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EFL Instructors' Satisfaction with Teaching English Online at Tertiary Level

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The aim of this study is to examine the satisfaction level of instructors teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) online at the tertiary level in Türkiye. The mixed-method research design was used to understand the nature of the existing state. In the quantitative part of the study, a total of 106 EFL instructors were included while there were 7 EFL instructors in the qualitative part of the study. The data were obtained through the "Online Instructor Satisfaction Measure (OISM)", and an interview form consisting of 8 open-ended questions. Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis of the quantitative data while content analysis was employed for the analysis of qualitative data. The overall satisfaction level of EFL instructors with online teaching was found to be at moderate level. The findings revealed that EFL instructors identified various personal and system-related factors that facilitated their interaction with students in the online learning environment. On the other hand, they stated that student-to-student interaction was limited in online teaching, which poses a challenge for instructors. Additionally, assessment was one of the challenges of online teaching as well as internet loss, lack of interaction. They also stated that online teaching provided flexibility and wide range of resources as well as saving time. This study highlighted the importance of evaluating and enhancing online teaching practices to ensure instructors' satisfaction.

Introduction

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, higher education institutions (HEIs) had to close their physical facilities, resulting in an accelerated shift towards digitalization and the conversion of traditional teaching to online learning (Mosquera, Albuquerque, & Picoto, 2022). As many other countries, Türkiye has implemented various measures to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education system. The Ministry of Education (MoNE) and The Council of Higher Education (CoHE) have suspended formal education to prevent the spread

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of the virus. This has resulted in the closure of schools and universities, and the implementation of online learning as an alternative (Ayçiçek & Karafil, 2021).

In response to this unprecedented shift, the field of language education, particularly English language education, embraced online teaching. Despite technology's gradual integration into language education, many teachers and learners, unprepared for this abrupt transition, faced challenges, including inadequate local infrastructure and resources, such as limited internet availability. Moreover, there were concerns that the sudden and widespread increase in online learning may have worsened the effects of unequal access to infrastructure and resources (Tao & Gao, 2022).

Research has established that the psychological state of teachers significantly impacts the experience and feelings of learners in the classroom. However, despite the increasing use of computer-assisted language teaching and learning, the emotional changes of teachers transitioning to online teaching, especially during crises, are understudied (Yang & Wang, 2022). Most of the current research on online education has focused on its effects on students, such as their learning processes or satisfaction with this form of education. On the other hand, there are limited studies (Pham & Van Nghiem, 2022; Wu et al., 2022; Li & Yu, 2022; Du et al. 2023; Mosquera, Albuquerque, & Picoto, 2022) on the satisfaction of faculty members with online learning, despite their significance in the success of teaching and learning.

In the context of Türkiye, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the satisfaction of EFL instructors with teaching English online at the tertiary level. Since instructors are the backbone of education and their satisfaction is a multifaceted concept, it is important to know why EFL teachers may accept or reject online teaching and to measure their satisfaction with it. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the satisfaction level of EFL instructors in Türkiye with online English teaching at the tertiary level. Additionally, the research seeks to explore the perceived affordances and constraints of online English education.

Literature Review

The global emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has presented significant challenges across various sectors, affecting the economy, health, and education (Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2020). This crisis, along with the ongoing digital revolution, has accelerated the growth of online education. Responding to the pandemic, approximately 1.5 billion students worldwide enrolled in online courses, highlighting the increasing prevalence of this mode of learning (Garcia, 2022). As a result, online education has been implemented across a broad spectrum, ranging from preschool education to higher education (Mishra, Gupta, & Shree, 2020).

Undoubtedly, online education offers numerous advantages, including convenience, enhanced interaction, and effective learning (Dinh & Nguyen, 2022). Various research studies (Yang, Zhu, & MacLeod, 2018; Heinrich et al., 2019) strongly support the idea that online teaching significantly contributes to expanding educational opportunities and promoting equity in education. Empirical research by Mandasari (2020), Supriyatno, Susilawati and Hassan (2020), and Gopal, Singh and Aggarwal (2021) consistently confirm that both online teaching and hybrid teaching (a combination of online and offline methods) positively impact students' performance, motivation, and learning abilities when compared to traditional teaching methods. For some students, the multimedia experience can be motivating, and self-assessment tools have the potential to benefit both students and instructors (Mupinga, 2005). Technology can also enhance engagement and facilitate collaboration between students and teachers (Aguilera-

Hermida, 2020). Moreover, institutions can save costs on physical infrastructure by enhancing digital skills (Van Wart et al., 2020).

However, the widespread impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many colleges and universities worldwide to close campuses and suspend traditional teaching methods (Ye, Lee, & He, 2022). In response, countries with advanced internet infrastructure have shifted to online teaching and swiftly implemented online learning systems to reintegrate students into educational settings, proving to be an effective strategy in overcoming the limitations of face-to-face education during the pandemic (Due et al., 2023). Institutions, administrators, educators, students, and parents unexpectedly found themselves immersed in the process of online education. This transition from face-to-face teaching to more indirect instructional approaches has led to a complex and restrictive learning process (Rasmitadila et al., 2020). Teachers, grappling with these challenges, have faced issues like inadequate technical support, adapting to online teaching, and balancing personal and professional life (Teng & Wu, 2021). Consequently, the shift to remote learning due to COVID-19 has brought about numerous challenges for both teachers and students.

As many other educational institutions, educators in universities worldwide have had to quickly shift from traditional face-to-face instruction to online teaching to ensure the uninterrupted continuity of higher education, all within a very limited timeframe (Wang et al., 2021). This sudden shift has markedly impacted the perspectives and convictions of university educators, giving rise to feelings of uncertainty and perceived difficulties associated with online teaching (Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2020). Moreover, this process required faculties to adopt new teaching strategies, pedagogies, and tools to deliver high-level online education. Rapanta et al. (2020) stated that with the urgent move to online classes, the stress and the workload experienced by university staff have increased, and teachers struggle much while balancing teaching, researching and service obligations. In addition, instructors' responsibilities have increased since the institutions demand more from them in this process. From this perspective, online instructors may feel constrained by technology, leading to a perception that their teaching approach becomes more mechanized rather than fostering creativity. Despite this, instructors play a pivotal role in achieving university goals and outcomes, exerting a significant influence on the success of academic programs (Bolliger, Inan, & Wasilik, 2014; Lim, 2022). This effect has been particularly pronounced in the domain of second-language teaching and learning, where the establishment of a supportive and interactive learning environment holds paramount importance (Al-Samiri, 2021). The perceptions and beliefs of EFL instructors regarding online environments not only play a crucial role in shaping their instructional methods and classroom but are also intimately linked with student academic achievement (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008). Therefore, it is of great significance to understand and assess university EFL instructors' satisfaction in promoting successful and effective online education programs.

