

EFL Students' Attitudes towards e-Learning and Effect of an Online Course on Students' Success in English

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Abstract

In some state universities in Turkey, students are given English preparatory education for a year and in addition to formal education they receive in the classroom environment, they also have online education embedded with into their formal education as an extra opportunity provided generally by online platforms. Within e-learning, students have online practice in relation to language areas such as grammar and vocabulary together with language skills except for speaking. Although learners have online course to support their formal class performances, the effect of online course on their overall success at preparatory classes is not clear. To have an insight into the possible effects of an online course on their success in English, 47 students were given a questionnaire to understand their attitudes towards online education, and their online scores were analyzed in comparison with their midterm and quiz scores. It was found that the students have partly positive attitudes towards online course; however, online course does not help students in terms of their overall success at preparatory class.

Keywords

e-Learning, online course, preparatory class, attitude, success

Introduction

Over the past 20 years, computer networks and the widespread use of internet in recent years have introduced unprecedented opportunities for language learners. As it is a very recent area for educational research, there are various terms referring to the issue of online learning and there is little agreement on the terminology used in the literature. Distance education, online instruction, e-learning, online training, asynchronous/synchronous learning, distant education, and web-based education programs are some of the most popular terms recently being used in instructional and technological contexts (Gluchmanova, 2015; Moore, Dickson-Deane & Galyen,

2011). All of these terms are sometimes covered by "e-learning" or "online learning" alone both of which will also be referred to as the basic terms interchangeably within this current study indicating any learning activity provided with the help of technology out of or supplementary to formal instruction. Throughout the study, e-learning is used to refer to the type of learning and online course refers to the platform the preparatory students use supplementary to face-to-face English education they receive in school.

As for language learning and teaching field, e-learning environment together with the widespread use and availability of internet connected computers and smartphones have changed the pace of second and foreign language learning especially on the part of the learners. The developments and innovations in technology offering unique features in language learning arena combining audio, visual and animation effects have made e-learning environment a promising platform (Shyamlee & Phil, 2012). In fact, while reducing the cost and increasing the efficiency in time, e-learning has brought about many other advantages in terms of language learning and teaching and among these advantages are learner-centeredness, convenience for the learners' own pace of learning, increasing motivation of the learner, availability of various forms of sources to practice the language and interaction with others through web-based platforms (Mohammadi, Ghorbani, & Hamidi, 2011).

In language learning and teaching context, e-learning is available to learners in two basic ways: learners can make use of it individually based on their personal needs and interests as an alternative to formal education or it is also common that e-learning can be used as a way to enhance formal education; that is, it is used as a supplementary learning environment embedded into formal instruction. Although e-learning first appeared as a substitute for traditional teaching, it has become a considerable supplement to formal education (Tallent-Runnels et al. 2006; Gluchmanova, 2015). In language learning too, face-to-face instruction is supported by e-learning where learners, after receiving their language education in the classroom, they practice the same content in an online environment. In fact, publishers also offer both printed and online versions of course materials offering more practice opportunities and varied audio-visual aids enabling learners to practice the language they learn in the classroom. Combined with traditional teaching, e-learning offers more online learning tasks for learners to engage (Anderson, 2003). Due to the limitations of traditional

formal education making students mostly passive receivers of knowledge, an integration of e-learning supplementary to formal education help learners to actively transform the knowledge received in class into language production in e-learning environment in addition to inspiring their positive thinking and communication skills and increasing their level of motivation contributing to their success in formal education (Shyamlee & Phil, 2012). The use of e-learning is commonly embedded into formal education in many institutions from primary to higher education all around the world (Harandi, 2015), and in Turkey too, especially in higher education, many universities offering English preparatory education try to enhance the language learning process with the help of e-learning.

Factors for Success in e-learning

Although the success or failure of a student depends on various factors, students' efforts on language out of class is also another important factor in language learning. As Dörnyei (1990) states, students' motivation is one of the determinants of their second/foreign language learning achievement and according to Ur (1996), computers -to some extent e-learning- are attractive and motivating for learners while learning the language. Formal instruction may not work properly unless it helps learners to use the language out of class since there are cases in which learners do nothing after class. The introduction of e-learning environments is supposed to make learners spend more time on language out of class in their free time, and make them be exposed to language more (Liu, 2013). However, according to Zhao (2010), the effects of any technology on learning outcomes lie in its uses and unless it is used properly, it may not have any positive effect on learning. Zhao (2010) also states that the effectiveness of e-learning depends on many variables and the learner is the main factor for the success.

