Analyzing Teacher and Parent Views on the First Literacy Process During the Covid-19 Pandemic*

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the opinions of primary school teachers and parents about the first literacy process in the 2020-2021 academic year under the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic. The recruits were the 1st-grade teachers in the city center of Malatya for the 2020-2021 academic year and the parents of the students in these classes. The recruits comprised 11 primary school teachers and 31 parents selected by criterion sampling of the purposeful sampling methods. The qualitative research tradition was adopted in the study. The research was designed as a case study. A semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool, and the data were analyzed through content analysis. The analysis results were categorized into four groups. It was found that teachers had difficulties in the distance education process and could not actively involve students during the courses compared to face to face education. It was stated that teachers, students, and parents experienced adaptation problems during the pandemic and preferred in-person education instead of distanced methods. It was concluded that the parents preferred continuing literacy activities from home via distance education for hygiene during the Covid-19 pandemic, and they supported face to face education after this process. It was suggested that in-service training would be helpful to teachers for literacy education during the Covid-19 pandemic, besides the technological support for distance education infrastructure and guidance activities based on parent-teacher cooperation.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, Literacy Teaching, Teachers, Parents, Distance Education

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INTRODUCTION

The first literacy is called the stage in which the individual transitions to the written and oral language. This is the first literacy period when a student can express oneself orally, use the symbols of the written language, and transfer what is heard into writing (Ferah, 2004). Primary literacy education is a language teaching process that starts from the first year of elementary school and aims to gain reading and writing skills with the support of the family (Baş, 2006). Listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills are developed as a whole in this process. The individual starts primary school with experiences gained from family and environment in both comprehension and expression skills. With certain skills in oral communication, the individual tries to develop the written expression skills in the first reading and writing process. Reading and writing skills, essential factors in successful learning, also ensure the permanence of emotions, thoughts, and knowledge. The basis of primary school ages includes literacy skills in this sense (Çaydere, 2010).

Language development starts in the mother's womb and advances with listening and speaking skills from birth until the school period (Babayiğit, 2019). The reading and writing skills are added to the language development process with literacy teaching. Natural language acquisition in pre-school continues in a planned way in the first literacy process, through which reading and writing skills are tried to be gained from the 1st grade of primary school, by systematic and dependent on a program (Sağırlı, 2015). Literacy skills, which progress in a planned and programmed way with the individual's involvement in formal education, are the primary skills they should have in their life-long learning (Özdemir, 2015). The basic skills acquired in this period are fundamental in shaping one's professional and social life.

The development of skills such as using Turkish correctly and effectively, lifelong learning, communication, decision making, and problem-solving in the first literacy process are also significant (Ministry of National Education [MNE], 2009, p. 232). Reading and understanding the texts, expressing feelings and thoughts in writing and verbally, writing by the rules, effective communication with the environment, and enjoying learning Turkish are among the primary literacy teaching goals (Çelenk, 2007, p. 32). The first literacy process can be described as the initial step in the multi-faceted individual development, which is organized according to the interests and needs of the students.

Several literacy methods are used to achieve the purpose of the first literacy process. Each country determines its literacy method by its literacy purposes, alphabet structure, and demographic characteristics. The reading and writing teaching has been conducted with the sound-based sentence method in Turkey since 2005. The voice-based first literacy teaching approach is performed in 3 stages. First, preparation for first literacy, first literacy initiation and progress, and independent reading as the third. The listening exercises, finger, hand, and arm muscle development activities, painting, and drawing exercises are concluded during the first reading and writing preparation stage. First, literacy and progress is the stage through which the teaching of sounds begins, the processes of sensing, recognizing, distinguishing sounds are achieved, then sounds are brought together to syllables, syllables to words, words to sentences, and finally, texts. The independent literacy process starts after all the sounds are taught, and reading exercises are conducted for at least two weeks to ensure fluent reading (MNE, 2019).

Certain misconceptions in this process in which the first literacy skills are developed might continue for years. The first literacy skill, effective in literacy and other life stages, must be acquired correctly and understandably. Misconceptions regarding notebooks, holding a pen, and writing letters can pose difficulties to correct in the future. It becomes necessary to spend this process in an organized way with the proper planning for literacy. However, learning environments may differ in the education and training process. Face to face education can also be conducted remotely due to geographical distances, extraordinary circumstances, or socio-economic reasons. Besides, education and training activities can be performed remotely during and after natural disasters, pandemics, and extraordinary situations. The first literacy activities can be conducted in another environment through various

technological tools apart from the face to face education environment in such cases within a planned manner.

The Covid-19 pandemic outbreak in Wuhan, China, in late 2019 has affected the whole world since March 2020 and caused education to be significantly affected and conducted remotely. The changes in the digital media and learning environments with the Covid-19 pandemic forced Turkey to introduce some changes regarding education in March 2020. Although it was said that the first break would last three weeks, it was decided that the second semester of the 2019-2020 academic year would be continued with distance education due to the high number of cases. The education period continued through the distance education model created with rapid planning (Eken, Tosun, and Tuzcu Eken, 2020). Students, teachers, parents, and administrators were affected by this change on March 23, 2020, and tried to adapt to the digitalized education process. The education activities starting from kindergarten, primary schools, secondary schools, and universities were transformed in a short time as a week as distance education was implemented (Sirer, 2020). The educational content of the Ministry of National Education was conveyed through television, and the internet was accessed free of charge since then. The students connected to the Education Informatics Network (EIN) through television and the internet the curriculum sections that were left incomplete were thought through these organs. The student and teacher interactions, teaching methods, and techniques have also changed with distance education.

One of the tools that primary school teachers utilize to develop technical skills and methods regarding the first reading and writing process is digital products. Altunkaynak and Çağımlar (2020) asserted that primary school teachers are at a moderate level using digital products. The use of digital products in the literacy process with distance education has become essential considering the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the lack of technological infrastructure and equipment, especially the problems in the internet connections of the primary school teachers, the inability of objective evaluations, completing the learning process, lack of detailed examinations on the course material, lack of opportunities to enjoy the activities, teacher's active and students' passive states, lack of possibilities to observe individual differences were the most common issues considering the Covid-19 pandemic (Fauzi & Khusuma, 2020; Kasa Ayten, 2021; Yurtbakan & Akyıldız, 2020). It was found that the teachers managing the educational activities during the Covid-19 pandemic experienced some problems and tried to solve these problems. Since parents are also involved in distance education, they must support teachers to overcome this period more comfortably and healthily. It is essential to get stakeholder opinions from teachers and parents regarding the distance education conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic and to be able to reveal the process they experienced.

Distance education was performed together with face to face education in the 2020-2021 academic year after the second term of the 2019-2020 academic year with distance education, as Covid-19 remains a vivid threat. Analyzing the education of the students who are just introduced to the education system shall guide the literature by revealing the pandemic's effects. Examining the literacy process of 1st-grade students during the Covid-19 pandemic and consulting primary school teachers and parents regarding this process shall be effective in helping future education processes.

Thus, the study aims to reveal the primary school teacher and parent views on the literacy process during the pandemic regarding the first literacy process in which distance education and face to face education were performed together during the 2020-2021 academic year. For this purpose, this study investigated the following sub-problems.

1) What are the primary school teachers' opinions regarding:

- The preparation phase of the first literacy process during the Covid-19 pandemic?

- The initiation and progression phase of first literacy process during the Covid-19 pandemic?

2) What are the parents' opinions regarding:

- The preparation phase of the first literacy process during the Covid-19 pandemic?

- The initiation and progression phase of first literacy process during the Covid-19 pandemic?

METHOD

The qualitative research tradition was followed in the study. The case study model of the qualitative research tradition was adopted. Case studies try to describe an event as it is. It differs from other qualitative research methods by detailed descriptions and interpretations of a unit or a limited system (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Yin (2014) argued that a case study has six stages: "planning, design, preparation, collection, analysis, sharing." Accordingly, permission was obtained from the Malatya Provincial Directorate of National Education for the research following the literature review in the planning stage. Semi-structured interview forms regarding the first literacy process during the Covid-19 pandemic were prepared to interview teachers and parents. Afterward, two field experts working in primary school teaching and two Turkish teaching experts were consulted. The pilot interview was held with 1 teacher and 1 parent as the forms were finalized.