Satisfaction with online education is a multidimensional concept that encompasses factors such as workload, technological support, feedback, and pedagogical skills (Öztürk, Karamete, & Çetin, 2020). Teachers tend to feel more satisfied when they are convinced that students can attain better learning outcomes, which is the foundation of satisfaction in online learning (Allen & Seaman, 2015). Various factors contribute to teacher satisfaction in online learning, such as their perception of the effectiveness of online teaching, institutional support, online interaction, and various academic and non-academic concerns. Teacher satisfaction in online teaching is closely linked to student performance and engagement. Studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between faculty satisfaction and student outcomes (Kuo et al., 2014).



When teachers perceive that their online teaching is superior to traditional methods, they are more motivated (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2021).

In conclusion, instructor satisfaction is a crucial factor in determining the success of online teaching and learning. The satisfaction of instructors not only affects their motivation and engagement in online teaching but also impacts students' learning outcomes and engagement. In contrast, if teachers are dissatisfied with online teaching, they may struggle to create engaging content, which could lead to lower student engagement and academic performance. Therefore, ensuring instructor satisfaction is a crucial factor in promoting successful and effective online learning. Additionally, understanding the components of instructor satisfaction and addressing their concerns and needs is essential to improve the quality of online education. Only by addressing these issues and promoting instructor satisfaction can we ensure the long-term success and sustainability of online education.

The Present Study

The present study examining the EFL instructors' satisfaction with teaching English online at the tertiary level in Türkiye is significant in several ways. Firstly, it sheds light on the current state of online English language teaching at the tertiary level in Türkiye and identifies the factors that affect instructors' satisfaction with online teaching. This information can be useful for institutions and policymakers in providing targeted support and resources to enhance the quality of online English language teaching quality. Secondly, the study provides insight into the challenges faced by instructors in adapting to online teaching and highlights areas that require further support and development, such as technology training and pedagogical skills. This information can help institutions and policymakers in providing targeted support and resources to enhance the quality of online English language teaching. Within this context, the problem statement of the study was defined as “*To what extent are EFL instructors satisfied with online instruction of English?*”. Accordingly, the following sub-problems were addressed:

- (1) What is the level of Turkish EFL instructors' satisfaction with teaching English online at the tertiary level?
- (2) How satisfied are Turkish EFL instructors with online teaching in terms of a) Instructor-to-Student Interaction, b) Student-to-Student Interaction, c) Institutional Support, d) Course Design/Development/Teaching?
- (3) What are the perceived affordances and constraints of teaching English online at the tertiary level?

Method

Research Model

A mixed-method approach was used to provide a deeper insight into EFL instructors' satisfaction with teaching English online than might have been obtained from quantitative responses alone. Fraenkel et al. (2012) state that mixed-method research involves the use of both quantitative-favouring numerical data - and qualitative - preferring in-depth information-methods in a single study. Moreover, the study employs a survey research design utilizing a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and open-ended questions. Griffiee (2003) defines a survey design as using various data collection procedure to let the teacher-researcher-educator-evaluator (TREE) to investigate a construct by asking either fact (descriptive) or opinion (explanatory) questions from a sample of a population for the purpose of generalizing.

Regarding Griffée's definition, the researcher aims to describe EFL instructors' satisfaction with teaching English online as well as to explain the perceived affordances and constraints of teaching English online.

Study Group

In the quantitative part of the study, a total of 106 EFL instructors were included. EFL instructors teaching online were reached through snowball sampling for the quantitative part. Dörnyei (2007, p. 8) defines snowball sampling as a chain reaction whereby a few people meeting the criteria of a particular study are identified and asked to identify other appropriate participants for the population. Accordingly, participants meeting the criteria of the current study were chosen at the researcher's convenience and were asked to contact further participants. The instructors were reached via email. The minority (25.5%) of the respondents stated that they had taught a course online before whereas the majority (74.5%) did not have an experience of teaching online. Moreover, minority of the participants (18%) had a training on online education before the pandemic while majority (82%) did not. The percentage of instructors who received training on online education during the pandemic was 64%. Out of 106 EFL instructors, 64.2% (n=68) were female and 32.1% (n=34) were male. However, 4 participants did not prefer to say their gender. In terms of age variable, majority of the participants (51.9%) were in the age range of 31-40. In terms of years of work experience in prep school variable, 38.7% (n=41) had 6-10 years of work experience, 20.8% (n=22) had 11-15 years of work experience, 2.8% (n=3) had 16-20 years of work experience, and 10.4% (n=11) had 21 years and above work experience. The majority of the EFL instructors (49.1%) had master's degree.

In the qualitative part of the study, there were 7 EFL instructors determined by convenience sampling method. Fraenkel et al. (2012) define a convenience sample as a group of individuals who are available for the study. Based on this, in the study 7 EFL instructors who wanted to take part in the study were included to obtain the qualitative data. For this, participants' consent regarding their willingness to be interviewed was asked at the end of the online survey, and the interview form consisting of open-ended questions were sent to the participants via e-mail. Of them, 3 were male and 4 were female. In terms of years of work experience, one participant had 25 years of work experience, one had 17 years of work experience, and 5 of them had work experience in the range of 11-15 years. Six of the participants were studying at state universities while one of them was working in a private university.

Data Collection Tools

Online instructor satisfaction measure

The quantitative data were obtained through a web-based survey with two major sections. The first section aimed at gathering demographic information to describe the participants and was developed by the researchers. The second section of the survey was the "Online Instructor Satisfaction Measure (OISM)" developed by Bolliger et al. (2014). The researchers hypothesized that five factors (instructor-to-student interaction, affordances, institutional support, student-to-student interaction, and course design/development/teaching) influenced instructors' satisfaction with online teaching. Based on this, they developed OISM in a five-point Likert type (5 = Strongly agree to 1 = Strongly disagree) consisting of 27 items and 5 sub-dimensions [1-Instructor-to-Student Interaction (ISI); 2-Affordances (A); 3-Institutional Support (IS); 4- Student-to-Student Interaction (SSI); 5-Course Design/Development/Teaching



(CDT)]. In the original study, the internal consistency reliability of the scale was found as .82, .80., .75., .77 and .66 for the sub-dimensions of the scale, respectively. Moreover, the reliability of the whole scale was found as .87. In the current study, the internal consistency reliability of the scale was found as .81, .80, .89, .76, .59 for the sub-dimensions of the scale, respectively. Moreover, the reliability of the whole scale was found as .91. Since the scale was developed after conducting validity and reliability studies and could be used as a valid and reliable data collection tool, it was preferred in this study. Moreover, as different factors affecting online satisfaction was included in the scale, it was used to explore the satisfaction level of EFL instructors with teaching English online.

