Middle School Students' Views on Distance Education: Turkish Language Teaching under the Shadow of COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to determine the strengths, deficiencies, and weaknesses of distance education process of learning-teaching activities in Turkish lesson by asking the opinions of students who are the subject of the learning process. In the study, the basic qualitative research design was preferred considering the nature of the research subject. The study group of the research consists of twenty-eight 7th grade students who continue their education activities in Eskişehir in the 2020-2021 academic year. The online interviews were conducted with the teachers through a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers. The data were analyzed by content analysis using the MAXQDA program. The students stated that distance education is more functional than face-to-face education in vocabulary activities of listening and comprehension skills. In speaking and writing skills, students mostly preferred distance education. The students explained the strengths and weaknesses of the two educational environments compared to each other in terms of all skills, with their justifications. In the study, students were also asked to write the five most useful features of both educational environments. Thus, the strengths of both learning environments in terms of Turkish lessons were revealed. Based on the data obtained, it has been determined that distance education cannot create an alternative to face-to-face education in terms of social interaction, teacher-student interaction, group studies at the desired level, but distance education is clearly preferred by students as it offers many opportunities that face-to-face education does not offer. For this reason, based on the prominent skills and activities of distance education, it can be said that it will be more beneficial to continue Turkish lessons by adopting a mixed (hybrid) model in the future.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, Turkish language education, distance education, face-to-face education, basic language skills.

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Introduction

Distance education is an interdisciplinary field and it extends over nearly three centuries. In Turkey, from 1923 to the 1960s, distance education was first discussed conceptually. After the 1970s, distance education studies were carried out at the middle education level with different initiatives, some experience was gained and limited progress was made (Bozkurt, 2017, p. 86). The distance education process, which progressed with the transmission of printed materials by mail at the beginning of the 1970s, continued by using television and radio broadcasts, cable television broadcasts (in the USA), multimedia tools such as video and audio recordings, teleconferences, web-based distance learning environments, computers and mobile devices. (Burns, 2011; Gunawardena and McIsaac, 2013). Online teaching and learning have emerged in the design and delivery of 21st century distance education. Online teaching and learning processes by providing Internet-based content and communication between instructors and students; carried out with advanced computer and communication technologies (Innes, 2021).

With the COVID-19 epidemic affecting the whole world, face-to-face education was paused in Turkey as of March 16, 2019, and education-teaching activities continued in distance education environments. This radical change in the educational environment and the emerging new condition has revealed new research areas based on learning and teaching processes. While the use of distance education at the higher education level in the past means that certain data on the quality and quantity of education at this level are already available, there is not enough data for this new learning environment experienced for the first time for students, teachers and parents in primary education. The data obtained for the distance education processes, which have recently started to be implemented due to the epidemic conditions at the primary education level, were mostly obtained by communicating with teacher candidates, teachers and parents (Demir and Demir, 2021; Erbaş, 2021; Ustabulut and Keskin, 2020; Güven, Kurum, and Sağlam, 2012; Süğümlü, 2021; Şenturk, Duran, and Yilmaz, 2020) and the studies carried out for elementary school students are limited. There is a need for studies that aim to reach data on the language skills and activities of distance education by referring to the lives of students in Turkish teaching. For this reason, the data to be presented by the students who are active members of the learning-teaching processes regarding the distance education processes is of great importance. In particular, the data to be obtained about how language skills gain a dimension in the distance education environment will guide the decisions to be taken for the future (hybrid, mixed education) by determining the stronger or weaker points of distance education compared to the face-to-face education environment in the acquisition of skills. For this purpose, four basic language skills with students and the activities (vocabulary, questions for understanding the text, finding the main idea, reading, listening, speaking and writing activities) involved in acquiring these skills were tried to be determined by comparing the strong, weak and improvable aspects of distance education with face-to-face education.

In accordance with this purpose, answers are searched for the following questions:

What are the strengths and weaknesses of distance education in vocabulary studies in distance education compared to face-to-face education?

Compared to face-to-face education, what are the strengths and weaknesses of distance education in listening or reading comprehension (questions about the text, identifying the subject and main idea) in distance education?

What are the reasons for students to think that distance education or face-to-face education is more efficient in their comprehension skills?

Compared to face-to-face education how is the distance education environment in terms of efficiency in speaking skill activities and what are the strengths or weaknesses of distance education?

Compared to face-to-face education how is the distance education environment in terms of efficiency in writing skill activities and what are the strengths or weaknesses of distance education?

Can distance education create an alternative to face-to-face education? How can these two educational environments be utilized most effectively in line with student views?

Method

In order to determine the participants' views on the dimension of comprehension and explicating the distance education Turkish course continued during the covid-19 pandemic, the basic qualitative research design was preferred among the qualitative research designs by taking into account the nature of the research subject. In basic qualitative research, researchers are concerned with the feelings and thoughts of the study group about a situation, a process, or an experience. Basic qualitative research; It is the study group's interpretation of the event, situation, phenomenon from its own perspective and the researchers' reinterpretation of these interpretations (Merriam, 2013).

In line with the method in question, the researchers first decided on the questions they would ask, considering the nature of the research topic. Then they decided to collect the data by interview. They planned the data analysis to be done by dividing the data into appropriate categories, forming themes from the data and making sense of the emotions and thoughts of the students in the study group.

