'it makes learning permanent' (f=40). Here, some parts of these opinions again have been presented in the form of direct quotation:

*Because the student shares the same physical environment with the teacher, the student can explain himself*

*more easily, and express better. Questions that are not understood can be asked and solved immediately. Mutual dialogues, instant questions and answers are also factors that increase learning. (P88)*

*Face-to-face education develop students' socialization skills through group assignments and projects. (P4)*

*Because the student shares the same physical environment with the teacher, the student can explain himself more easily, and express better. Questions that are not understood can be asked and solved immediately. The teacher and students create mutual dialogues so that learning becomes more permanent. (P16)*

*If the teacher does that is exceptional or above the call of duty, this changes the way the student think about the school. Because of the teacher, they have come to love school. This in turn leads to success. Another advantage is that students ask directly the questions that are stuck in their heads. It is also important in terms of giving structured daily routines and preparing them for the future. (K55)*

*We know the importance of education. For this reason, in order to achieve educational goals, the best learning environment should be created. Face-to-face education is critical in this respect. Because it is what the real world is like. (K61)*

### Findings Related to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Research Question

In the study, following the second question, prospective Turkish teachers were asked "What are the negative aspects of distance and face-to-face education for you?". The findings are shown in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4 shows that prospective Turkish teachers have reported many challenges/negative aspects during distance education. The most cited disadvantage is the technical problems, including internet connection/web/infrastructure, etc. (f=84). The other challenges include: insufficient feedback (f=76), interaction/communication problems between teacher and student (f=71), accessing to education properly especially for students with low income status (f=70), the inability to deliver applied courses (f=59), and decreased student motivation (f=49). Here, some parts from the participants' expressions again have been presented in the form of direct quotation:

*Some students cannot benefit from this education. Because not every student has communication tools like computer, smart phone, internet, etc. (P8)*

*Because we constantly use electronic tools in distance education, a high level of radiation may cause health problems. (P15)*

*It is almost impossible to receive applied courses during distance education. Apart from this, there is no specialty rooms or desired learning environment like workshop, laboratory, music room, painting room, etc. (P38)*

*The fact that distance education has led to a rise in cheating is really a big problem. This would be unfair to others. (P80)*

*The communication process in distance education has not been fully implemented due to the absence of body*

**Table 4.** The negative aspects of distance education from prospective Turkish Teachers' perspectives

| Number | Codes  | f  |
|--------|--|----|
| 1      | There can be technical problems, including internet connection/web/infrastructure, etc.          | 84 |
| 2      | You cannot receive direct or sufficient feedback   | 76 |
| 3      | There can be interaction/communication problems between teacher and student                      | 71 |
| 4      | Students with low income status cannot access to education properly                              | 70 |
| 5      | It is almost impossible to deliver applied courses   | 59 |
| 6      | It may decrease student motivation   | 49 |
| 7      | It may cause social distancing/loneliness  | 38 |
| 8      | Exposure to high levels of radiation may cause health problems                                   | 27 |
| 9      | You cannot reach the teachers  | 24 |
| 10     | It is hard to develop a robust plan/incomplete planning of learning                              | 24 |
| 11     | Students may lag behind in the courses/inability to understand the lessons                       | 23 |
| 12     | Students may lose attention  | 23 |
| 13     | Students may face challenges in assessing information  | 23 |
| 14     | Students may fail to study online  | 21 |
| 15     | Students may lessen gage in their learning   | 21 |
| 16     | Teaching may result in surface learning  | 13 |
| 17     | Students may experience loneliness, be emotionally detached                                      | 13 |
| 18     | It may thrive in slack   | 12 |
| 19     | Students cannot focus on online classes  | 12 |
| 20     | It may lead to a rise in cheating  | 12 |
| 21     | It does not develop students' higher order thinking skills                                       | 12 |
| 22     | The teacher cannot use body language effectively   | 12 |
| 23     | Cooperative learning or group work do not always work in distance education                      | 12 |
| 24     | It increases anxiety   | 12 |
| 25     | It does not provide the opportunity for experiential learning                                    | 9  |
| 26     | Students do not benefit from the opportunity to engage in nature                                 | 8  |
| 27     | Families living in crowded lead to have poor learning environment                                | 5  |
| 28     | The student may be unable to express himself adequately  | 5  |
| 29     | Students and teachers have to take more responsibilities   | 5  |
| 30     | It does not ensure permanent learning  | 4  |
| 31     | It increases dependence on technology  | 3  |
| 32     | It is rather difficult to manage the examination, homework, project or any other assignments     | 1  |
| 33     | Examination generates multiple vulnerabilities, including the challenge to object the exam marks | 1  |

