

Unraveling college students' conceptualisation of emergency remote teaching: A metaphor analysis

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Abstract

The current COVID-19 situation has affected almost all walks of life, including language education. As a result, remote teaching practices have become the mainstream offering in many settings. However, how students respond to this transition needs to be grasped to develop a deeper understanding of the educational practices at this period. Metaphor analysis was used as a methodology to unpack how language learners conceptualize learning and instruction during the emergency remote teaching (ERT) in a COVID-19 context. To this end, an open-ended questionnaire in which the participants provided their background and a semi-structured form through which their metaphorical images were captured were used. Elicited metaphor analysis was used to analyze the data gathered from 208 English majoring students studying at a state university in north-eastern Turkey. The results suggest that a great many students have unfavorable dispositions towards ERT, even though some reported that they cherish these opportunities as they help them keep track of their own learning. Several suggestions are made in the light of the findings.

1. Introduction

Currently, the world has been struggling with a traumatic circumstance, the social crisis of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19 pandemic, hereafter) that started in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. The disease with the common cold symptoms is dangerous as people can be infected easily with close social contact (Yan, 2020), thereby requiring physical closures of business, entertainment, and education (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, most educational institutions around the world have been temporarily closed as a precautionary measure, although some are partially or fully open (UNESCO, 2020). The related statistics from UNESCO (2020) show that there are 130 closures nationwide, affecting around 1 billion learners, accounting for 56.6% of total enrolled learners. This social crisis has created teaching and learning challenges for diverse parties, including teachers, students, and families. Among these parties, students deserve emphasis as they need to be supported effectively and taught how to be self-directed to manage the new learning environment (Carter et al., 2020).

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2. Literature

2.1. Emergency Remote Teaching

During the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, ERT has been implemented by many countries in an attempt to provide a quick solution to an emerging situation of a large-scale impact. About 90% of the students as well as a great many learners, amounting to more than 1.5 billion, to give a number, were affected (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020), which resulted in the closure of educational institutions, radical changes in the content of delivery, and considerable shifts in educational practices. As a result of these developments, remote teaching opportunities have become a mainstream offering, and there was almost an overnight transformation to online education (Parthasarathy & Murugesan, 2020). Although ERT and the terms such as distance education and online learning are used interchangeably, they are not the same. ERT should be considered as a temporary change in the mode of instructional delivery under emergency conditions such as war, natural disasters, and pandemics. The current pandemic situation is not permanent as the face-to-face education is expected to start following the emergency situation (Hodges et al., 2020).

2.2. Outcomes of ERT: Pluses and Minuses

The current studies have shown that as a quick solution, ERT has worked well, for students do not fall behind academically as online educational activities minimise the effects of large-scale school closures (Hebebcı et al., 2020). Also, the flexible nature of remote teaching that helps students go on learning whenever and wherever they want contributes to its popularity (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Besides, it contributes to the development of teachers and academicians: better digital literacy skills and competencies, enhanced skills to prepare effective course materials, better teaching skills, increased self-confidence, and more positive attitudes towards distance education (Elçi, 2021). Also, such remote teaching and learning activities conducted for school practicum could help teacher trainers equip candidates with required skills and decrease online teaching fear of teacher candidates (Ersin et al., 2020).

However, the related literature mostly documents various technological, pedagogical, and social challenges of this response to the spread of COVID-19 (see, Ferri et al., 2020). One of the most serious concerns is that the shift may impact low-income students seriously and hampers education equity as all students may not have a computer and Internet access at home (Akbulut et al., 2020; Ferri et al., 2020; Morgan, 2020). Also, infrastructural needs, equipment, frequent technological problems and access-related issues decrease both teachers' and students' motivation. Besides, one of its weaknesses is the lack of interaction between teachers and students, among peers, and teachers and students. However, healthy communication between administrators, staff, and parents is required to have satisfying outcomes in which effective communication ensures guidance for instruction, assessment, technological problems, and effective student support (Ferri et al., 2020; Morgan, 2020). Also, this shift has some negative affective consequences as home isolation and attempts to adjust to the new normal can lead to feelings of worry and anxiety, which definitely affect students' academic and affective development (Morgan, 2020). To complicate the matter even further, the excessive use of technologies such as the Internet, computers, and mobile devices could lead to health problems as excessive screen time may result in headaches, back pain, eye problems, to list a few (World Health Organization, 2014). Furthermore, teachers who offer instruction via distance education for the first time need technical support to stay updated (Ferri et al., 2020; Iglesias-Pradas et al., 2021; Morgan, 2020). Heavy workload is another teacher-related problem as they need to design teaching content and materials that could be uploaded to the new digital platforms (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). Another related challenge is assessment and evaluation, as this mode of instructional delivery cannot avoid plagiarism and cheating (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015).