Working Group

In this context, twenty-eight 7th grade students in a middle school in Eskişehir in the 2020-2021 academic year were chosen as the study group. The fact that Eskişehir has an average value among 81 provinces in the access list of provinces announced by the Ministry of National Education

has been effective in conducting the study in Eskişehir (Kamubiz, 2021). According to the data, every other student in Eskişehir can access EBA without any problem. A flexible approach was followed in determining the size of the study group. The flexible approach is often recommended when determining the size of the study group, especially in qualitative studies (Robson, 2017). In the flexible approach, the researcher does not determine a certain number before the study and ends the data collection when he thinks that the data reaches enough to reflect the subject studied. In this study, the researchers evaluated the data obtained from the interviews in the process and limited the number of participants to 28 when they thought that the data obtained was sufficient to answer the sub-problems of the study. In order to obtain reliable data in the comparison of face-to-face education and distance education, attention was paid to the regular participation of all students in the distance education activities carried out during the 2020-2021 academic year in the determination of the students in the study group.

Data Collection Tool

In qualitative research, interview, observation or document analysis are used during data collection. In the research, a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers was used to conduct in-depth interviews online. During the preparation of the interview form, the literature was examined and a draft interview form with nine questions was prepared based on the literature. Three Turkish education experts were consulted for the content validity of the draft interview form. Two of the experts who were consulted are doctors, and one is a Turkish teacher who currently carries out educational activities and has distance education experience. After the expert opinions, the interview form was rearranged considering the feedback and the number of questions was increased to twelve. It was applied to a group with similar characteristics in terms of grade level, educational environment and the interview form. Then it was decided that the interview form was appropriate. In the interview form, six questions were asked about the comprehension skill dimension of the Turkish lessons continued during the distance education process and three questions about the explicating skill dimension. In addition, the researchers added three more questions to the interview in order to clarify and summarize the thoughts of the students in the study group about distance education, considering the expert opinions. Thus, a twelve-question online interview form was completed to determine the views of the students in the study group in terms of comprehension and explicating the distance education Turkish lessons carried out during the covid-19 period. An example of the questions asked to the participants within the scope of the research on the dimension of understanding and explaining is as follows:

- While finding the main idea of the texts you listen/watch or read, do you think there are differences in distance education courses compared to the courses in the classroom? Explain the reasons.

- Which is easier face-to-face or distance learning to talk about a topic?

Data Collection Procedure and Data Analysis

The data in the study were collected through online interviews. Interviews were held between 11/02/2021-18/02/2021 at the beginning of the second semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. Before the interviews, the principal of the school where the participants continued their educational activities was contacted and detailed information about the research process was given to him. After the informing, an application was made to the district directorate of national education for research permission. After getting permission approval, an online information meeting was held with students and families on the content, purpose, scope and process of the research. After the meeting, the parents were asked whether they would give permission to participate in the research. Consent form for participation in the study was obtained from the parents who agreed to contribute to the study. Afterwards, online interviews were conducted with the students in the study group at suitable times for them, in a way that would not disrupt their normal education and training activities. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants and the recorded data were analyzed in the computer environment.

In the analysis of the data, the qualitative analysis program MaxQda program was used, and the data were analyzed using the content analysis method. Themes, sub-themes and codes were prepared in order to describe the findings as clearly and comprehensibly as possible. The application in Figure 1 was followed for the theme, sub-theme and codes.
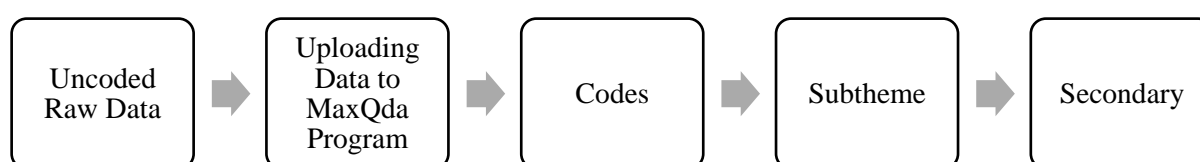

Figure 1. Data Analysis Coding System

First, the data of the online interview recorded in accordance with the application in Figure 1 was transferred to the computer environment. Afterwards, the raw data transferred to the computer environment were read with great care and the opinions of the students in the study group were coded. Secondly, the coded student opinions were gathered under common sub-themes. In the last stage, the sub-themes were combined under the themes based on the questions in the sub-problems of the research. In the direct quotations, the coding was stated as "S1, S2…" according to the priority of the interview with the students.

Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research, the concepts of validity and reliability are related to the concepts of credibility, confirmability, transferability and consistency. (Thorne, 1997). The researcher takes some precautions to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. In this study, some precautions were taken by the researchers to ensure validity and reliability.

In the research, depth-focused data collection method was preferred for the credibility. In order to collect depth-focused data, the researchers extended the time of interviews, archived the recordings of the interviews by obtaining the necessary permissions, and turned the interview records into written documents. It was tried to increase the credibility of the research by quoting directly from the interview. In addition, the consistency of the findings with the conceptual framework was checked.

The research process (details of working group characteristics, data collection and analysis) has been described in detail because the research can be transferable.