Some participants expressed more than one opinion

**Table 5.** The negative aspects of face-to-face education from prospective Turkish Teachers' perspectives

| Number | Codes   | f  |
|--------|---|----|
| 1      | The cost of education is more expensive/costly  | 46 |
| 2      | It is waste of time/it does not save time for learning  | 30 |
| 3      | It restricts the student to a particular location/it does not save spaces                                 | 16 |
| 4      | Overcrowding increases discipline issues/communication is difficult                                       | 15 |
| 5      | It is almost impossible pause, rewind or repeat the lesson  | 10 |
| 6      | It cannot deliver education for large audiences   | 10 |
| 7      | There is a danger of educational inequality/violation of equality of opportunity                          | 10 |
| 8      | Early school start time may cause students to get less sleep  | 9  |
| 9      | Some educational institutions require attendance to be mandatory  | 9  |
| 10     | Lack of instructional materials may contribute to ineffective teaching and learning                       | 9  |
| 11     | The student may experience more stress/anxiety  | 8  |
| 12     | Especially vulnerable students may experience some challenges. They may not access to education regularly | 8  |
| 13     | There may be unwanted physical and emotional contacts like bullying, quarrels, etc., between students     | 7  |
| 14     | It may decrease student/teacher motivation  | 7  |
| 15     | It benefits from technology less frequently   | 6  |
| 16     | Teachers may have different ways of teaching their students   | 5  |
| 17     | Financial problems may impact students  | 5  |
| 18     | It does not accommodate different learning styles   | 4  |
| 19     | Students face challenges in assessing information   | 4  |
| 20     | Exam stress can affect students negatively  | 4  |
| 21     | Some students may experience low self-esteem  | 4  |
| 22     | Teaching methodology does not set out to provide a variety of methods and techniques                      | 4  |
| 23     | Some school buildings may be old and unsuitable   | 3  |
| 24     | Students may perceive school as a part of their daily routine   | 3  |
| 25     | Students may move away/stay away from their families  | 3  |
| 26     | Students may lose attention   | 3  |
| 27     | There are no potential negative impacts   | 3  |
| 28     | It can make it hard to provide the justice in the measurement and evaluation                              | 2  |
| 29     | It has a fixed class schedule   | 2  |
| 30     | Class time devoted to different activities comprises only a small percentage                              | 1  |
| 31     | It makes it more difficult to for the family to monitor student's development                             | 1  |

Some participants expressed more than one opinion

language and paralanguage. This type of communication is deprived of powerful communication tools such as facial expressions, body movements. (P60)

The child is physically separate from any school building so he does not benefit from the opportunities like having fun or playing games provided in school environment. This is especially a big problem for those who live in apartment buildings in big cities where no playground or open space is available. (P88)

Table 5 shows that prospective Turkish teachers also have reported many negative aspects the same as distance education. The most cited disadvantage is the cost of education ( $f= 46$ ). The other disadvantages include: "the waste of time ( $f= 30$ ), restriction the education to a particular location ( $f= 16$ ), discipline and communication problems especially in crowded classes ( $f= 15$ ), difficulty of pausing, rewinding or repeating the lesson ( $f= 10$ ).” Here, some parts from the participants' expressions again have been presented in the form of direct quotation:

Requiring attendance to be mandatory in face-to-face education is a negative situation. (P18)

Since it is compulsory every day, students perceive school as a part of their daily routine. (P30)