2.3. The Study Context: Turkey

Turkey is not an exception in this educational shift in which all educational institutions have been closed, starting in March 2020, and the total number of affected students is 24,901,925. The statistical data about

Turkey show that all school types have been affected seriously by the pandemic: 11,404,385 secondary school students, 7,198,987 tertiary level students, 4,972,430 primary school students, and 1,326,123 pre-school students (UNESCO, 2020). As a response to these school closures, the Turkish Ministry of National Education established a distance education system, strengthened Educational Informatics Network (EBA), and collaborated with Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) to offer educational content to students from primary to high school (Akbulut et al., 2020; Özer, 2020). Besides, Turkish universities have utilised various distance education platforms for their instructional delivery in all majors. Although face-to-face instruction in practical courses of medical education and internship training still goes on (Tokuç & Varol, 2020), almost all faculties have shifted to online emergency remote teaching.

As this massive shift is one of the latest educational issues in Turkey, Turkish scholars have focused on the use of remote teaching as a popular research area. These studies fall into two broad categories: commentaries and surveys. There are commentaries on the psychological effects of the pandemic on students and reflections on education (see, for instance, Akat & Karataş, 2020; Akbulut et al., 2020). Also, Turkish researchers investigated both teachers' and students' view on distance education practices during the pandemic (see, for example, Hebebcı, Bertiz, & Alan, 2020; Keskin & Ozer-Kaya, 2020; Koçoğlu & Tekdal, 2020; Özer & Üstün, 2020; Süğümlü, 2021; Şendoğan-Erdoğan, 2020; Şener, Sağlam-Ertem, & Meç, 2020; Yıldırım & Ergün-Elverici, 2021) as well as parents' ERT experiences and perspectives (see, for instance, Mısırlı & Ergüleç, 2021). In addition, some studies investigate the effects of such instructional delivery on course outcomes (see, for example, Öztürk Karataş & Tuncer, 2020). Moreover, there are several studies that approach the issue from the perspectives of faculty staff to find out the gains of the process and determine Turkish academics' professional development needs (see, for instance, Elçi, 2021). Overall, Turkish studies have highlighted the fact that there are both positive and negative attitudes towards emergency remote teaching in Turkey. Related parties including teachers, students, and parents feel content, for it compensates for education losses quickly and effectively, offers students flexibility regarding time and place of learning, increases learner autonomy and encourages them to self-regulate their learning process, and enhances the skill of digital socialisation. However, restricted social interaction, problems with infrastructure, technological problems, increased screen time, lack of social interaction, parental need for young learners and students with special needs, and ineffective communication with the instructors have all caused people to feel negative for it and long for face-to-face education.

2.4. The Current Study: English Language Teaching via ERT

Despite these studies focusing on students' and teachers' views in a general sense, the existing literature in Turkey covers a limited number of studies on the role of ERT in particularly English language teaching. There are a few investigating English language teacher candidates' views and practices. To illustrate, Öztürk Karataş and Tuncer (2020), found that although ERT enhanced pre-service teachers' writing, reading, and listening skills, speaking skill was neglected. Ersin et al. (2020) used ERT to offer practice teaching (practicum), i.e., e-practicum. They saw that technical problems did not discourage teacher candidates who found e-practicum and e-mentoring effective to lower their teaching anxiety. There are also studies investigating views of students at English preparatory programme. For example, contrary to most of the earlier studies, Şendoğan-Erdoğan (2020) found that the students were mostly positive about remote learning, although they complained about exhaustion. Besides, there are some studies investigating ELT teachers' views and teaching experiences, such as Şener et al. (2020), who highlighted various technical, institutional, and pedagogical problems. Yet, the teachers developed positive attitudes towards ERT in time as it created a community of practice where peers supported each other.

Very few studies on the role of ERT for English language teaching highlight the growing need to elicit Turkish English majoring students' reactions to this massive change in education. Especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, a provisional shift of instructional delivery has accelerated the digitalization of

education. Learners at this stage have undergone a significant transition from their traditional mode of delivery. Therefore, learners' beliefs regarding how they view this switchover have been a debate of controversy with learners advocating either face-to-face or online modalities. As a result, many people have been questioning the effectiveness and preparedness of instruction and institutions that offer online instruction. Therefore, how students react to the sudden shift needs to be well-understood in order to develop applicable policies that will help promote quality instruction.