For the confirmability factor, the findings and results obtained from the research were read to three students who were randomly selected among the students in the study group. Afterwards, these students were asked whether the data obtained were consistent with the answers they gave to the questions in the interview form, and whether they reflected what they wanted to express, and their confirmations were obtained. In addition, the raw data of the research were also stored.

Content and face validity were provided for the consistency factor. In addition, throughout the process, the researchers carried out the stages of the research design, data collection and analysis, revealing the findings, reporting the results, and provided feedback to each other by constantly checking the stages. Apart from this process called peer assessment, for the consistency factor, the researchers conducted data analyzes simultaneously and tried to ensure the consistency of the analysis results by trying to agree on common codes and sub-themes. Content and face validity were provided for the consistency factor. Miles and Huberman's (1994) Reliability Level = Number of Agreements / Number of Agreements + Disagreements formula was used to determine the consistency coefficient. The reliability coefficient was determined as 330 / 330 + 6 = 0.98, since the number of agreed themes, sub-themes and codes was 330 and there were 6 codes that could not be agreed between the two researchers. The researchers met once again for the codes, on which they could not agree, returned to the raw data and repeated the analysis process together, and gave these codes their final form.

Findings

While finding the main idea of the subject of the texts you listen/watch or read, do you think there are differences in distance education courses compared to the courses in the classroom? Please explain the reasons.

Table 1. Students' Opinions on Distance Education in Activities for Finding the Topic and Main Idea

	f	Percentage
Face to face education	7	25,00
Distance Learning	6	21,43
Those who do not think there is a significant difference	15	53,57
TOTAL	28	100,00

When Table 1 is examined, the interviewed students state that learning environments do not have a significant effect on their performance in activities for determining the subject and main idea. It can be said that the distribution of students who think that distance education or face-to-face education affects learning performance is equal.

Students who think that distance education is more beneficial in determining the subject or main idea claim that the distance education environment makes them feel less peer pressure and thus they give their answers more easily. "I think I am more successful in distance education. In face-to-face training, my friends can laugh at my answer" (S 6).

Another reason for students who prefer distance education is that there are fewer distracting factors in the distance education environment compared to the classroom environment: "I think I am more successful in distance education. Because the sound coming from outside in the classroom environment, etc. factors affected more negatively" (S 13).

Students, who think that face-to-face education is more beneficial in determining the subject or main idea, mostly avoided giving reasons. Only one student gave a reason for his choice. The reason given is that distance education causes distraction in such activities: "I think I am more successful in face-to-face education. Because I get more distracted in distance education" (S 8).

Another remarkable data of Table 1 is that 54 percent of the students did not find a significant difference in performance in activities based on topic and main idea determination in distance education or face-to-face education courses. Accordingly, the fact that students do not choose an option is a positive indicator for the efficiency of the distance education courses.

Table 2. Code Distribution of Positive and Negative Aspects of Distance Education Compared to Face-to-Face Education in Questions Regarding Comprehension Skills in Activities

	f	Percentage
Positive Aspects of Distance Education Compared to Face-to-Face Education	18	75,00
Negative Aspects of Distance Education Compared to Face-to-Face Education	6	25,00
TOTAL	24	100,00

In answering the questions about listening/watching and reading texts, the students mentioned 7 different titles and 18 codes of distance education compared to face-to-face education. 5 negative situations are included in 6 codes. The positive/negative features of distance education compared to face-to-face education in questions about students' comprehension skills are shown in Table 3:

Table 3. Codes and Frequencies of Positive/Negative Aspects of Distance Education Compared to Face-to-Face Education in Activities Where Questions about Comprehension are Answered

Codes related to positive aspects	f	Percentage
More effective use of technology	5	27,78
Quieter Learning Environment	4	22,22
Time Saving Situations (Attendance Class Management etc.)	2	11,11
Making it Easier to Focus on the Lesson	2	11,11
Absence of Physical Problems (Preparation, Being Late, Carrying Bags)	2	11,11
Capable of appealing to more senses	1	5,56
Making Class Participation Easier and Systematic	1	5,56
Easy Access to Online Dictionaries such as TDK	1	5,56
TOTAL	18	100,00
Codes related to negative aspects	f	Percentage
lack of social contact	2	33,33
Ineffective use of body language	1	16,67
More easily distracted	1	16,67
More teacher support	1	16,67
Health problems (headache, backache, neck pain...)	1	16,67
TOTAL	6	100,00

Students answered questions about comprehension skills in distance education. They state that they can benefit more from technology in distance education, and learning environments are quieter than classroom environments. Also, they asserted that they are provided stimulus for learning during problem solving. In addition, although they are not directly related to question-answer activities, they stated that they do not have certain time-consuming processes such as classroom management and attendance, and not performing actions such as preparing for school, preparing and carrying materials, by associating them with this question. This is an indication that students are aware of the positive and negative outcomes of distance education and face-to-face education.

In the question-answer activities, the students expressed the negative features of distance education compared to face-to-face education with 5 different codes. Social interaction is at a higher level in face-to-face education. Due to the fact that distance education is a static process, the presence of head, neck, waist, eye disorders, and the fact that the effect of body language on learning is less in distance education are the findings that can be attributed not only to the question-answer activity but to the whole process.