The recruits were selected through the purposeful sampling methods, namely the criterion sampling method. The criterion used in this sampling method comprised primary school teachers working in the 1st grade of public schools and parents with different socio-economic segments affiliated to the Battalgazi and Yeşilyurt district directorates of national education in Malatya and provided distance education in the 2020-2021 academic year. Teachers' demographic information is available in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Teachers

Demographic Features		N
Gender	Female	3
	Male	8
Education Status	Graduate	1
	Bachelor's Degree	9
	Postgraduate	1
Professional Seniority	5-10 years	2
	11-20 years	4
	21-30 Years	5
Total		11

As Table 1 illustrates, 3 female and 8 male teachers were recruited. 1 of the teachers was a college graduate, 9 of them were undergraduates, and 1 of them was a postgraduate. Moreover, 2 had experience between 5-10 years, 4 had 11-20 years, and 5 had 21-30 years. Parents' demographic information obtained before the interviews is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Parents

Demographic Features		N
Gender	Female	22
	Male	9
Education Status	Primary School	5
	Secondary School	6
	High School	7
	Associate Degree	2
	Bachelor's Degree	10
	Postgraduate	1
Occupation	Housewife	13
	Self-Employed	4
	Teacher	10
	Student	4
Total		31

As Table 2 summarizes, 22 of the parent recruits were female, 9 were male. 5 were primary school graduates, 6 secondary school graduates, 7 high school graduates, 2 associate degree graduates, 10 undergraduates, 1 postgraduate. Moreover, 13 of them were housewives, 4 were self-employed, 10 were teachers, and 4 were students.

Data were collected from teachers and parents recruited voluntarily through a semi-structured interview form. First, the interviews were recorded after the teachers and parents approved it with the consent form. After the interviews, the recordings were deciphered and recorded in the computer environment. 3 of the interviews with the teachers were in-person, and 8 were held remotely via Zoom. All parent interviews were conducted remotely using Zoom. The teacher interviews lasted between 14 minutes 22 seconds and 53 minutes 24 seconds, while the parent interviews lasted between 6 minutes 3 seconds and 21 minutes 43 seconds.

The data collected from the teacher and parent opinions were analyzed through content analysis. The content analysis results were classified within themes, and the correlations between them were analyzed. The themes and sub-themes related to the sub-problems of the research were formed with content analysis. The themes categorized by the authors were consulted by the field experts and modified accordingly.

A field expert selected random interviews and confirmed the accuracy of the breakdown of the records for validity and reliability. The coder first started to analyze the data together and then separated and continued the analysis. The analyses were compared as the themes, sub-themes, and categories were formed on similarities. Miles and Huberman's (1994, p. 64) reliability formula was used [Reliability = Agreement / (Agreement + Disagreement)] and the result was .96. Miles and Huberman asserted that reliability scores over .70 indicate that the research is reliable. The themes are supported with examples from student interviews in the findings section. The interviewees are presented with encoded names for confidentiality. Teachers are mentioned as T1, T2, etc., while the parents are mentioned as P1, P2, etc. The validity and reliability were tested through expert opinions regarding deciphering the views and forming the themes, with a sample from the interviews, in-depth parents' opinions, and teachers.

FINDINGS

The data analysis was detailed under two headings as parent and teacher opinions.

Findings Regarding Teachers' Views on the First Literacy Process during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The findings regarding the teachers' opinions on the first literacy process during the Covid-19 pandemic are presented with two tables. Table 3 illustrates "Teachers' Views on the Preparation Phase," and Table 4 presents "Teachers' Views on the First literacy and Progression Phase."

Findings Regarding Teachers' Opinions on the Preparation Phase

One of the essential steps in the first literacy phase is preparation. Activities performed in the preparatory phase affect the whole literacy process. The teachers' opinions regarding the preparation stage in the first literacy process during the Covid-19 pandemic period are available in Table 3.

Table 3. Teachers' Views on the Preparation Phase

Theme	Sub-theme	Category	Codes	f
Preparatory Activities for Students	Getting Acquainted			7
	Briefing			5
	Identifying Developmental Traits	Cognitive	Preliminary Information Checks	3
		Affective	Motivation	8
		Psychomotor	Pencil Grip	6
			Muscle Development Deficiencies	2
	Events	Listening	Playing Songs	4
			Fairy Tale, Story Reading	6
			Reading Poetry	3
			Cartoons and Animations	4
			Nursery rhymes	3
		Hand, Arm, Finger Muscle Exercises	Dough Playing	9
			Latching	1
			Puzzle	1
			Legos	1
			Cut-Paste	3
			Building with Mud and Sand	1
			Rope Shaping	1
			Sportive Activities	3
			Musicgram	1
		Painting and Line Exercises	Painting Activities	8
			Line Exercises	11
		Motivation Activities		7
Preparatory Activities for Parents	Raising Awareness	The General Process		11
		The Literacy Process		7
	Plan Preparation			2

Table 3 demonstrates that the teachers' opinions regarding the first literacy preparation stage were grouped in *"Preparatory Studies for Students"* and *"Preparatory Studies for Parents" themes.* There were 4 sub-themes under the preparatory work for the student theme: Getting Acquainted (f=7), Briefing (f=5), Identifying Developmental Traits (f=19), and Events (f=67). Moreover, there were 2 sub-themes as Raising Awareness (f=18) and Plan Preparation (f=2), under the preparatory work for parents theme.

Preparatory Activities for Students themes refer to the Acquaintance (f=7) activities by primary school teachers. Teachers' views on this sub-theme are as follows:

"What we did at the beginning of the process, well we contacted parents and students through WhatsApp groups. There were continuous meetings. I had meetings on Zoom. I introduced myself. I instilled confidence in them. I met my students. My students trusted me when they came to school. We started training at school together. We played games together, taught lessons, and created an environment." (T5).

Teacher T5's views indicate that teachers primarily conducted meetings with students from a distance through various means of communication for acquaintance activities during the preparation phase. Furthermore, they spent this process with various games and activities for the students to know, trust and adapt themselves.

Briefing activities (f=5), a sub-theme, were held under *the Preparatory Activities for Students* theme. The teachers stated that they informed the students about the process regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. Examples of teachers' views on this are as follows:

"I told them what was going to happen, and I made them believe that we would keep the distance between us, masks, disinfectants and that we would always create a safe environment for the school. We also informed the children in the same way. Every time I went to school, I took photos and showed them what we were going to do." (T7).

Teacher T7 tried to provide psychological relief to the students by introducing the possible situations they may encounter during the school start process to control the student information about the pandemic under the teacher information sub-theme. There were some concerns about the Covid-19 pandemic among the students starting the 1st grade of primary school, while the primary school teachers tried to motivate them in this sense and propound the situations they will encounter in this process.

Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor categories were created within the sub-theme Identifying Developmental Traits under the *Preparatory Activities for Students* theme. Examples on Preliminary Information Checks in the Cognitive category (f=3), Motivation (f=8) in the Affection category, Pencil Grip (f=6), and Muscle Development Deficiencies (f=2) in the Psychomotor category are as follows:

"Well, I did roll call for the children first. Such as what are the meanings in mathematics, randomly in Turkish, 'There is a bird flying in the air, do you notice the bird?' and 'Are there any trees around?' To understand whether the children's perception of the outside is open or closed, I first analyzed this, and then we made a general examination of the families." (T1)

Teacher T1 collected information about the general situation of the parents while taking attendance at the students' prior knowledge at the beginning of the school year. It was tried to measure the students' knowledge status and whether they were cognitively ready for the first literacy process by the teacher coded T1.

"When I look at it, the readiness level of two children and their pencil holding skills were extremely good. He/she can hold a pen and write letters correctly. Some of them started with irregular lines, as we call them, and they had trouble even drawing the irregular lines. So we planned something about holding a pencil and writing skills..." (T5).

The example reveals that teacher T5 monitored the readiness for holding a pencil. It was stated that students with pre-school education did not have problems with pencil grip, but the ones who started their education life with the 1st grade had some difficulties.