Interview form

Qualitative data were obtained through an interview form consisting of 8 open-ended questions. The questions were prepared by the researcher in accordance with the purpose of the study. While preparing the questions to be included in the interview form, factors such as the questions being clear and understandable, each question pointing to a single dimension, not directing the participants, and enabling the participants to explain their opinions were taken into consideration (Patton, 2002). The first draft form was prepared by the researchers and sent to two field experts, who are university academicians experienced in qualitative studies and English language teaching. Depending on their feedback related to content and design, some questions were excluded, and some of them were modified and rephrased. After this process, the final form of the interview with a total of 8 questions was prepared. According to Creswell (2014), interviews can be carried in a face-to-face and one-on-one way, by telephone, in focus groups, or through the Internet (emails, for example). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were sent and received via email.

Data Collection Process and Analysis

The scale was prepared as Google Form and sent to the participants in the Fall term of the 2020-2021 Academic Year. Prior to the survey, the participants were informed about the objectives of the study, and it was clearly stated that participation in the study was voluntary, and they were free to withdraw from the study whenever they wanted to. After the informed consent was obtained through choosing the option to take part in the study, the participants continued with the form. At the end of the scale form, the participants were asked whether they would agree to take part in the qualitative part of the study. Before the analysis of the quantitative data, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for both the subscales and the overall scale to determine the instrument's reliability. In the analysis of the quantitative data, firstly the negative items in the scale were reversed. Secondly, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations were computed to show the EFL instructors' overall responses to the online instructor satisfaction measure items.

The interviews were conducted after the analysis of the quantitative data. The list of the participants who volunteered to be interviewed was drawn from Google Form, and 10 participants were determined. Due to the pandemic, interview questions were sent to the participants via email and 7 of them replied. However, 3 of them did not reply. Upon receiving the emails, the responses were filed together, and the names of the participants were coded as T1-T7 to provide anonymity. The study utilized content analysis as a method to analyse the data gathered from the interviews. Content analysis is a systematic technique that involves creating themes, categories, and codes to reflect the main ideas of a text (Büyükoztürk et al., 2020). The data collected from the interviews were transcribed into a Microsoft Word document and analysed using a qualitative data analysis program. Initially, the data in the document was

labelled with descriptive codes. Then, the codes were examined to identify common aspects, which were then classified into categories. Subsequently, the data was reviewed again to ensure that the codes were properly assigned to their corresponding categories and themes, and corrections were made as needed. In the findings section, the interview data were reported using the frequency of occurrence (f) and interviewer codes.

Findings

In this section, the findings of the study are presented in accordance with the research questions of the study.

EFL Instructors' Satisfaction Level with Teaching English Online

The first research question sought to find out the overall satisfaction levels of EFL instructors with online teaching. The obtained findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. EFL Instructors' satisfaction level

Variable	\bar{x}	Median	Mode	SD
ISI	3.17	3.16	3.00	.49
A	3.45	3.50	3.40	.83
IS	3.63	3.75	4.00	.93
SSI	3.14	3.00	3.00	.75
CDT	3.64	3.70	4.00	.62
Overall Satisfaction	3.41	3.38	3.11	.54

ISI: Instructor-to-Student Interaction; A: Affordances; IS: Institutional Support; SSI: Student-to-Student Interaction; CDT: Course Design/Development/Teaching

As seen in Table 1, EFL instructors' satisfaction level with course design/development/teaching and institutional support was relatively higher (\bar{x} =3.64) than the other sub-dimensions. Apparently, they were the least satisfied with student-to-student interaction and almost neutral with the affordances. Additionally, the overall satisfaction level of EFL instructors with online teaching was found to be at moderate level (\bar{x} =3.41).

EFL Instructors' Opinions on Their Satisfaction with Teaching Online

To get better understanding about the EFL instructors' satisfaction with teaching online, they were asked open-ended questions. Firstly, EFL instructors were asked about whether they were satisfied with online teaching in terms of instructor-to-student interaction. For this, their opinions on interacting with their students using online tools such as learning management systems, email, chats were taken, and the findings are presented in Figure 1.

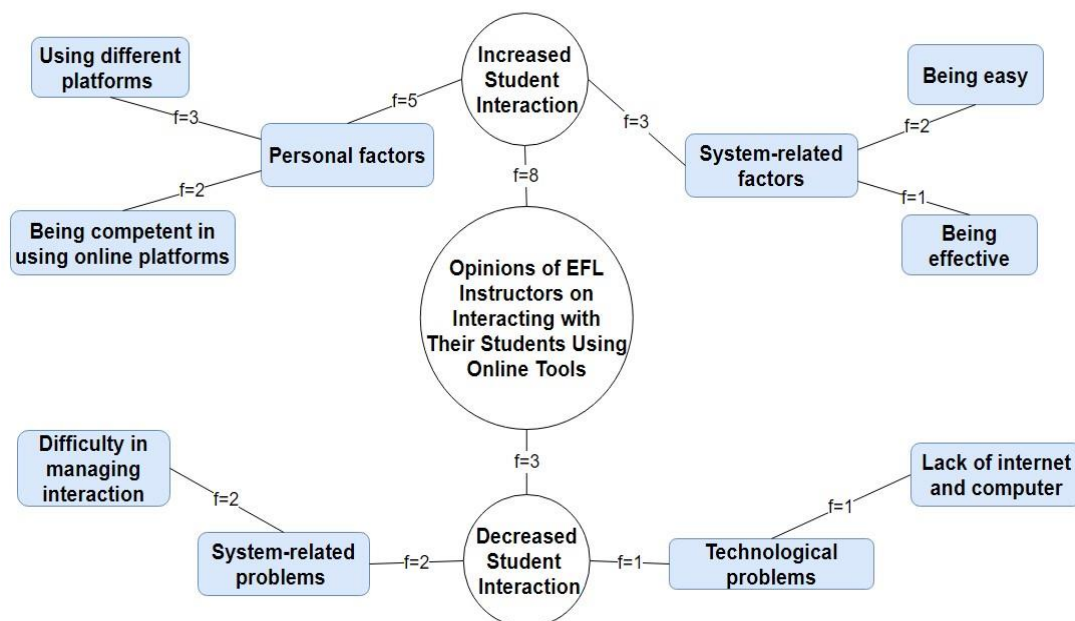


Figure 1. Opinions of EFL instructors on interacting with their students using online tools