It is known that learners get into learning environments with preconceived ideas, entrenched beliefs and prior experiences. There are various methodologies to explore those beliefs and ideas, and metaphor research has had its share. In line with the surge of interest in cognitive studies in the past few decades (Mahlios et al., 2010), there has been a quest for people's thoughts. This has paved the way for analyzing the ways people interpret the world. To this end, metaphor analysis is used as a methodology that enables researchers to unpack how learners and teachers conceptualize learning and instruction. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argued that our conceptual system is metaphorical and metaphorical mapping of how we conceptualize everyday language, as well as our abstract concepts, could help surface the less familiar terms and concepts to a more familiar realm. In this manner, metaphors are more than a part of the language: they are tools that assist us to unravel thought and reason. Such a pursuit is an opportunity to understand and reflect on emerging situations. Moreover, in the documented literature metaphors are used as tools for awareness-raising and reflection (Çalışıcı & Sümen, 2018). Despite the effectiveness of metaphor studies in many fields, no study, to the best of researchers, using metaphors to elicit students' perceptions for the emergency remote teaching situation was found in the documented literature. Understanding learners' motivations, responses and feelings towards remote teaching practices after the Covid 19 situation merits attention as the pandemic has created unrepresented educational affordances. Therefore, there is a growing need to elicit learner responses to the shift in the modalities of instruction. Above all, the research potential of metaphor analysis encouraged the researchers to choose it as their main data gathering method. Metaphor analysis ensures access to tacit knowledge, draws a holistic picture of both understanding and knowledge, does not allow the participants self-present themselves and thus offers automated action, and it combines both quantitative and qualitative research perspective (Moser, 2000). To this end, this study conducted Elicited Metaphor Analysis (EMA) to bring about students' motivations and experiences with remote learning.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study attempts to determine reactions and feelings of students majoring in English students regarding ERT. A qualitative inquiry was used as the researchers did not start with pre-designed hypotheses, and they gathered detailed descriptive data to gain a comprehensive understanding of learners' feelings and experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The researchers chose a case study not as a methodological preference but as the entity to be studied (Stake, 2005). The case study should be understood as "the close examination of people, topics, issues or programs" (Hays, 2004, p. 218). The present investigation could be entitled as an intrinsic case study as the researchers aim at understanding that particular case rather than generalise their findings (Stake, 2005).

3.2. Setting and Sample

The target institution for this study was a language and literature department of a state university located in northeastern Turkey, where both researchers have been working as fully-fledged staff for over 10 years. To save time and money and gather reliable data under these emergency conditions, the researchers utilised a purposive sampling strategy that is a way of gathering data from the nearest participants (Cohen et al., 2007; Dawson, 2007; Yin, 2018). A total of 208 students (F=145; M=63) enrolled in the English Language and Literature program during the 2020-2021 academic year participated in the study. The sample consisted

of English majors from the preparatory programme to the fourth grade. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 34, with a mean of 21.20. The researchers invited learners to participate in the study using online meeting platforms such as Google Classroom and the Learning Management System offered by their institutions as an e-platform for instructional delivery and assessment.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

Elicited Metaphor Analysis (EMA) was used in many studies (e.g., Akbari, 2013; Dincer, 2017; Farrell, 2006; Genç, 2017; Güneş & Fırat, 2016; Jin et al., 2014; Şimşek, 2014; Wan et al., 2011), and in this study, it was utilised to gather the qualitative data of the present study, which should be understood as a discourse analysis method to explore meanings (Zheng & Song, 2010). In cognitive linguistics, metaphors are “no longer thought of as a mere decoration of language, but functions as a cognitive instrument” (Zheng & Song, 2010, p. 48) due to the correlation between language and thought. When people are asked to make a metaphor, they give “one thing a name or description that belongs by convention to something else, on the grounds of some similarity between the two” (Leary, 1994, p. 4). Metaphors as powerful linguistic devices simplify and reflect people's views, perceptions, feelings, and experiences by describing phenomenon with familiar terms, i.e., a kind of mapping between source and target (Kövecses, 2010). As both making and interpreting metaphors are seen as creative acts (Davidson, 1978), data gathering and analysis processes in the current research should be regarded as creative.

A questionnaire in which the participants provided their background (age, gender, grade) and a semi-structured form through which their metaphorical images were captured were used. The students were asked to fill in an elicitation form which included 3 elements, namely, a target domain, a source domain, and an entailment. In the target domain, the students were given the abstract topic (remote learning), and in the source domain, they provided a concrete image. An entailment was used to see how the participants explained the metaphor. To put it more specifically, in the semi-structured part, they completed the following sentence: “Remote learning is (like)..... because.....” The participation was voluntary, and the students were provided with an example sentence to encourage them to develop similar metaphors. As the participants were all English majors and could express themselves well in written English, they were asked to answer that one question in English. After gathering data, EMA was used to ascertain perceptions about remote learning. Following the qualitative data analysis guideline of Miles and Huberman (1994), the researchers first condensed the data in which they examined the self-reported metaphor elicitation documents to exclude the ones with incomplete answers, unclearly articulated metaphorical images, or the blank ones (N= 10). Then they separately read the answers to familiarise themselves with the metaphors. The data were categorized by identifying the themes. Initially, the metaphors generated were listed thematically. Then the categorization was made based on the positive, negative, and neutral ones. During data analysis, first, the researchers analysed the documents separately to compare their answers to reach a consensus, which served as a kind of coder triangulation for research validity and reliability. Besides, to help the interested parties confirm the study findings, the raw data have been presented in the form of a list covering all metaphors in alphabetical order. Following the coding process, the researchers compared the codes, and it was found that a majority of the codes were the same. We followed THE thematic synthesis approach by Thomas and Harden (2008) and discussed the overlaps and divergences rather than computing the consistency of coders.