The examples regarding the Listening category under the Events sub-theme within the Preparatory Activities for Students such as Listening to Songs (f=4), Reading Tales and Stories (f=6), Reading Poetry (f=3), Cartoons and Animations (f=4), and Nursery Rhymes (f=3) are as follows:

"We utilized the internet for listening exercises. There are the stories I took and read a few of them. Sometimes I used audio videos and stories. There were some very good stories, both suitable for our voices and as normal stories, especially on a few sites such as Okulistik. We listened to the children in a way that they could listen and understand and then tell me. It was very nice." (T7).

Teacher T9 conducted listening exercises for the preparatory activities to understand the text listened to, concentrate their attention, and think creatively. The majority of the teachers stated that these exercises were significantly beneficial for the student's literacy preparation.

Examples regarding Hand, Arm, and Finger Muscle Exercises category within the Events sub-theme under the Preparatory Activities for Students such as Playing Dough (f=9), Latching (f=1), Puzzle (f=1), Legos (f=1), Cut-Paste (f=3), Shaping with Mud and Sand (f=1)), Rope Shaping (f=1), Sportive Activities (f=3), Musicgram (f=1) are as follows:

"They prepared their dough with puzzles, play dough, Legos, or different materials at work. We have included activities like this one where children will do more cut and paste. Moreover, we already did line exercises and hand muscle development exercises for about 3 weeks to 1 month." (T2)

The explanations of teacher T2 hints that play dough activities contribute to 1st-grade students' muscle development, help them hold pencils, provide 1st-grade students' muscle development, help them provide first, and provide comfort in writing. It was understood that materials besides play dough such as blocks, cut-paste activities, and puzzles were used to help the students develop their hand, arm, and finger muscles in the preparation phase before the sounds are thought.

The examples regarding the Drawing Activities (f=8) and Line Exercises (f=11) within the Painting and Line Exercises under the Events theme for Preparatory Activities for Students are as follows:

"We were leaving copies at the school, and we set up a booth, families came and took them. I have sent them over the phone via WhatsApp. I made a video on how to hold the pen. I told their families that they should not force them and work for half an hour every day, and that was enough." (T2)

Teacher T2 prepared for the literacy process with painting and drawing activities and made efforts for these activities. It was observed that teachers produce different solutions to deliver activities to students. They also benefited from textbooks and different sources, and the internet in this process. Since this process advanced remotely, parents' help was also sought by teachers. Other teacher opinions also support these statements.

An example for the "Motivational Activities" (f=7) category within Exercises on Affection Traits under the Events theme for Preparatory Activities for Students was*:*

"When we arrived, we played games, joked around, asked riddles, and applauded together when I put it on the board. We also hung your pictures on the board and tried to motivate such children." (T1)

Teacher T1 wanted to motivate the students to the school and the Covid-19 process during the orientation period when the students started school and conducted various motivational activities to prevent them from being affected and prepare them emotionally for the literacy process.

Examples regarding the General Process (f=11) and Literacy Process (f=7) within Raising Awareness sub-theme of Preparatory Activities for Parents are as follows:

"I talked to the families on the phone during this process. We gathered them in the schoolyard, and I used a board and told the families about not teaching the letters wrong, how to teach the consonants because they needed to support me at home, especially the mothers who participated in the education a lot." (T2)

This example by teacher T2 shows that they first met the parents as preparatory work and provided information/guidance about the literacy process. They emphasized the importance of parents and the necessity of teacher-parent cooperation in the first literacy process, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"I said let's prepare the parents well. Understand the homework, at least follow up when we assign something. So don't practice the sounds, don't try to teach. Because misteaching is a potential consequence. For example, the child says 'p' to a sound, brings the letter p and e together, and says 'pe' to it. They teach the wrong syllable or the spelling of the letter, for example. Children mistake the direction of a letter that should bring it from top to bottom in

the wrong way when writing. I frequently informed the parents, especially via WhatsApp. I posted a picture of every activity. For example, I listed the things about what they should do at home." (T5).

The teacher T5 mentioned that the primary school teachers warned the parents in this regard to prevent the student from being exposed to wrong learning. If a parent, with the student during the distance education process, does not comply with the teacher's guidance, the mistakes mentioned may become permanent.

Examples regarding the Plan Preparation (f=2) within Preparation to Activities sub-theme of Preparatory Activities for Parents are as follows:

"I was texting the parents early, around seven am. I was making plans for the parents ten minutes before breakfast. I was writing good morning to everyone at seven o'clock. I'm giving the message that I'm ready to start." (T1)

The primary schoolteacher T1 has made various preparatory studies on preparing a plan for the parents. The primary teacher conducted this as preparatory work to motivate both the student and the parents while providing order.

The Preparatory Activities for Parents When theme, in general, revealed that primary school teachers focused on awareness-raising activities towards parents for the literacy process regarding the raising awareness sub-theme.

Findings Regarding Teachers' Views on First literacy and Progression Stage

The first literacy and progression phase is when the student starts reading/writing letters and syllables following the preparation phase. It can also be called the stage of feeling, recognizing and distinguishing the sound, reading and writing syllables from letters, words from syllables, sentences from words, and reading simple texts. The teachers' views on the process of first literacy and progressing stages during the Covid-19 pandemic are available in Table 4.

Table 4. Teachers' Views on First literacy and Progression Stage

Theme	Sub-theme	Category	Codes	f
Teaching Activities	Distance Education Activities	Reading Exercises		11
		Writing Exercises		11
		Reading Comprehension Exercises		11
		Specific Days and Weeks		1
	Face to Face Education Teaching Activities	Reading Exercises		11
		Writing Exercises		11
		Reading Comprehension Exercises		11
Teachers' Methods and Techniques	Method Techniques Used in Distance Education	Question-and-answer		3
		Return Demonstration		4
		Narration		6
	Face to Face Education Methods and Techniques	Return Demonstration		5
		Question-and-answer		4
		Drama		2
		Game-based Teaching		2
		Brainstorming		1
Materials, Tools, and Equipment	Additional Sources			11
	Video and Visual Presentation			6
	Writing Sticks			2
	Education Sites			9
	Projection			2

Experienced Problems	Problems in Distance Education	Common Issues	Boring Out the Students	4
			Lack of Technology	7
		Literacy Problems	Family Intervention in Reading Exercises	7
			Writing Problems	8
			Time Shortage	3
			Participation	4
			Inability to Correct Mistakes	5
			Mislearnings	2
	Problems in Face to Face Education	Common Issues	Mask Problem	4
			Avoiding Close Contact	4
			Increasing Hygiene Measures	4
		Literacy Problems	Time Shortage	3
			Mask Problem	1
			Problems Experienced in Teaching Letter and Syllables	11
			Students' Adaptation to School	7
Solutions	Solutions for Common Problems	Reward and Reinforcement		6
	Solutions for Literacy	Color Writing for Reading Syllables		2
		Keeping Camera and Microphone Open in Distance Education		2
		Parent Cooperation		11
		Introductory Games		3
		Providing Feedback with Videos		6
		Peer Support		1
		Nursery Rhymes, and Poetry Reading		3

Table 4 indicates that the teachers' opinions regarding the first literacy and progression phase are categorized under 5 themes: *Teaching Activities, Teaching Methods and Techniques, Materials, Tools, and Equipment, Experienced Problems,* and *Solutions.* There are sub-themes as Distance Education Activities (f=34) and Face to Face Education Teaching Activities (f=33) under the Teaching Activities theme. Moreover, 2 sub-themes emerged as Distance Education (f=14) Methods and Techniques and Face to Face Education Methods and Techniques (f=15) under Teaching Methods and Techniques theme. Additional Sources (f=11), Video and Visual Presentation (f=6), Writing Sticks (f=2), Education Sites (f=9), and Projection (f=2) were formed under the theme of Materials, Tools, and Equipment theme. The sub-themes of Problems in Distance Education (f=40) and Problems in Face to Face Education (f=33) were constructed under Experienced Problems theme. There were 2 sub-themes as Solutions to General Problems (f=6) and Solutions to Literacy (f=28) under the theme of Solutions.