EFL instructors stated that personal factors such as using different platforms ($f=3$) and being competent in using online platforms ($f=2$) affected their interaction with their students positively. For example, T1 stated that *“As I like using various types of communication online and try to adapt to the new applications, I don’t feel unable to use them. And learning management systems are making our work little bit easier.”* Similarly, T3 expressed her ideas as: *“We use Google Classroom and telegram chatting. They can send me their assignments and ask questions whenever they like. I also use ed Puzzle to give them extra video assignments and Edu candy (a Microsoft app) to provide extra vocabulary or grammar exercises. With all these things, I believe I can support them more besides online lessons.”*, which indicates the significance of different platforms to increase the interaction between students and teachers. T6 also stated his opinions as follows: *“Personally, I use social media and IT technologies actively, so interaction/communication hasn’t been a major problem for me and my class.”* T7 also highlighted being component in using different platforms as: *“I think I can use these kinds of resources efficiently and make them available to students.”* In conclusion, the insights shared by EFL instructors highlight the positive impact of personal factors, such as their willingness to explore various online platforms, on their interactions with students. Therefore, the adaptability and proficiency of instructors in utilizing different platforms emerge as key factors influencing successful online engagement. This information underscores the importance of instructors’ comfort and proficiency in utilizing diverse online resources for effective engagement and communication in the EFL teaching context.

On the other hand, EFL instructors stated that they were dissatisfied with the interaction with their students due to difficulty in managing interaction ($f=3$) and lack of internet and computer ($f=1$). On this issue, T6 stated that *“It is hard to reach and feel them and interact with them.”* while T2 indicated that *“It is difficult to have an effective interaction with students as in face-to-face classes. In online classes, it becomes difficult to manage the interaction between students. When I ask questions, sometimes just one or two students reply. Even if I wait for the others, sometimes there is no reply. And I feel that it is unfair to wait for all the students.”* Similarly, T7 expressed her opinions as follows: *“However, when some students do not have internet or computers at home, it does not matter if the teachers use it well. In this sense, I do*

not think we can achieve equality.”

In summary, EFL instructors highlighted the positive impact of personal factors, such as adapting to various online platforms, and system-related factors, like the ease and effectiveness of systems, on their ability to interact with students. However, challenges emerged, including difficulty in managing interaction and disparities caused by students lacking internet or computers.

EFL instructors were also asked about their opinions on student-student interaction in online teaching. The findings are given in Figure 2.

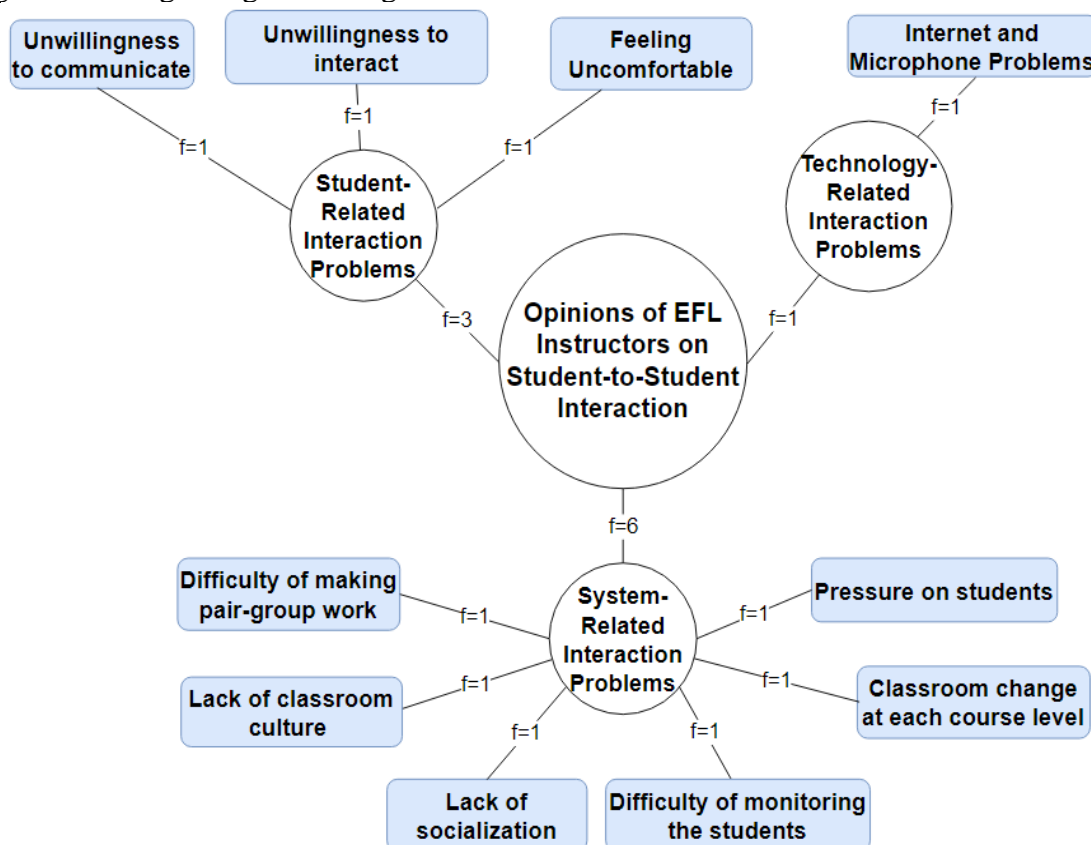


Figure 2. Opinions of EFL instructors on student-to-student interaction

All the instructors (f=7) stated that student-to-student interaction was limited, and it was one of the problems of online teaching. The instructors mentioned student-related, system related, and technology related factors leading to decreased student-student interaction. For example, T2 indicated that; “*The interaction is very low between the students in online classes. It is difficult to make pair works or group works.*” This statement suggests that there is a significant challenge with fostering interaction among students in online classes. The low interaction implies that students find it difficult to engage in collaborative activities such as pair work or group work. The instructors also mentioned that students were unwilling to interact during online classes, which leads to decreased interaction. On this issue, T6 stated that “*It is one of the most problematic issues with the general ongoing of online teaching. Students avoid interacting with each other.*” Similarly, T7 expressed his ideas as “*Although we do our best as teachers, they refuse to communicate with each other except for a few students.*” Besides, the instructors mentioned the technology related interaction problems such as internet and microphone problems. T2 stated that; “*Some students may have access problems and sometimes*

they say that their microphone is not working.”