4. Findings

This section provides an analysis of the target domain, source domain and entailments, and a discussion with reference to students' perceptions towards emergency remote teaching is made. The target domain of the metaphors was remote learning. As for the source domain, the students came up with a plethora of metaphors ranging from ones referring to objects to the ones referring to tools and media. Therefore, before

going into the justifications of the metaphors, the source domains were unravelled.

4.1. Source Domain

When the metaphors created by the learners were grouped, the following metaphorical categories were found. To put the participants' metaphors in descending order, they likened remote learning to an object (n=62); an experience (n=35); natural elements (n=26); a process (n=22); a place (n=18); food (n=15); a situation (n=13); a person (n=6); a creature (n=3); an animal (n=3); skill and media (n=3); and a tool (n=2). Accordingly, the participants use objects more than other categories to draw an analogy.

Table 1 gives a list of objects that students developed for their remote learning experience. As the list suggests, the students came up with varied opinions when drawing an analogy. The wealth of analogies seems to corroborate with students "paradoxical" experience of ERT (see Rahiem, 2020). It could be argued that metaphors referring to objects outnumber the ones in other categories.

Table 1

Metaphors Referring to Objects

A basketball hoop	Counterfeit goods
A Baby's toy	King Lear (The Book)
A bed	A lamp
A book in an unknown language	A Chain
A boring book	A loved [favorite] writer's unliked [unfavorite] book
A box of fireworks	A mask
A difficult instrument played for the first time	A painting
A hamper full of delicious appetizing fruits	Perfume
A rope	Plastic
A rope that chokes	A refrigerator with little food
A rubbish bin	A rope
A seat	A smartphone
A stove that does not burn	Socks
A valuable word document which went blank	Sunglasses
An alarm clock	Toilet slippers
An old table	A treadmill
A balloon	An unfiltered factory chimney
A blanket	A vase with no flowers
A bookshelf to be filled	A ventilator
A Broken watch	A video camera
A candle	A virus
A closet	A wall *
A couch	A wardrobe
A customer service call	A window
A dress	A health-warning picture on the cigarette package
An e-book	Hobby videos
An empty chest	An encyclopedia
An imitated violin	Glasses

* Was used to show if a metaphor was used more than once.

With reference to metaphors related to experience, the participants usually established a relationship between remote learning and unfavourable experiences (see Table 2). This is evident from the repeatedly uttered word “torture”. Other unfavourable experiences include “a hand squeezing my throat”, “sunburn”, “a divorce case”, “feeding on serum”, “listening to your favourite singer on the computer”, “spitting into the wind”, “watching a movie adapted from a book”, and “teaching swimming on land”. When the neutral and the positive metaphors are examined with reference to their entailments, it is seen that there are more metaphors in the negative category.

Table 2

Metaphors Referring to An Experience

	Metaphor generated
An oil stain	Listening to your favourite singer on the computer
A dream	Paying taxes
A hand squeezing my throat	Platonic love
A one-side conversation	Raising panda
A stiff competition	Riding a donkey
A trip to a museum	Watching a movie adapted from a book
Being nice to everyone	Sleeping
A divorce case	Spending through credit cards
Drinking warm milk	Spitting into the wind
Eating sunflower seeds	Sunburn
Eating Turkish kebab	Teaching swimming on land
Feeding on serum	Torture
Getting stuck in a cage	Waste of energy
Knitting	Watching a movie
Learning to dance in the moonlight	

Table 3 shows the metaphors referring to food and drinks. Without going into the entailments, it could be stated that some metaphors point to the missing elements or ingredients. Baklava without syrup and food with no taste are to be categorized in this sort.

Table 3

Metaphors Referring to Food & Drinks

	Metaphor generated
Baklava without syrup	Ghanoush
Cat food	Herbal tea
Chips	Kokoreç
Chocolate	Plum
Corn	Soup
Food with no taste	Turkish coffee
Frozen foods in supermarkets	

Another category drawn from the metaphors created by the students is metaphors referring to natural elements (see Table 4). A surface analysis again would give us the lack of a complete picture. The void in question is evident in the following metaphors: “a flower with no smell” and “arid soil”.

Table 4

Metaphors Referring to Natural Elements

	Metaphor generated
A bamboo tree	Narcissus flower
A cactus	Rain
A flower with no smell	Sky
A rainbow	Star/s
A tree	Sun
Arid soil	Water
Leaf-fall	Wind
Moon	Winter sun

In addition to metaphors referring to foods/drinks and natural elements, some metaphors referring to places (see Table 5) indicate dissatisfaction, too. “Empty room”, “semi-fertile land”, and “unproductive land for flower planting” are the metaphors that address the ineffectiveness of remote learning.