Relevant examples for categories of Reading Exercises (f=11), Writing Exercises (f=11), Reading Comprehension Exercises (f=11), and Specific Days and Weeks (f=1) related to the Activities Performed in Distance Education sub-theme within the *Teacher's Activities* theme:

"I received a lot of support from the parents during this process. I received support from the parents as the children only came to school for 2 days and were home for 5 days. Thus they were more active. I asked them to check how long their children studied and their homework. At school, we were able to correct their deficiencies and mistakes in face to face education, but we could not control them from away. Therefore, they sent me videos of the children's readings and pictures of their works/writings. At least, I monitored whether their writing was beautiful or not, but we could not see whether they misspelled or the letter directions." (T2)

Teacher T2 revealed that they received help from the parents in the reading and writing activities during the distance education process. They were asked to take photographs for improvements in writing and videos to see progress in reading. Homework checks were also performed in this way. It was observed that other teachers also used the same method.

> *"For example, we made domestic goods events, etc. Everyone cooked or prepared local goods at home and sent their photos to me. We had our reading festival. For example, I made the letters farewell party for the children. They all held a farewell party to the letters at home with their families. They posted photos of those events. That's how we continued the process." (T6).*

Teacher T6 stated that although s/he was in the distance education process, the exercises were performed on certain days and weeks. It can be asserted that the activities on certain days and weeks help students not to break away from the literacy process as if the face to face education continued.

The following examples are relevant for the categories of Reading Exercises (f=11), Writing Exercises (f=11), and Reading Comprehension Activities (f=11) related to the sub-theme Classroom Teaching Activities under the *Teaching Activities* theme:

> *"We did eye-muscle improving activities by expanding a word downwards like ladders. We tried to find a solution that way or draw attention to the letter or syllable. We said let's read this, and you read it, and let someone else read it, so we had your friends read it and listen to it. I wonder if he'll be able to find the mistake." (T5).*

Teacher T5 had the students read the words s/he prepared in the form of stairs to help them understand what they read during the face to face education. The aim was to make other students understand what a student reads while doing this activity, not with only one student but with all students in the class. It was found that the teacher tried to make sense of the reading studies.

> *"At first, we did literacy activities in face to face education, and then we conducted activities to recognize letters and sounds following the adaptation week. Methods and techniques, apart from conventional methods, we used conditions where the student is active. Then we benefited from the exercises of educational sites such as EBA (Education informatics networks), Morpa, and Okulistik. Moreover, we had children experience it, of course, children can be active in education." (T4).*

Teacher T4 indicated that the student was more active in the face to face education process than in distance education. It has also been revealed that teachers also benefit from the education sites they use during distance education in the face to face education process. Furthermore, it was stated that the teacher-centered lessons during distance education were student-centered in the classroom environment.

Teaching Activities, summarized in Table 4, hints that teachers prioritized reading, writing, and reading comprehension activities in distance education and face to face education. Unlike face-to-face education, it was found that students performed activities from home for certain days and weeks in distance education.

Teaching Methods and Techniques the theme was detailed into the Distance Education Method and Techniques (f=14) with categories such as QA (f=3), Return Demonstration (f=4), and Narration (f=6).

For instance, T9 stated that *"I did more screen sharing with children in distance education. I used a typing program myself for the writing of the letters. After that, we used the visuals on the Okulistik site and shared screens using other internet sites, EBA. We wrote it ourselves and showed it to the children so that they could write. The children wrote their texts in the notebook and sent them to me. So, looking at those things, I suggested that they pay more attention to specific letters and write them. I gave feedback again. So we reinforced it with visuals." (T9).* Teacher T9 applied different methods and techniques such as narration and return demonstration in the initial reading and writing process. Since the education was performed remotely, the feedback was sent through technological tools. It can be argued that since the teachers include the student in the process, they prevented boring the student and followed a suitable path for the constructivist approach.

Relevant examples of Return Demonstration (f=5), QA (f=4), Drama (f=2), Game-based Teaching (f=2), Brainstorming (f=1) under *Teaching Methods and Techniques* theme are as follows:

"Especially, we imagined a story for each letter. Sometimes one student enacted Ela, Lale, and Ali. Moreover, Nalan was Ali's mother, and she was driving by making a "vroom" sound when they took a ride in the car; we all drove together. So, I focused more on role-playing, return demonstrations, and question-and-answer methods. I significantly utilized these 3 methods. I enabled the children to participate actively in the process. I gave a lot of space to visual materials by co-animating." (T2)

It can be argued that students participate more actively during the literacy process in the face to face education process compared to distance education, based on teacher T2's statements. As the distance education process progressed with technological tools and was under the teacher's control, the students had to follow the teachings from videos. The students progressed this through return demonstration in the face to face education since they were in the center.

The *Teaching Methods and Techniques* theme revealed that teachers used the narration model in distance education and return demonstration in face to face education. It was observed that teachers often also resort to the QA method in both processes.

The Additional Sources (f=11), Video and Visual Presentation (f=6), Writing Sticks (f=2), Education Sites (f=9), and Projection (f=2) were analyzed under the theme of Materials, Tools, and Equipment theme. The following examples for these sub-themes are:

"I have utilized Çaliskan Arı's 1st grade learning to read and write kit. The parents also bought it, it was conducive. There are the textbooks, we have finished them. They have been very helpful. We have storybooks, I sent them these. Besides, Morpa Kampüs offered beautiful stories, for example, for the feeling of the voice, while it makes one feel, it explicates the sound very well. I took advantage of it. The things we usually did were online." (T11)

Teacher T11's statements indicate that teachers benefit from additional sourcebooks and various educational sites besides the textbooks. It was observed that especially 1st-grade teachers include the first literacy sets in the process frequently. Teacher views revealed that the transfer of the contents of the educational sites to the students by reflecting them on the screen, especially in the distance education process, provided great convenience for feeling and recognizing the students' voices.

The *Materials, Tools, and Equipment* theme indicates that 1st-grade teachers benefit from additional sourcebooks and educational sites in the literacy process. They stated that they use them both in distance and face to face education.

Relevant examples for categories of Boring Student (f=4) and Technology Deficiencies (f=7) in the General Problems (f=11) category related to the Problems Experienced in Distance Education (f=40) sub-theme within *Experienced Problems* theme are:

"They were bored, since sitting in front of the screen for a long time bored them, the primary issue was this. Another problem was that the lack of internet at home in the early days. Children could not attend online lectures. Third, the inadequacy of devices, phones or computers, tablets. Having a couple of siblings, with one or two telephone calls at home, sometimes they attended in turns. They had such troubles." (T4).

Teacher T4 stated that the students were bored because they were sitting in front of the screen for a long time. Moreover, technological problems and equipment were inadequate due to the number of students studying in the family. Student boredom and lack of technology were among the general problems in the distance education process.

Relevant examples for categories of Reading Exercises (f=7), Writing Problems (f=8), Time-based Troubles (f=3), Participation (f=4), Inability to Correct Mistakes (f=5) and Mislearning (f=2) in the category of Literacy Problems (f=29) under the theme of Problems Experienced in Distance Education (f=40).

> *"The writing process was like this, and we were getting the child on the board in face to face education, I was showing it. But here I am watching a video, I explain, I show the way of writing, I knew what the child was doing. I was getting them on the board to see if they learned the spelling directions correctly. This was a problem in distance education. The child wrote the letters somehow, but they wrote them in their own way." (T6).*

Teacher T6 mentioned that students could not perform their writing exercises at the desired level by the teacher since they were away from the teacher during the distance education process. Teachers overall opinions indicated that this problem might be overcome more easily in face to face education. The writing problems arise in letter exercises regarding the way and direction of the letter.

> *"The parent interferes a lot with the child in distance education, and we cannot remove the parent from the equation. This was the biggest problem. We can't identify the child's own information, some parents whispered to the child in the background…" (T3)*

Teacher T3 asserted that distance education extended student's learning period about the problems experienced. The same information provided in classrooms at school enables students to put the knowledge into practice directly since there is no intervention. However, parents' intervention causes them to fall behind at both reading and writing in distance education. Because when the family shares the correct information directly with the student, the student shares the newly learned letter or word with the teacher after memorization instead of recognition. The same conditions apply for writing exercises, as the parent completes the homework for the students when they cannot write, which delays the student's learning and writing habits.