In conclusion, all seven instructors acknowledged the limited student-to-student interaction as a significant challenge in online teaching. They identified student-related, system-related, and technology-related factors contributing to this issue. The instructors expressed concerns about the difficulty of facilitating pair or group work in online classes, with students actively avoiding interaction. Additionally, the perception of being closely monitored during online lessons created pressure for students, hindering free communication. Technical issues, such as access problems and malfunctioning microphones, were also cited as barriers to effective student-to-student interaction.

EFL instructors were asked whether they were offered assistance (technological support, funding, workload balance, etc.) about conducting online English courses by their institution. All of them (f=7) indicated that their institutions provided assistance. However, their opinions on their satisfaction level on the assistance offered by their institutions were different. The obtained findings are presented in Figure 3.

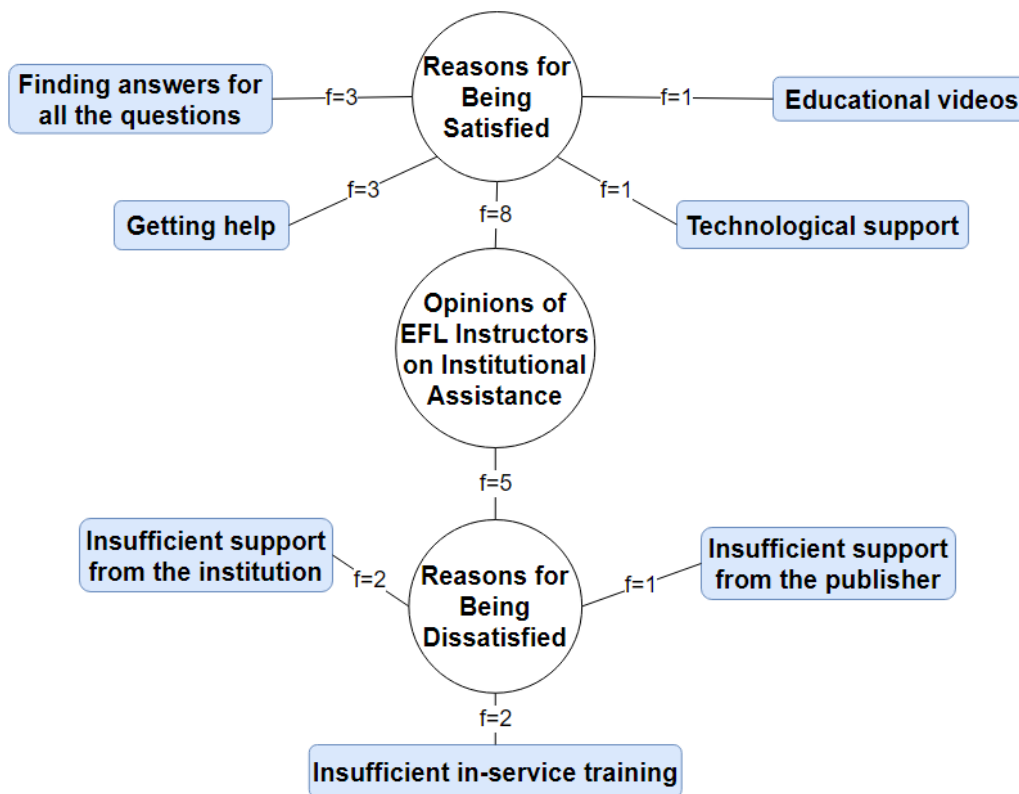


Figure 3. Opinions of EFL instructors on institutional assistance

The instructors indicated that since they could find answers to their questions (f=3), they got help (f=3), educational videos were effective (f=1) and they got technological support (f=1), they were satisfied with the assistance they got from their institutions. For example, T1 said that “*My questions were answered whenever I had problems. They were quick and accurate.*” In addition, T2 emphasized that “*In the institution, videos were prepared for all the academic staff on how to install and use Microsoft teams.*” In a similar vein, T5 mentioned her ideas as: “*I was given the necessary platforms and tools which I needed, and this was enough for me. (Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Digital Online book, Camtasia)*” The overall

satisfaction of instructors with the assistance from their institutions seems to stem from a combination of responsive support systems, effective educational resources like videos and reliable technological support. This positive feedback is indicative of the institutions' success in meeting the needs of their instructors, fostering a supportive environment that enables effective teaching, which contributes significantly to instructor satisfaction.

On the other hand, four EFL instructors needed to be more satisfied with the assistance they got. Some of their opinions on this issue are as follows: T3: "I cannot say yes or no. They informed us about some technical details and told us that we do not have to teach four class hours as it is determined in the weekly schedule. For instance, 1 full hour would be enough for four class hours. Yet I spend at least 120 mins. to teach most of the time. Nothing else I got from my institution." T4: "As for online teaching education we didn't receive enough assistance." T6: "I'm satisfied with my institutional support however I'm disappointed with the service provided by publisher and distributor."

In summary, all seven EFL instructors reported receiving assistance from their institutions for conducting online English courses, including technological support, funding, and workload balance. Dissatisfaction stemmed from issues such as insufficient information on technical details, limited support for online teaching education, and disappointment with the service provided by publishers and distributors.

The opinions of EFL instructors on the affordances of teaching online are presented in Figure 4.