The preference of the students in vocabulary-oriented activities was mainly in favor of distance education courses:

Table 4. Educational Environments Preferred by Students in Vocabulary Activities

	f	Percentage
Distance Education	25	78,13
I Don't Think There is a Significant Difference	6	18,75
Face to Face Education	1	3,13
TOTAL	32	100,00

Contrary to the fact that the preferences between distance and face-to-face education were equal in the previous questions, students preferred distance education predominantly in vocabulary-oriented activities. This situation shows that students make a judgment by taking into account every positive/negative situation presented by distance and face-to-face education environments in each of the in-class activities and they do not generalize. It is understood from the data in Table 4 that the target acquisitions for the vocabulary of distance education and the opportunities it offers for studies are more functional. The reasons why students prefer distance education are given in Table 5:

Table 5. Reasons for Students to Prefer Distance Education in Vocabulary Activities

	f	Percentage
More Functional Use of Electronic Dictionaries	14	56,00
The Unlimited Content of E-Resources According to Printed Materials	4	16,00
Difficulty Carrying Printed Dictionaries or Forgotten Dictionaries	4	16,00
Preventing Dictionary Diversity (Word, Idiom, Proverb, Dictation)	3	12,00
TOTAL	25	100,00

Vocabulary studies are a process that can be carried out with more diverse sources in terms of the wide range of vocabulary elements. In this respect, from the student's point of view, for a vocabulary study in face-to-face education, the student should have many materials such as words, idioms, proverbs, dictionaries and spelling book. It is a difficult situation for students to carry these materials around with them in every lesson and to spend effort to carry dictionaries along with other materials. In addition, the fact that there is the factor of "forgetting" due to age is another factor that will prevent every student from actively participating in these activities in the classroom. Students are

also less likely to access vocabulary elements in printed materials when compared to online dictionaries. In distance education, it is possible to reach the desired vocabulary element by means of many databases, especially the online dictionaries offered by TDK. This also guides how students can benefit from secure and official e-resources. The Turkish Curriculum (2019) has the following objectives regarding this issue:

T.4.3.35. Uses information resources effectively. (Information on how to use the contents of the printed and digital contents and the dictionary section to access the information is given.

T.5.3.29. Interrogate the reliability of information sources. (It is emphasized that sites with "edu" and "gov" extensions are mainly used in scientific studies.)

T.6.3.33. Uses information resources effectively.

T.6.3.34. Interrogate the reliability of information sources. a) The reliability of internet/written (magazine, book, brochure, newspaper, etc.) sources is questioned. b) It is emphasized that sites with "edu" and "gov" extensions are mainly used in scientific studies.

T.7.3.33. Interrogate the reliability of information sources. a) The reliability of internet/written (magazine, book, brochure, newspaper, etc.) sources is questioned.

T.8.3.31. Interrogate the reliability of information sources. a) Studies are carried out on the reliability of the information on the blog and personal web pages (MEB, 2019).

Therefore, the distance education environment also contributes to the acquisition of the above target objectives. Being aware of these opportunities offered by distance education, students preferred distance education in vocabulary activities.

The predominant preference of the students was face-to-face education in terms of which learning environment they learned more efficiently:

Table 6. Students' Learning Environment Preferences in Terms of Comprehension Efficiency

	f	Percentage
Distance education	13	54,17
I Don't Think There is a Significant Difference	7	29,17
Face to face education	4	16,67
TOTAL	24	100,00

While 54 percent of the students state that face-to-face education is more efficient in terms of comprehension skills, the rate of those who prefer distance education or think that there is no significant difference between the two is 46 percent.

Table 7. Reasons for Students to Prefer Face-to-face and Distance Education Environments in Terms of Efficiency in Comprehension Skills

Reasons for Preferring Face-to-Face Education	f	Percentage
Establishing a Healthier Communication with the Teacher	3	27,27
The Teacher's Active Use of Body Language	3	27,27
Having Social Interaction	3	27,27
Easier to Ask Questions	1	9,09
A More Disciplined Process	1	9,09
TOTAL	11	100,00
Reasons for Preferring Distance Education	f	Percentage
Having a Quieter Educational Environment	9	56,25
No Vision and Hearing (Teacher, Blackboard...) Problems	5	31,25
Easier to Take Instant Notes	1	6,25
Allocating Saved Time to Studying and Repetition	1	6,25
TOTAL	16	100,00

According to Table 7, the main factors in preferring face-to-face education in terms of comprehension skills are healthier communication and the effectiveness of body language. The main factor of these reasons is that both are stimulating to learning. Students interact more intensely with their peers and teachers due to being together in a physical environment. In a multi-stimulus educational environment, students become active subjects rather than being the object of theoretical teachings through visual, linguistic and auditory tools. This supports learning positively (Sever, 2011).

The reason why distance education is more efficient in comprehension skill is that most distance education offers a quieter learning environment. The students state that the noise that comes from inside and outside the classroom in face-to-face education negatively affects their comprehension processes. This situation also reveals that the social interaction of the students and the sounds that will emerge during this time can be interpreted differently by the students as positive or negative. While students who are more inclined towards social interaction do not perceive the sounds in the educational environment as a problem for learning, students who are more introverted and willing to learn individually; perceive voices coming from the inside and outside of classroom as an obstacle to understanding.

The second important reason put forward by students who prefer distance education is communication problems arising from the physical environment. For example, in a face-to-face education environment, there will be students who are closer to the blackboard and the teacher, as well as students sitting in the back rows who will have problems with vision and hearing. In distance education, each student's own screen and sound system prevents students from negatively affecting each other physically.