The examples regarding Mask Problem (f=4), Avoiding Close Contact (f=4), Increasing Hygiene Measures (f=4) in the category of General Problems (f=12) related to the sub-theme Problems in Face to Face Education (f=34) under the *Problems Experienced* theme are as follows:

> *"The teacher made a great effort so that the children do not touch each other regarding all kinds of movements, washing their hands, their pens fell to the ground, numerous complaints, mask changes, hand hygiene, etc. These, of course, doubled the burden of the teacher. (T6).*

Teacher T6 mentioned the mask, avoidance of close contact, and hygiene problems during the face to face education process. S/he expressed the teacher's difficulties and responsibilities in adapting the students to the mask-distance-cleaning rules during face to face education. Since there is no mask usage in distance education, this was not a problem.

A relevant example for the Problems Experienced in the Face to Face Education (f=34) sub-theme for the Literacy Problems (f=21) category including the Letter and Syllable Teaching (f=3), Mask (f=1), Problems in Teaching of Letters and Syllables (f=11), and Students' Adaptation to School (f=7), within *Problems Experienced* theme, is as follows:

> *"Because there was a mask and a visor, the children could not see my mouth, and I could not show them emphatically the letters in the tongue, teeth, or lips. They could see my face during the online courses but could not when I was at school. I needed to raise my voice more. This was a struggle indeed. Moreover, we repeated the letters about language and tooth structure, for example, during the online lectures." (T2)*

Teacher T2 talked about the problem in teaching letters due to the mask problem in the face to face education process. It was a problem that the students could not see how the letter came out of the

mouth. This activity progressed more quickly because there was no mask use in distance education. Because the student was able to directly observe the way the letter was written and emphasized through the camera.

The *Problems Experienced* revealed that the teachers stated that the students experienced *Problems in Distance Education* with their writing activities. This problem was followed by technological deficiencies and family interventions in literacy studies. Regarding the *Problems in Face to Face Education* sub-theme, teachers had several problems while teaching letters and syllables. Since the literacy exercises coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic, some delays were observed in teaching letters and syllables due to avoiding contact with students. This situation was again augmented by students' problems adapting to the school during the face to face education period.

Under the *Solutions* theme, there was an Awards and Reinforcements (f=6) category regarding the General Problems (f=6) sub-theme. The following example is relevant for this category.

> *"I motivated them by telling that we are going have fun after finishing that. I kept saying we will paint if we finish this, we will start physical education, if we complete this, we will do different activities, and it worked (T6).*

This case provided by teacher T6 reveals that s/he found a solution to reward and reinforce students for motivational purposes against their reluctance and boredom in the process. S/he focused the attention of the students in this sense both by drawing and playing games.

Relevant examples for Color Writing in Reading Syllables (f=6), Keeping the Camera and Microphone On in Distance Education (f=2), Parent Collaboration (f=11), Greeting Games (f=3), Providing Feedback with Videos (f=6), Peer Support (f=1), and Rhyme and Poetry Reading (f=3) categories under the theme of Solutions for Literacy (f=28) within the *Solutions* theme are as follows.

> *"We had a lot of trouble with writing. The children were writing very badly. I was trying to see through the camera. Since some children's phone and tablet cameras were very old, I could not see their writings. I couldn't make corrections despite the necessity. I experienced this problem a lot, and then I tried to correct their writings by sending a lot of nursery rhymes to the children and having them write rhymes, numbers, and poems. It hasn't been very effective, so it's not as good as when we are in the classroom, but I mean, the writing is bad, the 1st graders' writing particularly bad." (T11)*

Teacher T11 argued that s/he wanted help from the parents for students who did not repeat daily in the reading process and expressed potential solutions to the writing problem in this way. Therefore, it might be asserted that the teachers encounter problems in writing rather than reading. They cooperated with the parents and tried to advance the process with the help of various directions and technology. They supported the reading and writing styles of the students with photographs and videos. They drew the students' attention in the syllable teaching by writing the syllables to be read in color, and they also applied for peer support when necessary.

The *Solutions to Problems* revealed that the teachers provided solutions to the problems they experienced in this process related to the Solutions for Literacy sub-theme. It was observed that they found solutions to the problems experienced, especially with the cooperation of the parents, the parents provided feedback with videos and photographs, and the parents collaborating with the primary schoolteacher have improved considerably in the student's literacy exercises.

Findings Regarding Parents' Views on the First Literacy Process during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The findings on the parents' opinions on the first literacy process during the Covid-19 pandemic are presented with two tables. Table 5 demonstrates that parents' opinions on the preparation

phase are grouped under two themes: Preparatory Activities for Distance Education and Preparatory Activities for Face to Face Education. Moreover, Table 6 summarizes parent opinions regarding the first literacy and progression phase with 3 themes: Reading, Writing, and Problems Experienced.

Findings Regarding Parents' Opinions on the Preparation Phase

The preparation stage, an essential part of developing a positive attitude towards the first literacy process, affects parents and students. Parents' views on the preparation for the first literacy phase during the Covid-19 pandemic are available in Table 5.

Table 5. Parent Opinions on the Preparation Phase

Theme	Sub-theme	Category	Codes	f
Preparatory Activities for Distance Education	Planning	Additional Resourcing	Education Sites	11
			Additional Sources	17
			Video, Images, Material	7
		Overcoming Deficiencies	Creating a Classroom Environment	3
			Stationery Materials	7
			Technological Needs	15
	Developmental Features	Availability	Pre-school education	13
			Hand, Arm, and Finger Development	8
			Letter and Number Knowledge	11
			Intelligence Games	5
			Painting and Line Exercises	2
			Associating Literacy with Daily Life	3
Preparatory Activities for Face to Face Education	Raising Awareness	Social Distance		3
		Hygiene Measures		9
		Mask Usage		6

The parent opinions regarding the first literacy and progression stages were grouped under two themes: *Preparatory Activities for Distance Education* and *Preparatory Activities for Face to Face Education*. The Preparatory Activities for Distance Education theme have sub-themes of *Planning* and *Developmental Features*. The categories of Additional Resourcing (f=35) and Overcoming Deficiencies (f=25) were formed under the Planning sub-theme, as the Availability (f=42) category was designed for the Developmental Features sub-theme. The *Raising Awareness* sub-theme under Preparatory Activities for Face to Face Education has Awareness Raising (f=18) category. The following examples are relevant to the Additional Resourcing (f=35) category for the Planning (f=60) sub-theme under the *Preparatory Activities for Distance Education* theme.

> "The material was a literacy kit called Triangle Education that our teacher bought. We followed him. It was quite comprehensive, as a weekly fascicle, and supportive in different disciplines such as mathematics, life sciences, and literacy. These are things that go cumulatively, you cannot rush it. The teacher already informs weekly about which pages will be followed in which fascicles. We followed it from there and progressed daily. The teacher also gave homework from the textbook, and we tried to complete them." (P19)

Parent P19 mentioned that supplementary resources were also used upon the teacher's suggestion besides the textbooks during the preparation process. Since the transition to free reading and writing has not been achieved yet, preparations for reading and writing were conducted step by step with the teacher's suggestion.

> "We deciphered all of the toys into text so that they could be used at home first, so if there were blocks, we wrote words and letters on them, we were trying to make an activity at home, well, from bingo to writing cards. Then we found pictures, for example, I downloaded some

from the internet, pictures that I thought might be meaningful. We showed those pictures to the children and started to talk about them and improve their vocabulary. There were activities given by our teacher, and we used them regularly every day. Besides, their books and the books we bought as extras were for exercises and short activities with the reading and writing content. However, they had better reading material. Because the children attended the online lesson for 6 hours and they exhausted all the screen, lesson, literacy times there. They were very bored because if we didn't play afterward, they wouldn't come near us." (P23)

Parent P23 stated that this process was supported with several additional visuals and games so that students would not get bored with distance education. This parent also improved the process with the works given by the teacher by grasping the student's attention with the visuals obtained from the internet and by discipline. S/he tried to increase the student's motivation by using the child's toys at home as course material.