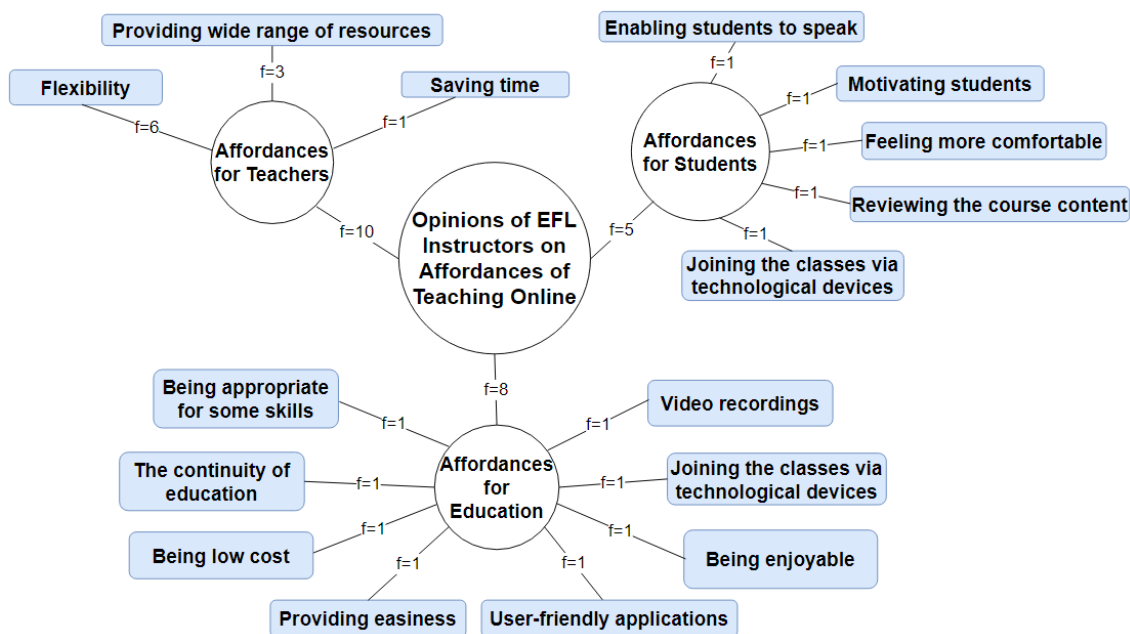


Figure 4. Opinions of EFL instructors on affordances of teaching online

EFL instructors stated that online teaching provided flexibility (f=6), wide range of resources (f=3) and was time saving (f=1). They also indicated the affordances for students such as enabling students to speak (f=1), motivating students (f=1) as well as affordances in terms of education as being appropriate for some skill (f=1) and being low cost (f=1). For example, T2 mentioned that "Online classes provide a great flexibility for me. This flexibility provides autonomy for me, and I feel better as I do not feel any pressure on me." T3 stated that "You

can use technology, interactive applications, lots of online quizzes and games quickly.” T6 also indicated that “Actually, materials and LMS systems and their instant feedback make it easier for students to engage in the topic/course. User interface is easy for them to navigate as they are experienced thanks to hundreds of apps they use on daily basis.” In summary, EFL instructors highlighted several advantages of online teaching, including flexibility, a wide range of resources, and time-saving benefits. They also noted positive affordances for students, such as the opportunity to speak, increased motivation, and suitability for certain skills. Additionally, instructors acknowledged the low cost and ease of engagement with educational materials through online platforms.

The opinions of EFL instructors on the constraints of teaching online are presented in Figure 5.

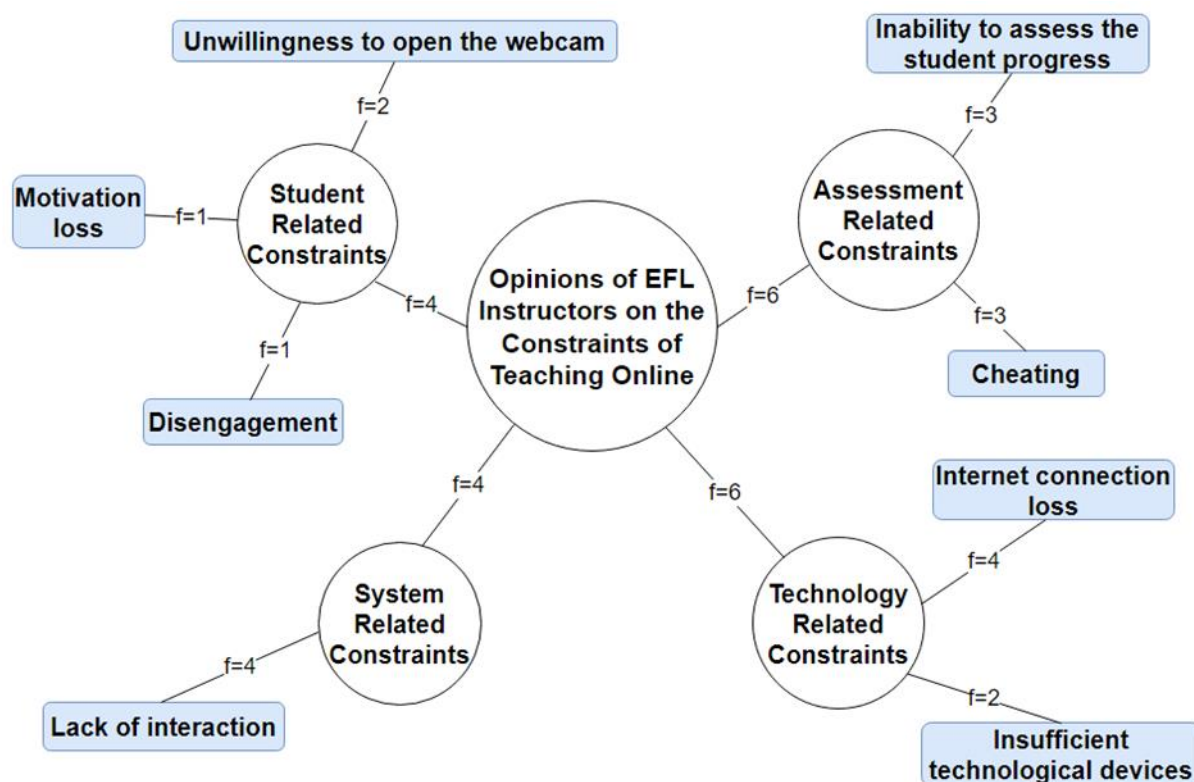


Figure 5. Opinions of EFL instructors on the constraints of teaching online

EFL instructors stated that assessment, technology, and system-related factors were among the constraints of online teaching. T1 highlighted the technology related factor by stating that: “Sometimes students and teachers may have unstable connection. Most of the teaching programs require high-spec computers. As in our schools we do not have fast computers, it is frustrating for teachers to teach without a frozen screen.” T4 emphasized the system-related constraints as follow: “Online limited communication is never like a real classroom face to face communication. Students can lose their motivation because each of them is in their isolated house, and they can’t get the classroom motivation.” On the other hand, T7 talked about assessment related constraints as: “One of the biggest disadvantages is that we cannot assess students’ progress well. The online systems we use are very suitable for cheating and we cannot get the right result in this way. Apart from that, since most of the students do not actively participate in the lessons, it can be monotonous for the instructor.”

In summary, EFL instructors identified assessment challenges, technology limitations, and system-related issues as significant constraints in online teaching. Concerns included unstable internet connection, difficulties in assessing student progress and preventing cheating, as well as the impact on student motivation and engagement. The limitations of online communication, such as the inability to see students fully and challenges in maintaining focus, were also highlighted as drawbacks.