Some researchers investigated the attitudes of learners towards e-learning in an educational context and found that students' attitude to e-learning was a strong predictor in benefiting from e-learning in utmost level as well as having an impact on their success (Akbari, Eghtesad, & Simons, 2012; Cinkara & Bagceci, 2013). However, for this tool to be effective, a number of conditions should be met. As emphasized, the effectiveness of e-learning is influenced by student access to internet, material and their readiness to accept and learn well from e-learning (Tallent-Runnels

et al. 2006; Aydın, 2007). Additionally, it is also stated that there are eight factors affecting the student success in e-learning and these are access to tools, technology experience, learning preferences, study habits, goals, purposes, lifestyles, and personal traits (Schrum & Hong, 2001). As clearly pointed out, the learners' attitudes towards e-learning is one of the critical issues related to taking the advantage of e-learning in terms of success in language learning which also affects students' willingness to take responsibility for their own learning (Tallent-Runnels et al. 2006), indicating that the effects of e-learning on part of student success in language learning can be attributed to student effort and their attitudes towards using it. Thus, assessing the effectiveness of e-learning is in fact tied to the effectiveness of its users. For this purpose, in this study, learners' attitudes towards e-learning of English out of preparatory classes and the impact of e-learning on learners' success in their preparatory programs will be investigated.

Since there are only a few studies concerning e-learning in language learning and teaching process addressing tertiary education, this study attempts to determine the students' attitudes towards e-learning and its relationship with the student success in the English preparatory school at a state university in Turkey. With this aim in mind, the study tries to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes of the students towards the online course?
2. How effective is the online learning in terms of student success in preparatory classes?

Method

This study aims to find out students' attitudes towards e-learning at a state university and to investigate how the e-learning affects the students' success in language learning at preparatory class. Thus, this quantitative study was designed as a descriptive study making use of survey methodology. To collect data, questionnaire titled Comparative Learning Environment Questionnaire (COMPLEQ) developed by Iyer (2011) was adapted to find out the attitudes of the university.

Data Collection Instrument

Comparative Learning Environment Questionnaire (COMPLEQ) was designed for assessing learners' attitudes of the two learning environments as e-learning and face-to-face learning referring to classroom learning and included six scales of "Task Orientation" assessing the clarity and organization of the activities in online platform, "Responsibility and Independence" which assesses students' taking the responsibility of their own learning, "Access" for measuring the availability and convenience of online learning for the learners, "Computer Usage" measuring the extent to which students use their computers to retrieve information and complete various tasks, "Authentic Learning" assessing students' views in relating their study to real-life experiences and finally "Information Design and Appeal" assessing the design of the e-learning environment (i.e. visuals) (Iyer, 2011). To assess learners' attitudes towards e-learning, the COMPLEQ also had three subscales of "anxiety", "student enjoyment" and "academic efficacy". However, while adapting the scale into the context of this current study, the items in the questionnaire have been analyzed under five categories as "task orientation", "access to online course", "information design and appeal", "academic efficacy", "enjoyment" and finally "anxiety" omitting some items related to "computer usage" as it has been delivered as a direct question in personal information part of the questionnaire. Other categories excluded from Iyer's questionnaire are "Responsibility and Independence" and "Authentic Learning" as they had directly related items to assess face-to-face learning instead of online course. Additionally, while adapting the scale into this study, five questions seeking an answer to students' attitudes towards language areas and skills have been added by the researcher. The reason for adding extra questionnaire items is that the content of the online course was designed in accordance with the courses students have in their face-to-face education. To this end, items in the questionnaire have been designed directly in correlation with the school courses. In short, the categories employed in the questionnaire aim to reveal different aspects of the attitudes of the learners towards the online course.

Setting and Data Collection

The study was conducted on preparatory class students studying in the School of Foreign Languages at a state university whose medium of instruction in their

departments was English. The students received English preparatory education for two terms (25 hours a week, a total of 32 weeks) in an academic year either compulsorily or selectively and before they start to study in preparatory classes, they are placed in different levels such as A2, B1 and B2 level according to the results of the placement test given at the beginning of the academic year. Although there are students having education in three levels of English as A2, B1 and B2 levels based on CEFR, only A2 and B1 students were involved in the study considering that as the level of students gets higher, the potential factors, such as students' previous experiences with the language, which can affect the success of students may also increase. Apart from having face-to-face English language education at school, they are also obliged to log into online supplementary courses delivered in accordance with the face-to-face courses. In the online course, they are also assessed and their online course scores have an effect on their success or failure at preparatory classes.