Other reasons of students who think that distance education is more beneficial in the understanding process are related to time savings and the conveniences offered by technology. For example, students state that, as an advantage of distance education, they can understand the target subject better by allocating time for repetition and practice immediately after a finished lesson. This situation is considered as an opportunity for students to reinforce the target topic after the lesson, since the time to be allocated for transportation and preparation in face-to-face education is not available in distance education.

Table 8. Educational Environment Preferences for Students' Speaking Skills

	f	Percentage
Distance Education	15	65,22
Face to Face Education	5	21,74
I Don't Think There is a Significant Difference	3	13,04
TOTAL	23	100,00

In terms of speaking skills, the students' predominant preference (.65) was to talk in a distance education environment. Students who think that speaking is more efficient and preferable in face-to-face education correspond to one-third of those who prefer distance education. Three students stated that there was no significant factor that would affect their individual performance between the two educational environments. The situations and frequencies that are effective in the preferences of the students are as in Table 9:

Table 9. Educational Environment Frequencies in which Students want to demonstrate their Speaking Skill

Face to face education	f	Percentage
Reflecting Body Language Effectively	2	50,00
Getting Feedback from the Body Language of the Audience	2	50,00
TOTAL	4	100,00
Distance education	f	Percentage
Less Stress and Excitement	14	100,00
TOTAL	14	100,00

Students who preferred distance education stated that they felt embarrassed, excited and stressed because they were afraid of the reactions of their peers during speaking activities. For this reason, they stated that they could speak more comfortably in distance education courses. On the other hand, students who prefer face-to-face education for speaking activities base their preferences on two reasons. The students stated that they have the opportunity to receive feedback from both their teachers and peers about their speaking in face-to-face education (S 3, 20, 25), and that they can also use their gestures and facial expressions more easily in speaking activities in face-to-face lessons (S 10, 13, 14). All three reasons put forward are important factors affecting the success of the speaking process. According to their cognitive and affective readiness levels, the students stated their preferences by considering which educational environment provided the opportunity they needed.

Students with high affective readiness especially intend to make eye contact with the audience, express themselves more effectively with their body language, and get feedback about their speech with the body language of the audience. Students with insufficient affective readiness try to cope with this pressure by not having a visual interaction with the audience, so they think that the distance education environment is more preferable for speaking.

Table 10. Educational Environment Frequencies in which Students want to demonstrate their Writing Skills

	f	Percentage
Distance Education	9	37,50
I Don't Think There is a Significant Difference	8	33,33
Face to face education	7	29,17
TOTAL	24	100,00

According to Table 10, there is an equivalence in the distribution of students who think that there is a significant difference between the educational environments for writing skills and those who do not. In this respect, there was no factor put forward by approximately 70% of the students regarding writing in distance education. The reasons and frequencies for students to choose face-to-face or distance education environment for their writing skills are given in Table 11:

Table 11. Frequencies of Educational Environment in which Students Want to Demonstrate their Writing Skill

Face to face education	f	Percentage
Social Interaction and Group Writing	4	66,67
Easier to Focus on Writing	2	33,33
TOTAL	6	100,00
Distance education	f	Percentage
Easier to Focus on Writing	5	50,00
No Peer Pressure	5	50,00
TOTAL	10	100,00

The main reason for students, who prefer face-to-face education environment in writing skills, as well as in speaking skills, is to interact with the group. They justified their choices by expressing that it is important to get support both through social interaction with their peers and with group writing activities by means of face-to-face training in the writing process. Another remarkable point in the table is that there are students who think that both face-to-face education and distance education provide a basis for focusing on writing. The reason for this is the individual differences of the students. Students who are more willing to work in groups and cooperation prefer face-to-face education to write story, composition etc. however, students who are more focused on individual studies think that distance education is more efficient in writing because the distance education environment is quieter and the interaction area with their peers is relatively low.

In general, students were asked to write down five advantageous aspects of both learning environments over the other. The advantages stated by the students are shown in Tables 12 and 13.

Table 12. Advantages of Distance Education Compared to Face-to-Face Education

	f	Percentage
Faster and Easier Access to Information	16	18,18
Absence of Preparing for School, Transportation and Climate-related Problems	12	13,64
Absence of some Problems (Carrying or Forgetting Educational Materials)	11	12,50
Saving Time	10	11,36
Easier to Focus	8	9,09
Having a Quieter Learning Environment	8	9,09
Higher Efficiency in Narrative Skills	6	6,82
Controlling Emotions (Anxiety, Fear, Excitement etc.)	4	4,55
Being More Efficient	4	4,55
Eating During Class	4	4,55
More Opportunity to Benefit from Technology in Learning	3	3,41
More Benefit From The Teacher' Knowledge and Experience	1	1,14
Allocating more time for the Family	1	1,14
TOTAL	88	100,00

According to Table 12, the most frequently mentioned aspect of distance education is access to information more quickly and easily. There are other positive aspects of the digital content offered. For example, there are no problems due to forgetting the materials. In addition, 13.84 percent of the students stated that they were aware of and expressed that they did not experience situations such as preparing to go to school, spending time and money on transportation, and being exposed to the negative effects of the climate. 12.5 percent of the students state that they can spare more time for learning in distance education and they see this as an advantage. Another prominent feature of distance education is that it has a quieter environment, therefore it is easier to focus on the lesson and it is thought that the lessons are more productive. Another factor of the mentioned efficiency is that students do not feel fear, excitement, etc. at a level that negatively affects their performance in distance education.