Results and Discussion

This study investigated the satisfaction level of instructors teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) online at the tertiary level in Türkiye. It was found that the instructors were satisfied with online teaching at moderate level. This finding suggests that while instructors generally find online teaching to be satisfactory, there may still be room for improvement. Similarly, Ece and Kazazoğlu (2021) found that EFL instructors' job satisfaction level with teaching online was at moderate level. Understanding the specific aspects that contribute to this moderate level of satisfaction can help identify areas that may require attention and support. One possible reason for the moderate satisfaction level could be the adjustment period required for instructors to adapt to the online teaching environment. Additionally, the level of interaction and engagement with students in the online environment may impact instructors' satisfaction. Overall, the finding highlights the importance of continually evaluating and enhancing online teaching practices to ensure instructors' satisfaction and, consequently, the quality of education delivered.

The findings of the study revealed that EFL instructors identified various personal and system-related factors that facilitated their interaction with students in online learning environment. Specifically, the instructors mentioned the use of different platforms as a significant personal factor, indicating that the availability of multiple platforms allowed them to effectively engage with their students. This suggests that instructors recognized the importance of selecting appropriate platforms that suit their teaching style and enable smooth communication with students. Samat et al. (2020) stated that readily available online platforms that promote social learning are beneficial in increasing engagement between teachers and students, and among students. Suresh, Priya and Gayathri (2018) indicated that e-learning platforms provide learners with several benefits, including the ability to control the content and the flexibility to manage their learning time. This adaptability allows learners to tailor the learning process to their specific needs and learning objectives. However, there were concerns about the quality of these discussions. Students may have faced various challenges due to their unfamiliarity with this mode of online discussion, such as difficulties in direct communication, the absence of personal connection, privacy concerns, and account security issues. Some teachers resorted to social media platforms like Facebook or WhatsApp to encourage more interaction among students, which added to their already heavy workload (Adnan & Anwar, 2020; Dhawan, 2020). Together, these findings highlight the potential of online learning platforms to enhance engagement, collaboration, and individualized learning experiences. By providing readily accessible resources and fostering social interactions, these platforms offer a dynamic and flexible learning environment. Educators can leverage these advantages to create engaging and effective online learning experiences that cater to diverse learner needs and promote meaningful learning outcomes.

Instructors highlighted their competence in online platforms as another personal factor contributing to their interaction with students. This implies that instructors who strongly understood the technical aspects of online platforms felt more confident and capable of



effectively utilizing them to interact with their students. This finding underscores the critical role of instructors' digital competence in shaping their interaction with students within online platforms. Numerous studies have consistently demonstrated a substantial correlation between teaching satisfaction and teaching efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014; Han et al., 2020). The study carried out by Hampton et al. (2020) revealed that university instructors who demonstrated a high level of teaching efficacy tended to experience greater satisfaction with their online teaching. In a similar vein, Winter et al. (2021) discovered that teachers have a regular and proficient usage of technology, demonstrating their proficiency in utilizing various programs and applications. Kaarakainen and Saikkonen (2021) conducted a study where participating teachers revealed their frequent or daily utilization of digital devices. Therefore, it can be argued that fostering a technologically proficient teaching workforce not only aligns with the demands of online education but also holds the potential to improve teaching satisfaction. In terms of system-related factors, instructors emphasized the significance of system easiness. This finding suggests that instructors perceived the ease of use of the online learning system as a crucial factor in facilitating their interaction with students. A user-friendly system that is easy to understand probably helped instructors save time and effort, enabling them to concentrate better on interacting with students and delivering instruction more effectively.

On the other hand, EFL instructors stated that they were dissatisfied with the interaction with their students due to difficulty in managing interaction and lack of internet and computer. Therefore, it becomes clear that apart from persistent technical and financial challenges, online learning can be ineffective because of the limited interaction between students and teachers. This lack of social interaction has presented difficulties for students to engage in virtual group work (Adnan & Anwar, 2020). Similar to other educational settings, the primary and influential connection in EFL learning environment is the interaction between teachers and students (Xie & Derakhshan, 2021). According to Aguilera-Hermida (2020), the lack of interaction between students and professors is a common issue in online learning. Moreover, the absence of social interaction may lead to a decrease in students' motivation to learn (Basar et al., 2021). Consequently, teachers must enhance their pedagogical approaches and adapt aspects of the curriculum to make it more suitable for online learning.

The finding suggests that student-to-student interaction was limited in online teaching, which poses a challenge for instructors. According to the instructors, several factors contributed to this limitation. Student-related factors, such as their unwillingness to communicate and interact, played a significant role. It appears that students may not feel comfortable in online learning environment, which further hinders their willingness to engage with their peers. In the study conducted by Toscu (2021), findings showed that teacher-initiated interaction had a higher percentage average compared to student-initiated interaction in online classes. This suggests that students' communication and engagement with each other were lower, indicating a decrease in the quality of interaction in online classes. This goes against the purpose of instruction, which aims to share knowledge with students by minimizing teacher involvement and promoting student participation in communicative activities in the classroom to achieve communicative outcomes.

Additionally, system-related and technology-related factors were mentioned as contributors to the decreased student-student interaction. Problems such as difficulty of making pair-group work, lack of classroom culture, lack of socialization, difficulty of monitoring the students were among the system-related problems. In her study, Toscu (2021) found that students were assigned identical tasks in all their classes, and engaging in group work activities in online

classes was impossible. Galegane (2018) explains that group work activities can enhance student interaction, making it essential to incorporate such activities in the classroom. This finding aligns with the results of Yüksel and Uysal (2021), which indicate a lack of group work activities in online classes. Unlike face-to-face instruction, managing group work and closely monitoring students' group interactions is challenging in online language classes (Yüksel & Uysal, 2021). Consequently, students have fewer opportunities to use the target language in the virtual classroom. Educators and institutions should explore strategies to promote and facilitate student-student interaction in online classes to address this challenge. This may involve implementing structured group activities, encouraging active participation through discussion forums or online collaboration tools, and providing clear guidelines for effective online communication. Creating a supportive and inclusive online learning environment can also help students feel more comfortable and motivated to interact with their peers. By addressing these factors, instructors can work towards overcoming the barriers to student-student interaction and enhance the overall quality of online teaching and learning.

The instructors also indicated that they were satisfied with the assistance they got from their institutions. However, two of them expressed their dissatisfaction since they found the support from their institution insufficient. Similarly, some authors (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2021; Teng & Wu, 2021) found that lack of technical support from the institutions was one of the challenges faced by the teachers in online teaching. On the other hand, some instructors chose to seek guidance from their colleagues and peers when making decisions (extrinsic level). Furthermore, the decision to implement online teaching is heavily influenced by the resources available within schools and institutions, such as administrative, technical, and technological support. These resources could either motivate or hinder the adoption of online education by the teaching staff (institutional level) (Wut & Xu, 2021). While Stickney et al. (2019) highlighted a substantial correlation between teachers' satisfaction in online higher education and the availability of teaching resources, empirical research has consistently shown that educators with ample access to teaching resources tend to exhibit increased dedication and energy in their teaching, leading to higher levels of satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Han et al., 2020). Some researchers (Kerres, 2020; Sokal, Trudel, & Babb, 2020) noted the lack and importance of institutional support for educators during the COVID-19 transition to online learning. Shuck, Reio and Rocco (2011) found that a lack of institutional support can negatively affect employees' emotions. Amazue and Onyishi (2016) further argued that employees who perceive their organization as supportive tend to experience better work-life balance compared to those who perceive less support.