Here is an example of the Overcoming Deficiencies (f=25) category of the Planning (f=60) sub-theme under the *Preparatory Activities for Distance Education* theme:

"I can say that I have prepared a quiet environment, established an internet connection to my house, changed my phone so that my child can access education with comfort, we do not have internet problems, and I cut our own expenses and spent it on their education. I tried to transform the house, the room environment, into a classroom, I can put it that way. For example, I wanted the room environment to be the same as the classroom environment, so I bought a desk, a chair, and books and helped him use his notebooks regularly." (P1)

Parent P1 implied that the student's room was tried to be transformed into a classroom environment in the preparation process for distance education, and in this sense, the necessary technological equipment was provided. All these preparatory steps can be considered as positive developments for distance education, as they increase the student's motivation towards the lessons. The following example is relevant to the Readiness (f=42) category of the Developmental Traits sub-theme under the *Preparatory Activities for Distance Education* theme:

"S/he knew rhythmic numbers and could count numbers from 1 to 100. S/he knew the shapes, most of the letters. S/he was even reading some things, knew some words, his/her own name, brother's name, s/he was trying to write. S/he was asking a lot, so I wouldn't teach too much so that s/he wouldn't be confused and learn in the classroom, frankly, I wasn't too involved. I was trying not to teach because I saw the problems of this in some of my students before. My own observations indicate that his/her readiness level was a bit better than the peers." (P30)

This example by parent P30 showed that the student acquired the knowledge of letters and numbers before starting the literacy process. Although s/he is at a good level compared to his/her peers, s/he was not fully passed on to literacy by his/her parents before starting primary school. This process relied on prolonged literacy teaching left to the primary schoolteacher to have healthier progress.

The *Preparatory Activities for Distance Education* theme, in Table 5, shows that students' parents utilized additional sourcebooks for the *Planning* sub-theme. They also benefited from educational sites in the process. As the technological infrastructure belonging to the category of overcoming deficiencies was satisfied, the readiness category related to the *Developmental Features* sub-theme revealed that the majority of the students received pre-school education and had letter-number knowledge.

The following examples are helpful to shed light upon the category of Social Distancing (f=3), Hygiene Precautions (f=9= and Mask Use (f=6) regarding the Awareness sub-theme (f=18) under the *Preparatory Activities for Face to Face Education* theme:

> *"First of all, we tried to take care of his/her health. We warned him/her and emphasized what s/he should do in the school environment should do without a mask or when s/he goes to the washrooms. Because it is 1st grade, we said do whatever your teacher says, with your teacher. Don't leave his/her side. We gave feedback to the child about the behaviors and attitudes that should be treated rather than the teaching context." (P26)*

This example indicates that parent P26 conducted awareness-raising activities on hygiene for the student before the face to face education. It can be argued that parents paid attention to mask, distance, cleanliness, and health issues and show their uneasiness when sending their students to school.

Table 5 demonstrates that the parents made their children aware of hygiene measures and warned about mask usage for the *Preparatory Activities for Face to Face Education.* It was also revealed that they focused on literacy exercises in the distance education process and on the mask-distance-cleaning issue during the face to face education period.

Findings Regarding Parents' Views on First literacy and Progression Stage

The first literacy and progress phase is the period after the preparation phase, where the student learns the letters and tries to read the texts. The parent support is quite substantial in helping the student to read and write at home. Parents' views on the process of first literacy and progressing stages during the Covid-19 pandemic are available in Table 6.

Table 6. Parents' Views on First literacy and Progression Stage

Theme	Sub-theme	Category	Codes	f
Reading	Reading in Distance Education			23
	Reading in Face to Face Education			7
Writing	Writing in Distance Education			17
	Reading in Face to Face Education			2
Experienced Problems	Problems in Distance Education	Common Issues	Absence of Classroom Environment	14
			Technological Issues	10
			Boring Out the Students	8
			Health problems	4
			Mental Fatigue	1
		Problems in Literacy	Distraction	2
			Motivation	8
			Student-Parent Conflict	4
			Parent's Conceptual Errors	2
			Mistakes in Writing	1
	Problems in Face to Face Education	Common Issues	Hygiene Issue	6
		Problems in Literacy	Lack of Reinforcers	4
			Environmental Comparison	1

Table 6 demonstrates parents' opinions regarding the first literacy and progression stages grouped under *Reading and Writing* and *Experienced Problems* themes. *The reading* theme was divided into *Reading in Distance Education* and *Reading in Face to Face Education* sub-themes. Relevant examples for these themes are as follows:

> *"The lack of school attendance during this pandemic, teaching letters through distance education, individual exercise sessions via Zoom and hence the boredom in the child slowed the reading speed." (P25)*

The example provided by parent P25 is about the impediments in the reading speed due to the student's boredom in the reading exercises that continued with distance education. With the continuity of face to face education and learning all the sounds, the spelling phase can be completed, and further reading activities can be conducted. This shows that the reading activities performed in the face to face education process are more functional than those in distance education.

The *Writing* theme was divided into *Writing in Distance Education* and *Writing in Face to Face Education* sub-themes. The following examples are relevant to the Writing in Distance Education and Writing in Face to Face Education sub-themes:

"Although left-handers write slower, we were well prepared. I am currently monitoring. If one student can finish a text in the 3rd or 4th rank in a class of 20 people, which shows that s/he is progressing. More or less, we can notice it. As the teacher cannot supervise it, we observe it ourselves." (P3)

The explanation parent P3 indicates that the student has made progress in writing during the distance education period. It can be asserted that the students who perform activities such as pencil grip, letter recognition, syllable formation in face to face education, and switch to distance education at the stage of initiating and progressing in literacy increase their speed in reading and writing in this process.

"Writing is one notch behind reading, it gets boring. S/he does not want to write. Especially, let's say, for example, s/he will write A for a whole page. S/he doesn't write it. We cannot make him/her. S/he only writes when it is mandatory, assigned by the teacher, or when it's puzzle style or activity-based or engaging. Moreover, s/he loves performing activities where there is less writing. But when there is a writing assignment that takes a long time, it gets boring. The kid doesn't want to do it." (P26)

Parent P26 revealed that the students do the homework given by the teachers in face to face education although being bored at home. If writing activities are done in a fun way, they are more attractive to the student. It can be argued that students can achieve more efficiency because they are less bored through fewer writing tasks and more fun assignments.

The individual analyses of parent views on the first literacy and progression stage under *Read*ing and *Writing* themes indicated no significant problems in students' progress in reading and writing through distance education. It can be thought that students were ready for sound and letter teaching, as they received face to face education during the preparation stage and switched to distance education at the starting and progress stages. It can also indicate that teachers did not delay their reading and writing activities during the distance education process.

The *Experienced Problems* theme was divided into *Problems into Distance Education* and *Problems into Face to Face Education* sub-themes. General Problems (f=37) and Problems Experienced in Literacy (f=17) categories were formed under the Problems Experienced in Distance Education sub-theme, while the Problems Experienced in Face to Face Education sub-theme was divided into General Problems (f=6) and Problems Experienced in Literacy (f=5). Relevant examples for Lack of Classroom Environment (f=14), Technological Problems (f=10), Student Boredom (f=8), Health Problems (f=4) Mental Fatigue (f=1) codes belonging to the General Problems (f=37) category related to the Problems Experienced in Distance Education sub-theme within the *Problems Experienced* theme are as follows:

"Although it is not like face to face education, because they did not see their environment with peers, and the teacher, they still learned the subjects well. But there were many shortcomings, namely the lack of friends and teachers." (P16)

Parent P16 expressed the lack of school and class environment with their explanations in the example. Other parents whose opinions were taken also support their children to continue their education by recognizing the classroom environment through face to face education. It can be argued that the contact that the teacher establishes with students is one of the most critical factors affecting the education process.