The enforcement of strict discipline measures take a toll upon students. (P36)

The school could have devastating impact on student. For example, if he/she has a health problem, it may cause him to stay back from his education that day. In addition, he/she may arrive late due to the problems, thus reducing daily motivation. (P48)

Another disadvantage is violence. Both inconvenient teacher training education and their personality traits are likely to contribute to psychological and physical violence at school. For this reason, students sometimes experience violence at the hands of teachers. Apart from this, more instructional time and pressure to do well are again other negative aspects of this type of education. (P7)

#### Findings Related to the 4<sup>th</sup> Research Question

In the study, following the third question, prospective Turkish teachers were asked "Is distance education or face-to-face education more useful in Turkish education (undergraduate education)? Why?". The findings are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 shows that a great majority of prospective Turkish teachers (95.74%) have opted for face-to-face education. Only 4 have satisfied with the distance education in Turkish education.

**Table 6.** Prospective Turkish teachers' perceptions and preferences of distance education vs. face-to-face education

| Codes                                     | <i>f</i> | %     |
|---|----------|-------|
| Distance education is more effective.     | 4        | 4.25  |
| Face-to-face education is more effective. | 90       | 95.74 |
| Total                                     | 94       | 100   |

All participants in favor of the distance education offer several arguments in support of their claims. These are direct quotes from their expressions:

I think that Turkish education is a course that you can study from home. The course content can be easily thought over the internet. Beside this, distance education reduces the cost. Therefore, Turkish language teaching is possible without school. (P10)

Of course, students can benefit from the opportunities offered by technology, and they can access the information at any time in Turkish classes. However, it should be noted that the course content should be enriched with different teaching materials like oral presentations etc. Thanks to this, distance education in Turkish classes becomes more effective. (P28)

Until now, distance education has provided the same benefits as face-to-face education in Turkish classes. It has improved educational standard and stimulated innovation. I believe that it will even be more useful in the future. (P48)

All those again in favor of the face-to-face education offer good reasons in support of their claims. These are direct quotes from their expressions:

The answer to this question is definitely face-to-face education. When we look at the course contents, we see that many courses are applied. Educational practices in face-to-face education help strengthen teacher preparation so that we -prospective teachers- get off to the best start we can. Such achievements are almost impossible for the distance education. (P54)

Language teaching is much more than abstract grammatical rules. The main purpose of language teaching is to develop and improve language skills. In this sense, Turkish language teaching is also based on developing four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. It should also be noted that these skills can only be developed through authentic real life activities. Therefore, Turkish classes should be delivered face-to-face. (P18)

Of course, distance education fosters teaching. But still Turkish should be delivered face to face. This is because Turkish is applied course which is comprised of various learning domains: grammar, reading, writing etc. Therefore, it requires lots of real life activities to develop those practical skills. And only face-to-face education provide those learning opportunities. (P76)

All languages, including Turkish, are not static but change over time. Students therefore need to practice their language skills continuously. The role of the teacher at this point is to provide opportunities to practice. But this is almost impossible for distance education. For example, if the teacher models how to pronounce a word and the student fail to engage in this activity, how can you control this in distance education? Again, in speaking lessons, most students do not want to attend class because they fear they will look silly. But if the student and teacher be in the same physical environment, the teacher can easily motivate students and control this situation.

*For this reason, all language classes should be delivered face-to-face. (P90)*

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

One of the most important finding of these studies is that distance education has shown significant growth after the pandemic. According to these studies, the countries all over the world immediately shifted to distance education. Turkey is also among these countries. Just after the days the first corona virus case has been reported, all primary and secondary level schools in Turkey shifted to online learning. All universities again managed to offer education completely through distance education, except for the applied courses.

Another important finding of these studies is that both face-to-face and distance education are not fully-fledged. They have both advantages and disadvantages. The key advantages of face-to-face education, for example, are: effective communication between teacher and student, easier reflection of difficulties and confusion about the topic, easy control of students' emotional states (e.g. willingness or unwillingness), etc. However, it is not free from flaws. Incompetent teacher, difficulties accessing information, the lack of desired level of student-teacher and parent-teacher relations, schooling etc. can be cited as disadvantages of classical education.