Table 5

Metaphors Referring to Place/Location

	Metaphor generated
A bottomless pit	An unproductive land for flower planting
A huge distance	An empty room
A one-side street	Our country
A slope	A self-service restaurant
An arid desert	A semi-fertile land
Arid land	Sports halls
Desert	A village

Another category developed from the metaphors created by the students is the process category (see Table 6). In this category, there are some metaphors that students likened remote learning to a process of stages rather than a specific image. When the adjectives used to describe the process are analyzed, we could see the following adjectives: “bad”, “demanding”, “fruitful”, “mechanical”, “adequate”, “unproductive”, “compelling”, and “not much different”. Moreover, the students also used “achieving innovation through obligations” and “productive system” to indicate their reactions. Apart from the productive system and fruitful process, the metaphors referring to the process revealed the participants’ negative beliefs of the online education practices or the challenges that are to be faced after the move to online education.

Table 6

Metaphors Referring to A Process

	Metaphor generated
A bad process	An adequate process
A demanding process	An unproductive process
A fruitful process	A compelling process
A mechanical process	Not a much different process
Achieving innovation through obligations	A productive system

With reference to the situational category, it could be stated that an overwhelming majority equated online learning experience with negative words. Chaos, illness, laziness and industrial revolutions were the words

or expressions chosen to indicate the negative connotations (see Table 7).

Table 7

Metaphors Referring to A Situation

	<i>Metaphor generated</i>
A discovery	Industrial revolution
A/n (good) opportunity *	Laziness
Chaos	Illness

Apart from the categories above, some other categories developed by the students were situation person (n=5), animal (n=3), creature (n=3) and skill (n=3). With reference to a person, “a hero fighting against the virus”, “an enlightened teacher trying to open the eyes of a society that has stereotypes”, “enemy”, “ex-lover”, “lover”, and “spoiled child” were the metaphors chosen by the students. The animals used in the metaphors were “cat”, “honeybee, and “turtle” whereas “a talent”, “a holiday booking website”, and “Youtube channel” were the analogies drawn in the tool category.

4.2. Entailments

Considering the entailments, the metaphors could be divided into positive, negative, neutral and ambivalent categories. However, negative categories outweighed (n=178) the positive (n=26) and neutral (n=4) ones since many learners expressed their negative opinions towards the categories.

4.2.1. Negative Metaphors

As ERT is an “emergency situation” in which online teaching replaced face-to-face teaching/learning practices, a great many of the participants, teachers and institutions were not prepared with the transition. This unpreparedness was reflected in the participants’ sentences or justifications. As a result, we see that there are a great number of voices reflecting their dissatisfaction with the remote learning experience. Lack of/poor interaction in ERT, inauthenticity of ERT, ineffectiveness of ERT, unrewarding learning outcomes, distraction, increased workload, poor exam security, technical and physical problems, lack of established patterns, ephemerality of online content, lack of concentration, and waning enthusiasm were among the frequently cited negative sentiments. It is evident that stakeholders of education, especially students and teachers, have to grapple with many issues including health concerns, financial issues, and employment instability (Hartshorn, & McMurry, 2020). Therefore, these additional issues might be reflected in people’s interpretations.

As for lack of interaction, the participants (n=18) usually complained about the one-way flow of the courses. That is, it is usually the teacher who is doing the talking, and a “dialogue”, as the respondent (S52) argued, cannot be established (see Table 8).

Table 8

Lack of Interaction in ERT

Student	Metaphor	Entailment
S52	Spitting into the wind	It is inadequate and inefficient in many ways. The most obvious reason for this is the lack of student-teacher dialogue-that is a must for education. Yes, education cannot be limited to a place surrounded by four walls. It is obvious that the efficiency in the classroom environment in face-to-face education cannot be achieved in distance education.
S10	Like a chain	Distance education is beneficial in AÖF or certificate programs where we learn extra knowledge, but the same is not true in formal education. People became more introverted with digitization, so the interaction decreased. This situation negatively affected many people in terms of development.
S70	A one-side street	The teachers teach, and the lesson ends, the question becomes a little difficult, and mutual communication is insufficient.
S61	Platonic love	You love your lessons very much, but you cannot see and be in the same environment, you cannot chat with your teachers.
S85	Painting	We can only look from afar and tell us what he wants to tell us. Interactive intervention rarely happens.

In most cases, the reference point for the success of the remote learning experiences was face-to-face learning practices. Therefore, many students compared the effectiveness of online and face-to-face modalities. A considerable number of learners (n=38) pointed to the ineffectiveness of online language instruction. The ineffectiveness was articulated through the words which address partial efficiency, uselessness, and poor sustainability (see Table 9).

Table 9

Ineffectiveness of ERT

Student	Metaphor	Entailment
S137	Cactus	because it looks beautiful from afar, but when you look closely it has thorns. the difficulties of distance learning are not clear until they get closer to it ..
S81	Waste of energy	I don't think it's useful at all. As if we were running out of time ... I can't focus on the lessons.
S89	Learning to dance in the moonlight	Nobody other than the one closest to the light can learn the movements exactly.
S91	Chips	You like it but it's useless
S21	Honeybee	I choose honey bees because their lifespan is only 2-3 months. They work to make honey then die, so they cannot continue for a long time. Distance education is like that. It exists to not deprive us of education, but its efficiency and continuity are low.