Table 13. Advantages of Face-to-face Education Compared to Distance Education

	f	Percentage
The Contribution of Social Interaction and Group Activities to Learning	16	28,57
Being More Efficient	11	19,64
Effective Use of Body Language	7	12,50
Easier to Focus	7	12,50
Being Physiologically Healthier	5	8,93
More Benefit From The Teacher' Knowledge and Experience	3	5,36
Lessons are not in the Late Hours	3	5,36
Higher Motivation	2	3,57
Easy Communication	2	3,57
TOTAL	56	100,00

When asked about the advantageous aspects of face-to-face education compared to distance education, students cited social interaction with a rate of 28.57 percent and stated that group activities also have an important share in learning. In this respect, when the views presented by the students are considered in general, it is possible to say that the biggest shortcomings of distance education are the inadequacy of social interaction, group work and body language.

Conclusion, Suggestion and Discussion

In this research, it is aimed to analyze students' thoughts about the efficiency of distance and face-to-face education environments in terms of four basic language skills. Thus, the functionality of both educational environments in terms of target objectives and activities in Turkish teaching was determined by those who experienced the process themselves. Based on the findings, it was concluded that distance education is more preferable for the students in terms of certain activities of the Turkish course, the technical opportunities it provides support the students more in achieving the target objectives, save time or relieve the burden.

Another issue is related to the fact that the sudden emergence of the epidemic process necessitates distance education despite the lack of sufficient equipment, and the technical problems experienced at the beginning make the efficiency of distance education debatable. Another question that the study searched for an answer is to reveal how much the functionality of distance education is compatible with the common perception of the public in terms of Turkish teaching processes and the thoughts of the students. However, in terms of physical conditions, face-to-face education (crowded, noisy, stuffy classrooms, etc.) has many negative effects on learning. For this reason, students were asked to reveal their thoughts about educational environments without considering the factors that negatively affect communication in both educational environments.

In this study, the strengths and weaknesses of distance education in the Turkish teaching process were tried to be determined based on the opinions of middle school students. In the interviews, questions were asked about the four basic language skills and the activities carried out to acquire them. In this respect, the study has two aspects in terms of past and future determinations and suggestions: Based on the activities so far in the distance education environment for the past, the strengths, weaknesses and improvable aspects of Turkish teaching in terms of skills have been revealed by comparing them with face-to-face education. Thus, determinations were made about the current situation of Turkish teaching in the distance education environment.

The fact that the Ministry of National Education plans to continue distance education, where there is a sudden and compulsory transition, after the epidemic reveals that a mixed (hybrid) education model will be adopted (CNN TÜRK, 2021). It is aimed to contribute to this mixed process by revealing the strengths and improvable aspects of distance education in terms of language skills

and learning activities during Turkish education, where distance education and face-to-face education are carried out together. This constitutes an important part of the study for the future of Turkish teaching in distance education. In this direction, in the light of the findings obtained in the research, the following conclusions were reached:

The preferability and efficiency of distance education in Turkish teaching is equivalent to face-to-face education for students.

In fact, many students stated that there was no significant difference between face-to-face and distance education environments, and therefore they did not make a choice. In the light of some positive and negative reasons for both learning environments, students' educational environment preferences show flexibility. While answering the questions about the texts in comprehension skill, the students expressed the positive features of distance education compared to face-to-face education with a frequency percentage of .75 under 8 different headings, while they mentioned the negative features at a rate of .25 and under 5 headings. These data, which are in favor of face-to-face education, have been in the direction of preferring distance education more clearly in the activities of comprehension skill on vocabulary. 78 percent of the students stated that distance education is more functional in vocabulary activities, 18.75 percent stated that there is no significant difference between the two education environments, and 3.13 percent stated that face-to-face education is more efficient than distance education. The main reason why distance education is so preferred in vocabulary studies is that digital resources are both easily accessible and more in number than printed resources. Pınar and Dönel Akgül (2020) reached similar research results regarding the discipline of science, and students stated that accessing information from multiple sources is an important benefit of distance education. According to another study that obtained data from teachers, distance education contributes such as not staying away from students' educational activities, supporting individual learning, independence from time and place, causing loss of motivation, creating inequality of opportunity, infrastructural problems, lack of feedback flow, inadequacy in technology literacy, It has negative features such as lack of socialization and being unsuitable for lessons involving practice (Kaplan & Gülden, 2021, p. 256).

Students have to bring word, idiom, proverb dictionaries and a spelling guide for vocabulary studies in face-to-face education. This creates a physical burden on students. Moreover, when even one of these tools is forgotten, students cannot actively participate in vocabulary studies. The probability of not being able to access the dictionary units they seek in these resources is higher in printed dictionaries than in digital content offered by distance education. In this respect, another reason why students prefer distance education is that these resources create a physical burden for them considering that these resources will be carried to school together with other materials, especially textbooks. On the other hand, it is much easier for students to find what they are looking

for in digital resources. The data of this study overlap with the data obtained in the studies of Nalyvaiko, Adzhva, and Sarhsian (2020), which aimed to reveal the strengths of distance education. Similarly, Bagapova, Kobilova and Yuldasheva's (2020) results in this study are consistent with the results that they have achieved regarding distance education, such as saving time and energy, and individual learning environment contributing to learning.