"Since it was 1ˢᵗ grade, I was happy, even if it was two days of classroom training. Because my daughter was getting educated, when we go online, when she looks at the screen for 5 minutes, her eyes get tired, her back hurts, she can't get up and walk, and I wouldn't say I liked it. But if you say about her education, is it beneficial for her reading, it is seventy percent. Her reading improved a lot, but as I said, when she focuses for 10 minutes, she starts to turn left and right in the 11th minute, she is busy with her notebook, she is dealing with something because it is not the school environment, this is my teacher." (P1)

The parent P1's explanation supports the topics of boredom of the student and health problems. This view of the parents reveals both the advantages and disadvantages of distance education. Technological devices create health problems for a student in this age group and cause them to get bored. Moreover, teachers enable them to improve reading and writing because they do not break away from education even from a distance.

Examples regarding Distraction (f=2), Motivation (f=8), Student-Parent Conflict (f=4), Parent's Conceptual Errors (f =2), and Spelling Errors (f=1) categories in the Experienced Problems in Distance Education sub-theme within the *Problems Experienced* theme are as follows.

"I saw a significant shortcoming, we couldn't do it. For example, the letter d is confused with b, there are conceptual structures that the child cannot figure, and for example, we had difficulties in correcting them. Because s/he needs an academic background to overcome this, unfortunately, we could not be very productive in terms of dictation and writing skills because it had to be done by an expert. These two issues were very challenging." (P19)

Parent P19 stated that the parents were not as competent as the teacher in teaching literacy and had some conceptual misconceptions. It can be asserted that parent-teacher cooperation significantly affects the probability of mislearning for students.

The following example was relevant to the Hygiene Problem (f=6) in the General Problems category related to the Problems Experienced in Face to Face Education sub-theme under the *Experienced Problems* theme:

"For instance, I did a lot of things for my child for social distance, cleaning, hygiene and mask, and I warned him/her. The kid said directly, "my friends do not comply with the social distance when they go out." I'm sure s/he has never played outside. Not once. There was too much anxiety or something like that." (P24)

Parent P24's explanation shows that s/he is very careful about hygiene and that the student is also affected by this situation. It can be argued that the parents have hygiene concerns when they send their children to face to face education. An example on the Lack of Reinforcers (f=4) and Comparison with the Environment (f=1) within the category of Problems in Literacy, related to the sub-theme of Problems in Face to Face Education under the *Experienced Problems* theme is:

"How does the pandemic affect the child, how would his/her relationship with the teacher be? It's an era of masks, kids want to get a 'well done'. It is necessary to say 'high-five' or pat on the shoulder, at the very least, or if the child is doing it wrong, the teacher has to pick up that pencil and correct it, but these cannot occur very often. We cannot warn anyone. Maybe students receive everything from us, but do they achieve fully at school, from the teacher, and benefit the peer environment? I'm a little upset about these. Our child wants to be liked,

approved and supported by someone. Maybe all children want it, even on a verbal level. A touch is a good thing, these affect him/her a lot." (P3)

Parent P3 mentioned the lack of reinforcers experienced by his/her child during the distance education process. It can be noted that being approved by the teacher affects the success of the student positively. These approval and reinforcing situations occur naturally between the teacher and the student in the classroom environment, while it gets quite limited in distance education due to time constraints and technological problems. The *Problems Experienced* theme, in general, revealed two things. The parents stated that the students experienced problems due to the absence of the classroom environment, which is noted in the *Problems in Distance Education* sub-theme. Besides, they stated that they had problems with hygiene grouped under *the Problems in Face to Face Education* sub-theme. Table 6 demonstrates that the parents stated that they also benefited from distance education even though they favored face to face education. 1st grade students who started primary school in the 2020-2021 education term spent the first literacy preparation process at school in classrooms and completed the initial and progress stage with distance education. The parents who stated that this situation delayed the reading and writing activities found it accurate that the educational activities were performed remotely in terms of health conditions. Problems such as distraction, motivation problems, conflict with parents, lack of reinforcement from the teacher, classroom environment, and health problems affected the students and the parents during the distance education process. The parents who collaborated with the primary school teachers stated that the process turned into an advantage for the students regarding reading and writing skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study analyzed the teacher and parent opinions on the literacy process during the Covid-19 pandemic regarding the stages of preparation and initiation and progressing in the first literacy. It was observed that the teachers conducted activities to meet their students and inform the students about the process during the preparation phase. The teachers explained that they tried to determine students' Developmental Traits at the beginning of the preparation phase and stated that they mostly performed motivation exercises for their affective characteristics.

Teachers expressed that they organized activities for listening, hand, arm, finger muscle exercises, drawing and lineation exercises, and motivation activities during the preparation stage. Tales, story reading, were utilized in listening exercises, dough playing in hand, arm, finger muscle studies, drawing, and line exercises in drawing studies.

The activities that teachers did for parents are awareness-raising and plan Preparatory Activities in the preparation phase. All the teachers raised parents' awareness of the general process within the scope of the preparatory work for the parents. Moreover, it was concluded that the majority of the teachers tried to raise parents' awareness of the literacy process and guided the students to the first literacy activities by helping the parents plan daily routines. Kluth (2020) stated that students could have discipline and balance in their daily lives both in studying and in the time allocated for games and exercises with a daily plan that parents prepare for them. The process might be even more straightforward if they also direct their parents and plan the day while teachers lead the process.

Teacher opinions regarding the first literacy and progression phase revealed that all teachers had reading, writing, and reading comprehension exercises in distance and face to face education. Teachers mostly used narration in distance education and return demonstration and question-answer in classroom teaching as methods and techniques. They also indicated that lectures and activities were only reflected on the computer screen as the root of narration dominance in distance education. Since this process was managed by a teacher-centered method due to the inactivity of the students, they most frequently used this method. It was revealed that the return demonstration method was used the most during classroom teaching. It was observed that teachers adopt the constructivist approach by including the student in the process while teaching letters, syllables, words, and other stages in

classroom teaching. It can be argued that literacy activities were more beneficial in classroom teaching.

The teachers' materials, tools, and equipment at the initial and progress stages show that the additional sources and educational sites were mostly preferred. It was found that all teachers benefited from different sources and various educational sites besides the textbooks. Türker and Dündar (2020) implied that the EBA platform, which teachers frequently use during distance education, was necessary and valuable. Moreover, they asserted that the development and improvement of this education platform against turbulences in the future would provide an advantage to the education stakeholders. Kasa Ayten (2021) also stated that teachers used educational sites extensively and included educational sites such as EBA and Okulistik in their lessons. Moreover, it was observed that teachers use technology especially in Turkish lessons and the literacy process. Bakioğlu and Çevik (2020) concluded that teachers developed a positive attitude toward using technology in their educational activities during the Covid-19 pandemic. It can be noted that this supports the view that in the first literacy process, primary school teachers shall use technological tools and content to advance the process comfortably in both distance and classroom teaching. Moreover, teachers' effective use of technological content effectively, students also improve in this regard. Aldemir and Avşar (2020) found similar results. They discovered that individuals started to use digital tools, especially social media, while working from home, attending meetings remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic, as the students were attending classes through distance education, following the news, or just spending time.

The problems experienced by primary school teachers during the first literacy start and progress stages vary in classroom and distance education. The general problems experienced in distance education were the boring out of the students and the technological deficiencies, the family intervention in the reading exercises, and the writing issues. Akgül and Oran (2020) stated that the students were bored, could not focus on the lesson, were delayed in learning, acted reluctantly, did not care, and had problems with the course material supply in the educational activities during the distance education process. Since the students were away from the classrooms, they stated that they had motivation problems for education. The teachers' opinions regarding the categories boredom of students and technological deficiency under the general problems support this view. Bayburtlu (2020) reached similar results and stated that Turkish teachers had problems with students due to technological equipment and connection deficiencies. Moreover, Erbaş (2021), Fidan (2020) and Sağırlı (2021) highlighted technological problems and the inadequacy of infrastructure and equipment.