Another category developed in the negative aspects was related to the little gains derived from online teaching situations. To the participants, it is obvious that the outcomes were not at a desired level (see Table 10). They expressed their concerns through the words such as “half”, “steals”, and inability to claim “full responsibility”.

Table 10

ERT as a Non-rewarding Experience

Student	Metaphor	Entailment
S56	Baklava without syrup	There is something, but half.
S60	Torture	It both steals time and causes us to spend our days inefficiently, causing us both physical and psychological pain.
S80	Kokoreç	its scent is nice and attractive, but at the end of the day, what you eat is obvious.
S100	Spending through credit cards	You know you are being educated, but you cannot fully feel the responsibility and motivation it provides.
S111	Winter sun	I liken distance education to the winter sun. It gives hope that it will warm with its presence. But it is just appearances. You would think that day would be a little hot. But you cannot help but feel cold and just see its presence.

When examining the students' reflections, a significant issue is related to their view of ERT as a platform lacking authenticity. Authentic communication, according to learners, is usually associated with face-to-face educational practices. According to some participants (n=15), ERT practices in general lacked authenticity (see Table 11). They learned about things rather than experimenting with them. Therefore, the experience lacked behavioural precision and experiential depth.

Table 11

Inauthenticity of ERT

Student	Metaphor	Entailment
S75	Imitated violin	It lacks the handmade sound quality and authenticity.
S113	A holiday booking website	I liken online/ distance education to a holiday booking website; that is because we can find out a lot of information about somewhere we would love to travel on these websites such as the country in itself, hotels, fun things to do etc. and we could read a lot of reviews of different things, but it would never be as the same as traveling there in person and experiencing it directly.
S114	Theatre scene	I think online/distance education look like a theatre scene watched from the television screen. You can understand the play but never feel the soul of drama.
S161	An old table	For me, online education is like an old table. It's like we're looking at an old table. Surely we're realizing some details and trying to understand the meaning of it. But if the artist were alive and came to us and then tell us about his own table, we would have understood it better. The communication would be better, and we wouldn't have a limited time. In both ways, we learn a lot but communicating simultaneously with the artist is better.

In addition to all these, distraction, increased workload, poor exam security, technical and physical problems, lack of established patterns, ephemerality of online content, lack of concentration, waning enthusiasm were some other problems associated with ERT. Since ERT, compared to online instruction, is relatively less planned (Hodges et al., 2020), more established patterns are needed to create more informed online teaching. Table 12 illustrates some examples of those problems.

Table 12

Other Problems Associated with ERT

Student	Metaphor	Entailment
S20	A bamboo tree	Unlike face-to-face learning, it takes more patience, effort and time to fully demonstrate its efficiency.
S208	A slope	Laborious and tiring
S19	An unproductive process	Internet connection problems, being used to traditional learning methods, and the inability to interact with emotions prevent efficient education.
S3	A spoiled child	The student cannot be as disciplined as in face-to-face training. He is constantly distracted and his focus coefficient drops. Unfortunately, this is the truth, maybe, if you stay away from things that will really distract you and be full-focus. Maybe that too. The fact that the assignments are decisive prevents unfairness, but the propaganda of rival classmates and the abuse by some friends of the working and note-keeping students are bad. Under the name of solidarity, some people first mean copying and then turn this into words as teachers help or friends help. In groups, the person or persons who do not comply with this manipulation are ostracized, ridiculed, disturbed by those who adhere to other leaders in the class. For the sake of competition or good grading in the classroom, people with an equal balance of power get along somehow. They want to eliminate their opponents with surprise and sarcasm.
S11	Not a rival for face-to-face education	Trying to understand the work by examining it remotely without touching it. We are just our names.
S40	A trip to a museum	Tree, because we are not able to move like a tree.
S94	A mechanic process	It would be glasses for me because while I was searching my laptop, I felt my eyes were very dry and sore and I went to the doctor. Now, I'm a person with glasses. I still have to spend lots of my time looking at the computer screen and this makes my eyes hurt.
S108	A tree	Perfume. When you wear perfume, it smells pleasant but sooner or later the smell will disappear. Just like online education. Everyone can attend classes in the comfort area whenever they want. But what can they learn? How permanent is the thing they learned? Distance education is inefficient and unfair, but unfortunately, it had to be so because of the circumstances.
S112	Glasses	
S146	Perfume	

4.2.2. Neutral metaphors

In the neutral metaphors (n=4), the respondents did not take a side and did not reveal their emotions. They, in fact, provided either the two sides of the coin or took a non-judgemental picture of the online education practices. As a result, ERT was associated with Turkish coffee, a self-service restaurant, a lamp and water (see Table 13).

Table 13

Neutral Metaphors

Student	Metaphor	Entailment
S79	Turkish coffee	You don't like it at first, and you can't get used to it when you try it again later.
S92	A self-service restaurant	They prepare the food for you, but you go and buy it yourself.
S159	A lamp	When we watch the lessons we had the opportunity to leave the course and attending the course whenever we want. Therefore, I liken it to a lamp. Because we decide it to turn off or turn on.
S191	Water	It is nice to watch the water, whether it is a sea, river or even the water flowing out of our taps. Therefore, in my perspective, it's nice to sit and just listen, and sometimes watch teachers talking, explaining the subject.