This section is to discuss the findings, draw conclusions about the research data, and make recommendations based on these results. An important finding from the current study is about the future of distance education. A great majority of participants predict that in the near future distance education replace face-to-face education. This finding is actually not surprised. Because The COVID-19 has reshaped science, technology, innovation, and consequently instructional practices. Empirical literature also provides enough evidence to support this finding. For example, according to Picciano (2017), distance education is the way of the future as communication systems are becoming more sophisticated and widely available. Kolcu Canatar & Balci (2021, p. 56) also think the same. According to Kolcu Canatar & Balci, distance education is now a necessity rather than a personal choice or a political decision. But not all researchers think the same way. Brekelmans et al. (2002) and Yanuschik et al. (2015), for example, do not agree that distance education will overthrow the throne of face-to-face education because teacher-student interaction is still a key feature in success, and distance education is deprived of this facility.

In the study, prospective Turkish teachers were first asked the question "What are the positive aspects of distance education?" The participants reported many positive aspects of distance education. These include: saving time, no space problem, affordability, maximum control over the education, ensuring equality of opportunity in education, and delivering education for large audiences. Similar conclusions have also been reached by other researchers in the literature (e.g., Odabaş, 2003; Arat & Bakan, 2014; Kırık, 2016; Traxler, 2018; Sarikaya & Şakiroğlu, 2021; Korkut & Memişoğlu, 2021; Canatar & Balci, 2021; Kazu et al., 2021; Odabaş, 2003). For example, Korkut and Memişoğlu's (2021, p.1648) have

found that the most important facility the distance education offers is time saving as it allows to spend more quality times on education. Another advantage is about space. As there is no space limitation, distance education is especially important. When the conditions are favorable, you can attend the class anywhere you want. Akgül's (2021) study again has verified these findings. The participants in their study reference the most important facilities of distance education as time saving, no space limitation and affordability. Traxler's (2018, p. 4) study also has emphasized in particular affordability. Razeeth et al. (2019) again has cited the most important facilities as time saving and affordability. Apart from these studies, there are also some others delving into depth positive aspects of distance education (e.g. Demir & Kale, 2020; Ferdousi, 2010; Görgülü Arı & Hayır Kanat, 2020). For example, Görgülü Arı & Hayır Kanat (2020) have emphasized in particular the ability to pause, rewind or repeat the lesson. They again have appreciated the equality of education opportunity as one of the most important feature. Likewise, Ferdousi's (2010) study has put a great emphasis on education opportunity and gender equality. For Ferdousi, distance education has raised awareness for the support of gender parity and gender equality.

Following the first question, prospective Turkish teachers were asked "What are the positive aspects of face-to-face education?" The participants reported many positive aspects of face-to-face education the same as distance education. These include: providing instant feedback, strengthening student-teacher communication, more opportunities for socialization, improving student discipline and responsibility, the chance to ask incomprehensible issues in the course to teacher comfortably, and supporting active and permanent learning. The same results were also obtained by a great many studies in the literature. For example, Alan & Can (2021, p.558) have cited the active participation of students, easier classroom management, and the higher motivation as the most important features. Beside this, face-to-face education strengthens student-teacher communication, according to the study. This finding is extremely important, given that effective communication can help to foster learning. Another finding of the study is that face-to-face education is the most convenient way to deliver applied courses. Eroğlu's (2018) study has also reached the same conclusion. According to the study, face-to-face education is proved to be the most effective way to teach knowledge and skills.