In terms of general efficiency in comprehension skills, the majority of students (.54) is in favor of face-to-face education. 29 percent of distance education; The rate of those who think that there is no certain difference between the two is around 17 percent. In the light of the data presented so far, the following judgment can be made: Although the students thought that distance education and face-to-face education affect learning equally in certain comprehension activities, and even they expressed the opinion that distance education is more functional in some activities, face-to-face education is predominantly preferred in terms of efficiency in comprehension skills. Students stated that face-to-face education is more productive than distance education for the main reasons such as better communication, easier observation of the teacher's body language, and more social interaction with the teacher and their peers. At the same time, students claimed that asking questions is easier in face-to-face education. These data obtained are consistent with the results of similar studies (Akyıldız, 2020, p. 330; Oliveira, Penedo, and Pereira, 2018, p. 148; Pınar and Akgül, 2020).

On the other hand, distance education has the following positive aspects compared to face-to-face education: The fact that it is a quieter learning environment is a factor that facilitates understanding, and situations such as not being able to see and hear the teacher and the blackboard in face-to-face education (unless there are technical problems) are not experienced in distance education. At the same time, it is less likely in distance education that the attention given to understanding the lesson is distracted by note-taking or that some points are missed during note-taking. Because students have the opportunity to record the course content in a short time by taking screenshots. On the other hand, according to what the students stated, the time that should be allocated for transportation and preparing for school contributes to understanding by using it for the repetition of the subject at the end of a course completed in distance education. Distance education offers more time to focus and study; It has also been found in similar studies that it offers opportunities to cope with negative emotions such as excitement, fear, and anxiety more easily (Karata and Tuncer, 2020, p. 26).

Based on these evaluations, it can be concluded that the distance education environment cannot be considered as an alternative to face-to-face education in terms of comprehension skills, but that distance education will further increase the efficiency in the comprehension processes with a complementary function to face-to-face education.

According to the data obtained in terms of speaking skills, it is possible to say in general that students who feel peer pressure more consider distance education as an opportunity. Students preferred distance education with a rate of 65 percent in speaking skills, while the rate of those who thought that speaking was more efficient in face-to-face education remained around 22 percent. There is only one reason why students prefer distance education: Individuals feel less stress and excitement compared to face-to-face education due to less physical interaction with their teachers and peers. Therefore, they perform their speeches more successfully. On the other hand, the reasons of students who think that face-to-face education is more efficient in speaking education are also extremely important. Students preferred face-to-face education in order to benefit from the effect of body language on communication during speaking.

When the educational environments are considered in terms of writing skills, the preference of the students was again in favor of distance education, although not as much as in speaking skills. Students think distance education as a more favorable environment for focusing on writing. Stages such as pre-writing thinking, activating information in long-term memory, and planning for writing are of great importance for writing. In this respect, students think of distance education as an environment where they can perform the mentioned writing steps more easily, as they interact less with their peers. The fact that their friends are not aware of how much time and what kind of writing they write also increases the writing performance of the students by ensuring that they do not feel peer pressure. The data obtained by Karata and Tuncer (2020) on language skills in distance education from English teacher candidates are similar to the results mentioned here regarding the ability to tell. In fact, among the four language skills, writing skill has been the skill that distance education can be applied in the most efficient way.

The most basic reason for students who prefer face-to-face education in the writing process is that they consider peer-teacher interaction as a supporting factor, unlike students who prefer distance education. At the same time, group writing activities are also preferable to face-to-face education for them.

Based on the points mentioned above, it can be said that distance education is preferred more than face-to-face education in terms of narration skills, but it can be said that these two educational environments are not equivalent to each other, but rather in coordination, they will increase the efficiency in Turkish teaching with their features that do not exist in each other. In the light of the data obtained from the researches of Bagapova, Kobilova and Yuldasheva (2020, p. 210), it can be confirmed that the two learning environments can similarly support each other, but not replace each other.

Based on the opinions expressed by the students, it can be said that distance education cannot be an alternative to face-to-face education mainly for the following reasons: Social interaction and

group activities are less; body language remains in a limited functionality. In similar studies (see Vail, 2001), results such as lack of social interaction in distance education or ineffective use of body language were obtained. On the other hand, students who remain stagnant for a long time in distance education experience headaches, backache and neck pain. Therefore, physiological problems constitute another negative aspect of distance education expressed by students. Similarly, there are some physiological problems caused by face-to-face education. Students may be exposed to extreme heat or cold depending on climatic conditions, and they also experience other physiological problems due to the load created by educational materials.

In general, it can be said that the continuation of Turkish lessons together in distance and face-to-face education environments will support the learning-teaching processes from different perspectives. "The preferences between the two teaching environments vary according to the needs of the students, the nature of the subject, and the chosen teaching methods" (Bates, 2005, p. 137). Therefore, it is necessary to benefit from both teaching environments in Turkish teaching according to the methods and techniques to be preferred depending on the needs of the students, the nature of the subject and the structure of the target objectives, based on the data revealed by these and similar studies.