4.2.3. Positive Metaphors

Even though it was not the case for many learners, some learners (n=26) highlighted the positive outcomes of ERT. In general, it was a productive and fruitful process to develop their autonomy. The access opportunity (e.g., watching the courses again and again), the fair evaluations of homework, students' exploration of the content were cited to be the positive gains of the students in general (see Table 14).

Table 14

Positive Metaphors

Student	Metaphor	Entailment
S12	A productive system	Thanks to the video recordings, I can watch and take notes whenever I want. Although there were some problems with connecting to the course in the system, I got more efficiency from my personal experience. In addition, the homework system that comes with it automatically forces the student to review the topics over and over again.
S14	A hero fighting against virus	Isn't it a miracle to continue our education even during this epidemic period? In what epidemic period has such a thing happened before? Distance education is our hero; we have to embrace him more and less.
S47	A fruitful process	We can follow the course records later and take our notes more easily. For the convenience of cheating in the exam, I think our teachers are fairer and more beneficial by giving homework. Moreover, we are less financially burdened with our family while at home.
S82	An encyclopedia	Because knowledge does not just fall into the student's hands, the student seeks and finds information himself.
S110	A smartphone	Because it is easy to access, smart, and technological. It is a smartphone, which is always under my hands, and I can watch it on my bed.

Considering the metaphors in these three categories, it is evident that students' experiments with ERT resulted in positive, negative and neutral categories of metaphors. As for the positive aspects, the radical conversion to remote teaching was achieved thanks to ERT. This is aptly put by a learner who established a similarity with ERT and a hero:

Isn't it a hero fighting against virus: Isn't it a miracle to continue our education even during this epidemic period? In what epidemic period has such a thing happened before? Distance education is our hero, we have to embrace him more and less. (S14)

On the other hand, the transition came with many challenges, and the following excerpts seem to summarize the need for a well-planned conversion:

To me, online education is like a semi-infertile land. That is, you have too much freedom. You have this immense field to work in, to plough, to run in, to dance at, but at the end of the day, you become exhausted. You are more tired than you should be and you do not have much to harvest. To have too much freedom may not be the right path for education. (S134)

The turtle metaphor of another student echoes a similar concern pinpointing the role of well-established patterns:

It would be a turtle because it literally progresses like a turtle. It is not as fast and efficient as face-to-face courses. Moreover, it is like the soul stealers in the Harry Potter because it was not scheduled well compared to face-to-face courses. There were always some additions and changes. (S128)

The neutral metaphors do not reveal much about the students' feelings and attitudes, and they are descriptive

in nature. Therefore, it is not easy to draw conclusions based on the sentences given in this sort. However, another interpretation of such descriptive data might be related to the students' avoidance of good or bad dichotomies. For some, such positive and negative conclusions could be premature, and there is still room to exercise caution when interpreting ERT. That is, rather than bringing feelings and emotions that could cloud the judgements, a "wait-and-see" approach might be more effective.

5. Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

The present study attempted to unpack English majors' conceptualisations about learning and instruction during the ERT in the recent pandemic context, for such conceptualisations are "associated with the processes and behaviours students decide to activate in a specific context, which potentially leads to the achievement of learning goals" (Tarchi et al., 2022, p.1). Such case studies with in-depth conceptualisations and implications on instruction betterment could help the related parties teach not only during but also beyond global educational disruptions. The participants' conceptualisations were explored with a metaphor analysis during the first wave of the pandemic.

In line with the existing research, the majority of the participants were found to have unfavorable dispositions towards ERT although they were aware of its role to compensate education losses (Hebebcı et al., 2020) with its flexible nature (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Similar to well-documented technological, pedagogical, and social challenges of this response to the spread of COVID-19 (see, Ferri, Grifoni & Guzzo, 2020), their negative perceptions and reasons were unravelled. They complained about lack of/poor interaction in ERT (as is seen in Ferri et al., 2020; Morgan, 2020), heavy workload (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020), poor exam security (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015), exhaustion (Şendoğan-Erdoğan, 2020), technical and physical problems (Şener et al., 2020), to list but a few. These findings are contrary to those of Elçi (2021), Ersin et al. (2020), and Şendoğan-Erdoğan (2020), who found several positive outcomes of this sudden shift despite exhaustion. Still, some reported that they cherished these opportunities as they helped them keep track of their own learning.