As a third question, prospective Turkish teachers were asked "What are the negative aspects of distance education?" The participants reported many negative aspects, either. These include: technical problems, insufficient feedback, interaction/communication problems between teacher and student, accessing to education properly especially for students with low income status, inability to deliver applied courses, and decreased student motivation. A great many research findings also confirmed these results. For example, Korkut & Memişoğlu (2021, p.1670) found that the lack of infrastructure, attendance problems, and the lack of live interaction/communication are among the most important problems facing students. Beside this, some studies have laid special emphasis on communication defaults in distance



education (e.g., Özdoğan & Berkant, 2020; Ünal & Buluz, 2020; Türker & Dündar, 2020; Arslan & Şumuer, 2020; Mengi & Alpdoğan, 2020; Oosterhoff et al., 2020). These studies all have agreed that distance education decreases student motivation as students spend excessive screen time. Physical and emotional problems are again another disadvantage that some have emphasized (e.g. Elcil & Şahiner, 2014; Oosterhoff et al., 2020; Wheeler, 2002). The studies have revealed that as students lack interest and motivation during distance learning, this leads to distraction, thus undermining the effectiveness of education. One another deficiency is insufficient feedback. Özdoğan and Berkant (2020), for example, reported feedback as important deficiency of distance education in their study. Considering that feedback is 'a guide for the improvement of learning' (Davies, 2003) and 'makes the student think about what they are doing' (Hattie, 1999), this finding again is extremely important. As a last deficiency faced by the students in distance education, some studies have reported the lack of opportunities for socialization (e.g. Lee et al., 2013; Muirhead, 2000; Simonson et al., 2019). As is seen in these findings, the disadvantages of distance education outweigh the advantages.

As a fourth question, prospective Turkish teachers were asked "What are the negative aspects of face-to-face education? The participants also reported many negative aspects the same as distance education. These include: economic costs, spending a lot of time, restricting to the education to a particular location, discipline and communication problems especially in crowded classes, difficulty of pausing, rewinding or repeating the lesson. There are also a great many studies in the literature that have concluded the same results. For example, Akgül (2021) has reported the difficulty of classroom management, teacher centered learning, reluctance to engage in learning, the inability to repeat the lesson and not paying attention to individual learning as the deficiencies of face-to-face education. Likewise, Bulut (2020, p.18) has shed light on similar issues. He has reported two leading deficiencies in face-to-face education: the inadequacy of repetitions and exercises and inability to meet the individual student needs. Yumbul's (2021, p.24) study again has discovered similar deficiencies: time/space shortage; teacher shortage and teaching styles; distribution of instructional resources unevenly and inefficiently use of their sources; the inability to deliver education for large audiences. As is seen in these findings, face-to-face education has common similar deficiencies.

Another important finding of the study is that a great majority of prospective Turkish teachers (95.74%) have opted for face-to-face education. Only 4 have satisfied with the distance education in Turkish education. This finding again is reasonable, given that Turkish is an applied course. Several studies in the literature also have replicated this finding. For example, Karakuş et al. (2020, p.239) have found that prospective Turkish teachers have difficulty in shifting to distance education, and be in favor of face-to-face education. Kolcu et al. (2021, p.55) reported that teachers have a very difficult time teaching writing and grammar, and Turkish textbooks are not suitable for distance education. Orhan's (2021, p.171) study has also shed light on similar problems.

According to the study, teachers have difficulties in teaching course contents, especially grammar. Kaplan and Gülden (2021), on the other hand, has high lightened the importance of emotion during distance education. They explore the impacts of distance education on Turkish education during the epidemic period. In their study, a great majority of teachers agree upon negative impact of distance education on student motivation and attitude towards Turkish class. These results show that distance education is not more effective way to teach Turkish.

One of the general results reached within the scope of the study is that Turkish teacher candidates think that distance education will replace face-to-face education in the future. The advanced technological developments in the world and the thought that epidemics will increase in the future may have led students to such a thought. In the study, it was determined that distance education cannot replace face-to-face education in Turkish teaching. Considering the structure of Turkish education, this finding is a normal situation.

Based on the empirical data this study has elicited, the following recommendations can be made:

- The authorities should give due attention to the positive and negative aspects of both face-to-face and distance education and take the necessary measures.
- In-service trainings should be provided for teachers, students and families. In this way, they benefit from computers and the internet properly, which are one of the most important components of distance education.
- The current and other studies in the literature have revealed that both face-to-face and distance education are economically costly. For this reason, the access to vastly more affordable education is of vital importance.

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