It was found that this problem is the most common since the teachers could not intervene with the students during distance education regarding the writing problems, and the parents could not provide adequate writing instructions. Ekici Calın (2019) concluded that the parents' knowledge of the sound-based sentence method is not at the desired level for the first literacy teaching. Besides, they should be informed about the sound-based sentence method to overcome this problem. Considering the problems experienced, technological inadequacies and the family interventions in reading exercises stand out. Teachers stated that some families did not regularly attend distance education due to the lack of internet and technological tools. Yurtbakan and Akyıldız (2020) found that students could not attend the classes due to the high cost of the internet, the lack of inadequacy, and this hindered students' access to the assignments given by the teachers. Moreover, it was observed that the letters, syllables, words, or sentences that the students could not read were whispered to the student by the parents during the reading activities, and the student told this to their teachers. It can be argued that this problem prolongs the transition period of the student to reading and writing. Another problem with parents was that they caused mislearning in the first literacy teaching. It was found that the parents gave the pronunciation of sounds to be taught inaccurately, causing permanent learning errors for the students. This shows that parents had difficulties in providing the necessary support to the student. Uğur Göçmez and Ünal (2021) also stated in their study that parents negatively affect the first literacy process. Bayat (2014) highlighted that the parent with difficulties providing sufficient support to their students caused various negativities in the first literacy teaching process. Informing the parents about the first literacy teaching and curriculum was propounded as a solution.

It was discovered that the first problem encountered in classroom teaching was about letters and syllables. It was revealed that especially the students without pre-school education had problems with pencil grip, writing letters, and how the sounds come out of the mouth due to masks. Besides, several teachers have also stated that there were problems with students' adaptation to school.

Teachers' solutions for these problems indicate that they used rewards and reinforcement to solve the general problems and that parent cooperation was a solution to the literacy problems. Sağırlı (2021) concluded similarly that the parents made a significant contribution to the process in the first literacy teaching conducted with distance education, and the support they showed during this period flourished teachers' work. Kırmızıgül (2020) argued that parents were also substantially affected by the digitalization of the process after the decisions were taken regarding education with the Covid-19 pandemic. The families who have experienced distance education have also indirectly participated and contributed to the education process. Akyol (2019) also stated that the teachers' biggest assistants in literacy and language development were families. The importance of the family factor has become even more vital than before during the Covid-19 pandemic, and parent cooperation has become integral. Moreover, parents provided feedback with videos and photographs so that the teachers could follow the process. Teachers found solutions such as applauding students, playing games, drawing pictures, painting, and gifting storybooks as rewards and reinforcements.

Teacher opinions revealed that classroom teaching is more beneficial than distance education. It was highlighted that it is more appropriate to contact the student and provide direct information transfer so that the first literacy process can progress more appropriately. It was stated that mislearning could be prevented faster during classroom teaching, and proper teaching can be provided without parent intervention. Moreover, it was noted that while student-centered methods were preferred in classroom teaching for literacy activities while the narration method was more common in the distance education process. It was also found that the methods and techniques used vary in classroom teaching. Similarly, Ergüç Şahan and Parlar (2021) asserted that primary school teachers had more difficulty in the distance education process than face to face education, and it is a process that requires more planning. Besides, there is more in-class interaction during classroom teaching, but the narration is more common in distance education, especially at the initial phase.

Findings regarding the parent opinions on the preparation stage in the first literacy process were grouped under two themes: preparatory activities for distance and classroom teaching. It was observed that parents mostly used additional sourcebooks as materials and tools for students during the planning phase of the preparation process for distance education. They benefited from various educational sites, videos, and visuals besides the textbooks. The teacher and parent opinions support each other in this regard. The opinions hint at the finding that both sides benefited from additional sourcebooks, educational sites, various videos, and visuals in the first literacy process. According to the parent opinions regarding readiness within the Developmental Traits sub-theme of the preparation process for distance education, approximately half of the students received pre-school education, and they had knowledge of letters and numbers. It was also revealed that the hand, arm, and finger muscles were more developed in these students. It can be concluded that students with pre-school education were more prepared for the first literacy process. It was observed that the parents made the students more conscious about hygiene, masks, and distance precautions in the first literacy preparation process for classroom teaching when they sent their children to the school. Willis (2020) stated that behavior, self-control skills, and social skills related to hygiene should be taught by parents. Yılmaz et al. (2020) and Ergüç Şahan and Parlar (2021) also revealed that parents had health concerns. It can be understood that parents were worried about the adverse effects of the Covid-19 pandemic rather than the literacy teaching in the face to face education.

The parents' views on the first literacy teaching preparation stage were examined under two groups as distance education and face to face education. It was revealed that awareness-raising studies were conducted in face to face education while planning and monitoring the developmental features are in question in distance education. It was observed that the parents mostly benefited from sourcebooks and educational sites as materials and tools in distance education. Moreover, parents

stated that they needed the technological tools most and felt the absence of the classroom environment while eliminating deficiencies for the students. It was observed that almost half of the students received pre-school education, and one-third of them knew letters and numbers. It was revealed that some of the remaining students did not progress much within their parents' decisions to have this information in primary school. It was observed that most parents felt uncomfortable about hygiene while sending their children to school as they raised awareness about social distance and mask usage for the preparatory work for classroom teaching. Still, they thought that distance education would be better hygiene.

The parent opinions regarding the first literacy start and progression stages, the themes of reading, writing, and experienced problems were analyzed through two sub-themes: distance and classroom teaching. Parents stated that their children's progress in reading was faster in the distance education process for the reading theme. They stated that the same was true for the writing theme. It was observed that both skills improved in the distance education process. It can be asserted that students who started their education in classrooms at the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year and switched to distance education in November could read certain syllables and words because they had learned only the sounds in the first group during this period. They learned the sounds in other groups and advanced in reading and writing during the distance education process.

The problems experienced by the parents show that the problems arising from the lack of a classroom environment were the most common in distance education. The fact that the students could not meet the conditions in the classroom at home caused problems in this process. Moreover, parents also stated that they frequently experienced problems such as technological deficiencies and student boredom. The parents stated that the students mostly encountered motivation problems the problems experienced in literacy in the distance education process. Çaykuş and Mutlu Çaykuş (2020) emphasized that psychological support should be available to students and the group whose psychological resilience should be increased by providing psychological support during the Covid-19 pandemic process was primary school students. It can be argued that this situation was rooted in the lack of classroom environment, the distance of the teacher, and the fear created by the pandemic. The general problems experienced in face to face education, the hygiene problem were reencountered, and the lack of reinforcement for literacy.

It was revealed that the interviewed teachers had great difficulties in the distance education process and could not actively involve the students in the process as they did in face to face education. They stated that both students and the parents experienced adaptation problems during the pandemic. Yurtbakan and Akyıldız (2020) stated that primary school students preferred face to face education instead of distance format to have more efficient education and training activities. The parents found it suitable for their children to stay home and continue their literacy activities with distance education during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was concluded that they supported face to face education and found it more beneficial when the pandemic is overcome. Akgül and Oran (2020) reached similar results and revealed that the advantages of distance education are that students do not fall behind in education, educational activities are maintained, parents are closely interested in the lessons and student development, and students are protected from pandemics and other diseases because they do not go to crowded spaces such as schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations can be propounded for literacy during the Covid-19 pandemic:

- Technological support should be provided to teachers, students, and parents with technological issues due to the suspension of schools due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Students' internet connection and technological device needs can be met at a minimum level to prevent delays and disruptions in the first literacy process and to progress more

systematically and healthily with distance education. Thus, the problems of families and teachers can be reduced to a manageable level.

- The methods used by teachers in the literacy process in distance education remained in a teacher-centered approach. In-service training on technological pedagogical content knowledge may significantly improve the literacy process for teachers.

- Educational platforms with enriched content can be initiated considering the importance of first literacy teaching and the material and content-based deficiencies experienced by primary school teachers in the distance education process.

- All stakeholders can be provided with psychological support and guidance activities for teacher-student-parent cooperation and the problems experienced during the epidemic period.

- Students who started their first literacy education with distance education during the epidemic period could not participate as actively as in the classroom teaching and completed the literacy transition process later. Recovery lessons can be organized for these students.

- The teacher and parent opinions on the literacy process during the Covid-19 pandemic were examined in this attempt. The impact of the pandemic on the education system and all stakeholders can be examined with alternative data collection methods.

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