The instructors stated that online teaching provided flexibility, a wide range of resources and it saved time. They also stated that online teaching provided affordances for students. Similarly, various studies emphasized flexibility as one of the benefits for teachers (Turan, Küçük, Cilligol Karabey, 2022; Watterston & Zhao, 2023). On the other hand, assessment was one of the challenges of online teaching as well as internet loss, lack of interaction. The topic of assessment in the realm of online education has been deliberated globally due to the susceptibility of online learning to various forms of academic misconduct, including cheating, plagiarism, and dishonesty. Additionally, learners' sense of isolation, refusal to turn on cameras, and unethical practices are among the learner-related challenges in online classes (Al-Maqbali & Raja Hussain, 2022). In online learning environments, learners have various convenient methods available to them for achieving high grades due to the open nature of the online setting. Cheating has consistently been a significant problem for tutors when assessing students in online learning contexts (García-Morales, Garrido-Moreno, & Martín-Rojas, 2021). According to Rahim (2020), having all necessary resources such as network service, online



platforms, technology, and infrastructure is crucial for successfully implementing online assessments and effectively addressing educational challenges during the pandemic. Additionally, using cameras during online instruction can positively impact instructional interaction. However, it was found in some studies that students are reluctant to turn on their cameras in online settings (Slimi, 2020). Castelli and Sarvary (2021) identified this refusal as a global issue. The research also revealed that students' concerns about their physical appearance, background, unreliable internet connections, and cultural constraints contribute to this reluctance. Consequently, educators need to comprehend students' apprehensions and persuade them to activate their cameras during assessment sessions to address this challenge effectively.

Conclusions and Implications

In conclusion, this study delved into the satisfaction level of EFL instructors in the context of online education and uncovered several key findings. It was evident that instructors generally expressed moderate satisfaction with online teaching. While this suggests a degree of contentment, it also indicates room for improvement in online teaching landscape. Identifying the specific factors contributing to this moderate satisfaction level is crucial for addressing areas that require attention and support.

One significant personal factor contributing to instructors' interaction with students was their proficiency in using online platforms. Instructors who were adept at navigating these platforms felt more confident in effectively engaging with their students. Additionally, the ease of use of the online learning system emerged as a vital system-related factor, as it streamlined the teaching process and allowed for more meaningful interaction. However, challenges persisted, particularly regarding students' limited interaction with both instructors and peers. Factors contributing to this limitation included students' unwillingness to communicate, technical issues, and lack of suitable platforms for group work. These limitations emphasized the need for educators and institutions to explore strategies that promote student-student interaction, fostering a more engaging and collaborative online learning environment.

Furthermore, instructors' satisfaction was influenced by the support they received from their institutions. While some expressed satisfaction, others found the support insufficient. This institutional support played a pivotal role in the decision to adopt online teaching and influenced the overall success of the transition.

Despite the benefits of online teaching, such as flexibility and access to resources, challenges remained in areas like assessment, internet connectivity, and student engagement. These challenges underscored the importance of addressing academic misconduct, encouraging camera use during online instruction, and understanding and addressing students' reluctance in activating their cameras during assessments. In conclusion, this study highlights the complexities and nuances of online teaching and the multifaceted factors that impact instructors' satisfaction and students' engagement. It emphasizes the need for ongoing evaluation, support, and adaptation to ensure the effectiveness and quality of online education in EFL contexts.

Limitations and Future Direction for Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the satisfaction of EFL instructors with online teaching at the tertiary level in Türkiye, it has some limitations. Firstly, the participants were limited to a specific group of EFL instructors. The results may not fully represent the diverse perspectives and experiences of all EFL instructors in Türkiye. Based on this, future research

should aim to broaden the scope of participants by including a more diverse and representative sample of EFL instructors in Türkiye. This could involve incorporating instructors from different regions, types of institutions, or varying levels of experience. Secondly, the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly influenced the educational landscape, including the shift to online teaching. The responses gathered during this unique period may be influenced by the exceptional circumstances, making it essential to recognize the potential impact of the pandemic on the instructors' satisfaction levels. Therefore, further research may investigate the longitudinal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on EFL instructors' satisfaction with online teaching. A comprehensive study could involve tracking satisfaction levels over an extended period, examining how instructors' experiences and perceptions evolve as the educational landscape adapts to post-pandemic conditions. Thirdly, the study's sample size, particularly in the qualitative part with only 7 EFL instructors, may raise concerns about the depth and breadth of the qualitative insights. A larger and more diverse qualitative sample could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and facilitators faced by EFL instructors in online teaching.

This study was conducted with EFL instructors. In the following studies, both students and EFL instructors can be included, and the comparisons can be made related to their satisfaction. Additionally, different variables such as motivation and technological competence can be examined.

Suggestions

Teacher satisfaction is an important factor affecting the teaching and learning process. Based on the finding that EFL instructors were satisfied with online teaching at moderate level, specific areas where improvements can be made to enhance EFL teachers' satisfaction should be identified. The government should allocate additional investments to assist teachers and students who currently lack access to the internet. Additionally, educational institutions should invest in professional development programs to improve EFL instructors' proficiency in using online platforms. Training sessions can focus on improving technical skills, navigating online tools effectively, and fostering innovative teaching methods in the digital environment.

Policymakers and institutions should prioritize the improvement of online learning systems to ensure user-friendly interfaces that facilitate seamless interaction. Investing in user-friendly platforms can contribute to a more positive teaching experience and increase the overall satisfaction of instructors. Recognizing the pivotal role of institutional support, policymakers should assess and enhance the support mechanisms provided to EFL instructors. Additionally, institutions should also implement strategies to promote student-student interaction in online learning environments. Policymakers and institutions need to address challenges related to online assessment, including academic misconduct and student engagement. Implementing clear guidelines, promoting ethical conduct, and exploring alternative assessment methods can contribute to a fair and effective evaluation process. By implementing these recommendations, educational institutions and policymakers can contribute to the continuous improvement of online teaching practices, enhance instructor satisfaction, and create a more engaging and effective learning environment for EFL students.

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