Although many studies dealing with the COVID-19 process for similar purposes mention the difficulty of measurement-evaluation and getting feedback from the students, it can be claimed with a few suggestions that the level of the mentioned difficulties may be as much as in face-to-face education, based on the findings obtained in this study. In the findings of the study, it was stated that distance education is mostly more efficient especially in the speaking skills of the students. It is stated in the Turkish Language Curriculum that multi-focused assessment is essential and that assessment-evaluation practices will be carried out with the active participation of teachers and students (MEB, 2019, p. 6). In this respect, considering the opportunities provided by distance education, a writing assignment requested from the student can be easily delivered to the teacher via e-mail or via the EBA platform. It will be much easier for this assignment to be peer-reviewed by screen sharing in the distance education environment, compared to face-to-face education. In face-to-face education, both budget and time should be allocated for printing and distribution for each student to review an assignment or to provide students with an assessment-evaluation tool.

At the same time, if a portfolio is created, the preservation of printed products will be very difficult compared to digital content. In distance education, on the other hand, the digital writings and handwritten photographs taken by the teacher from the students are classified for each student without worrying about space. It is possible to apply measurement-evaluation tools on the digital platform, to apply on the EBA platform, to prevent the cost of paper and printing, as well as to give feedback to the student instantly and by the system. In addition, web 2.0 tools can be used in distance education.

In face-to-face education, feedback will be given separately through a printed measurement-evaluation tool. This will result in a serious waste of time.

At this point, the main problem is not related to distance education itself, but to teachers and students not being able to reach the guidance services they need in terms of how to use the system more functionally. In a study, it was concluded that the priorities of Turkish teachers were always the textbook and they adhered to it. According to the research, teachers need to turn to different sources when they think that the texts are not suitable for the level of the students or that the activities are insufficient (Kara Özkan, 2021). Therefore, the common habits of teachers are also a factor for the positive or negative perception of distance education. Both making the content richer and providing training to teachers and students so that they can use the distance education environment more effectively will eliminate many criticisms of distance education (Aktan-Acar, Erbaş and Eryaman, 2021; Fidalgo, Thormann, Kulyk, and Lencastre, 2020, 15; Hebebci, Bertiz, and Alan, 2020; Özköse, Arı, and Çakır, 2013; Chakanyuka, Chiome, and Chabaya, 2008). Considering that children's readiness and learning levels are at a high level in terms of digital competence (see Altunbay and Bıçak, 2018), it can be said that students can perform tasks such as applying and sharing their homework and exams over the digital environment without much difficulty.

It is thought that it will be beneficial to continue distance education in vocabulary studies and expression skills. In particular, one aspect of vocabulary studies will be carried out with distance education, and effective use of digital data resources and students' learning of digital research resources will be a step that supports the philosophy of the current curriculum. In addition to this, teaching the narration skills with distance education to a certain extent will create an opportunity for students who prefer to remain passive in these activities by experiencing emotions such as excitement, anxiety and fear. This situation can be recommended especially for 5-6 grade students who are more likely to be affected by the mentioned negative emotions.

The distance education process, which started as a necessity, also carries the potential that many opportunities can arise from a crisis. Distance education, which was mainly used at the university level before the epidemic and which was tried to become widespread, started to be used in all education levels as mentioned. For this reason, it is very important to make distance education as functional as possible, which is thought to be used to a certain extent in the future. The fact that it is not completely clear when the abnormal conditions due to the epidemic will disappear, necessitates making distance education compatible with the principle of being suitable for children as much as possible. For this reason, it is necessary to benefit more from the identified strengths of distance education for the four basic skills and activities of Turkish, and to make the developable aspects more appealing to the target objectives. A distance education environment can be organized with arrangements that will minimize the inadequacy of group work, social interaction and body language,

which is one of the most criticized points of distance education. Turkish course book activities can be arranged in accordance with distance education. For example, activities based on group work can be created directly in speaking activities. By making it compulsory for teachers to use cameras, they can be enabled to use their gestures and facial expressions. According to the results of the research, one of the points that should be noted is how well teachers teach in distance and face-to-face learning processes. For example, the teaching attitude and classroom management to be adopted in these two learning environments are based on very different sensitivities. Therefore, in many studies criticizing the efficiency of distance education, it should be taken into account that the problem may arise from the lack of knowledge and skills required by distance education, and this should be investigated as a separate study. Because distance education; It includes reading lists, assignments, student activities and feedback mechanism, many visual and written materials, online discussion forums, websites and web-based online resources for the relevant course, computer-based assessment-evaluation processes, audio and video clips, animations/simulations and it is a very broad concept that includes other similar media elements (Bates, 2005, p. 138). Therefore, it would not be a correct criticism to come to a conclusion that distance education is inefficient without meeting the requirements of all these and without allowing the teachers to access sufficient equipment about all these elements.

As summarized at the beginning of the study, "distance education" is a concept that has a long history and is in constant change with the development of technological opportunities. Depending on these changes in distance education, which has made its last and radical change in our age, individuals in the learning and teaching process should review their readiness levels according to these changes and have the necessary knowledge and skills. In this respect, while discussing the efficiency of distance education in Turkish lessons, it is necessary to reveal how teachers adapt to this educational environment, how much they can dominate it, how much they can prepare teaching methods-techniques and activities according to the nature of distance education.

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