Overall, the study showed predominantly negative attitudes towards ERT, which the related literature has documented regarding diverse parties, including, teachers, students, parents, teacher educators, and education leaders (see, for instance, Parpala & Niinistö-Sivuranta, 2022 for negative higher education leaders). That high level of negative attitude and emotions such as anxiety, stress, fear of failure, uncertainty, and low mental well-being still documented by the recent studies despite those two years from the outset of the pandemic (see, for instance, Yin 2022) might be associated with teacher-centred instruction in Turkey where students' self-regulated learning skills and learner autonomy may not develop enough. Besides, as noted by Tarchi et al. (2022), limited ERT adaptation time for both teachers and students due to that sudden shift could affect the participants' conceptualisations and attitudes. Thus, interventions in the form of online orientations for rapid and discomfoting emergency remote education transitions could serve well to equip remote education students with required skills and knowledge to help them not to fall back academically, keep up with the technology, and manage their emotions (see, for instance, de Klerk et al., 2021). Furthermore, lack of remote education experience may make it difficult for not only teachers but also students, who are not used to getting instructed in a context where both parties cannot see each other's body and facial expressions due to different physical space, i.e., loss of real contact, which is important not only for physical classrooms but also online ones (Godhe & Brante, 2022).

Various conclusions could be drawn in light of the findings above. The sudden shift of instructional delivery after the emergence of COVID-19 has brought about radical changes for many people in the field of education. Therefore, understanding people's metaphorical expressions will help us convey their response

to the language instruction at this period. Capturing students' cognition at this period will also help future researchers and educators design online courses accordingly. It should be noted that online education will thrive after the pandemic, and educationists will benefit from the ubiquitous opportunities that online learning offers. However, with such unfavorable connotations of online teaching in an ERT context, the transition from ERT to full-fledged online education will not be smooth. Thus, educational institutions and teachers shoulder a great responsibility to introduce online pedagogies and training as well as look for ways to create sustainable online teaching frameworks.

The metaphors in the negative category were predominantly higher. Many factors, including the digital literacy of the students and teachers, the quality of interactions in online courses, the effectiveness of the materials used in the courses etc. could be influential in our understanding of the negative metaphors. In a recent study by Wang et al. (2020), it was found that students experienced a greater degree of stress and anxiety than nonstudents. Therefore, the context and period might have shaped the students' judgements. Psychological support could be offered to students to help them eradicate their negative feelings (Bao, 2020). Particularly lack of teacher feedback has been commonly documented in the related literature, thereby bringing about the need for effective teacher feedback for decreasing anxiety, isolation, and confusion and increasing student motivation and satisfaction (Ferri et al., 2020). As the new learning landscape brings extra challenges, institutional steps could be taken to make the adaptation process smoother. New teaching methods and new language teaching pedagogies, such as effective online classes and flipped classroom, to this end, could enhance our understanding of the emerging realities.

Another proposal for action is the systematic training of all related parties including teachers, students, and parents (Ferri et al., 2020; Nisiforou, Kosmas & Vrasidas, 2021), for such gaps in digital literacy make the process difficult and anxiety-provoking for all. As is highlighted by Mısırlı and Ergüleç (2021), particularly young learners and students with special needs are in need of parental assistance, who could feel bad emotionally when they realise that they are not equipped well to guide the process. Thus, as highlighted by Nisiforou et al. (2021), communication between school and home needs to be ensured for a successful implementation. Also, higher education institutions need to ensure the development of digital skills of their staff, for this among infrastructure readiness could ensure a quick, effective, and sustainable response to such crisis (Iglesias-Pradas et al., 2021).

ERT emerged as a response to the global pandemic. Therefore, it served as a test to see how prepared flexible the educational institutions are. In this sense, the transition was a test of organizational agility. However, to create sustainable pedagogies in the new learning landscape, finding ways to "a new conventional rather than an emergency response" (Osman, 2020, p. 470) is necessary. With the medium shifting to screens, there is much to do to help increase awareness and familiarity of online language teaching pedagogies. This should be achieved before turning the physical distance to a pedagogical one. It appears that the learning landscape during the language education after the outbreak has ended up with several constraints such as physical constraints, technological challenges and lack of personal touch (Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2020). In the absence of the perceived lack of human touch, it is not difficult to understand why some students do not consider the online "interaction" authentic. The lack of authenticity in question is a call for teachers and educational institutions. The message from the students is that they would like to play a more active role, so they want to be "in the game", not on the bench. The metaphors show that educational practices are taking place at an unprecedented speed, and they sometimes fail to become part of the process. Based on the explanations of metaphors, it could be stated that they are not adequately included in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, they use expressions indicating the events taking place as "out there", not "in here". Much has been suffered through the teacher and student dichotomies in education. Therefore, curating online platforms where dialogue, collaborative construction and negotiation prevail is sought.

This study attempted to elicit ELL students' responses to online education in an EFL context. The findings will help researchers make more informed decisions, especially before conversion to online teaching during or after the pandemic. It will at least help become better prepared for online and blended learning scenarios in the post-pandemic period. Still, the present study is not without its limitations. First, one potential caveat could be the only prompt, thereby creating the need for the development of several prompts on teacher, student, process, context, and so forth in future studies. Also, the fact that it was conducted in only one setting, i.e., a case study, makes the researchers hesitant about making grand generalisations. For a more comprehensive view, further studies could be conducted with diverse majors. Besides, cross-cultural research designs could yield interesting findings.

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