Participants

The participants of this study are 47 students studying at the School of Foreign Languages at Pamukkale University. The reason why 47 students participated in data collection is that although there were 75 students enrolled in preparatory school, only 47 were in class when the scale was administered. The percentage of participants according to gender in the study is 47% and male participants are 53%. The age range varies from 18 to 21 and majority of them are 19 years old with a percentage of 42.5%. Distribution of students who attend the School of Foreign Languages as day education students and night education students has been analyzed and among the participants of this study, 72 % attend day classes and 26 % attend night classes. According to the responses given, 89.2 % of the students were studying English as compulsory and 10.8 % chose to study as elective. The distribution of the participants according to their proficiency levels is 83.8% as A1 and 16.2% as B1.

Data Analysis

The collected data in this study have been analyzed using the SPSS 19. In the analysis, the reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha Model, a model of internal consistency based on the average inter-item correlation. The values that are in the accepted level of reliability (Pallant, 2002) prove that the

instrument is quite reliable for data collection, thus, the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire used in this study was calculated as .88 indicating that reliability coefficient of the data collection instrument is high.

As for the statistical analysis of the first research question, data related to numbers, frequencies, means and percentages were computed to identify the levels of the attitudes towards e-learning based on students' online course. Additionally, the percentages of the responses given to attitude items were used for the description of the attitudes. The participation level intervals have been found using $n-1/n$ formula. As a result of the computation, the interval scale is $5-1/5= 0.80$ and a score of 2.40 and above was considered as the indicator of moderate and high while the one below this level was considered as low in terms of student perceptions of e-learning.

The interval scales in the study are shown in the Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1. Interval scale of the options in the questionnaire based on positive statements

Participation Level	Mean
Strongly Agree	3.21 – 4.00
Agree	2.41 – 3.20
Neutral	1.61 – 2.40
Disagree	0.81 – 1.60
Strongly Disagree	0- 0.80

For each positive statement we have assigned; “Strongly Disagree” 0; “Disagree” 1; “Partially Agree” 2; “Agree” 3; “Strongly Agree” 4.

Table 2. Interval scale of the options in the questionnaire based on negative statements

Participation Level	Mean
Strongly Disagree	3.21 – 4.00
Disagree	2.41 – 3.20
Neutral	1.61 – 2.40
Agree	0.81 – 1.60
Strongly Agree	0- 0.80

To address the second research question posed in this study, that is the effect of online learning/course in learners' success at prep classes, only "A2" level student scores have been documented and analyzed. As A2 level students have a limited experience and knowledge in English, their quiz scores from the online course were utilized and their overall school success in the first term including online scores was compared (see Table.3 for grading scheme).

Table 3. Grading scheme for the students

Exam Type	Number	Weight
Midterm exam	2	20%
Quiz 1 (pen and paper)	4	10%
Quiz 2 (online course)	4	10%
Final Exam	1	60
Total	10	100 %

In the first term, students had two midterm exams and eight quizzes from each language skill as listening, reading, writing and speaking in addition to grammar as the language area. Eight quiz scores include four quiz scores from the online course; that is, scores from the online course are added to students' overall success as four quiz scores. Scores from midterms and quiz scores including the ones learners have in online course make up 40% of the overall score as final exam scores (achievement exam) they have at the end of the second term constitute 60%.

In the analysis of students' scores, their online scores and general average scores from three A2 level classes have been documented. Although students' general score averages in which online scores are included constitute 40%, as they do not have their final exam scores yet, in our analysis they have been transformed to 100%. To reach a clear analysis, their online scores have been calculated separately and mean scores have been tabulated.

Findings

Results of the study have been analyzed in relation to the research questions. First of all, results of the students' responses to the attitude scale have been analyzed under

different categories and next, their online course scores and general score averages have been analyzed and tabulated.

Findings related to Students' Attitudes towards the Online Course

In order to answer the first research question, items in the data collection tool have been analyzed under different categories as follows:

1- Attitudes of the students towards the online course in Task-Orientation Category

In the task orientation category, the scale has five question items. The Task Orientation scale assesses the extent to which activities are clear and well organized. It is widely acknowledged that students need to have goals, both short-term and long-term, to provide them with motivation and purpose (Killen 2001; Spady, 1994 cited in Iyer, 2011).

Table 4. Attitudes of the students towards online course in Task-Orientation Category

	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Average score
Strongly agree	6.4	4.3	12.8	8.5	8.5	8.1
Agree	25.5	10.5	36.2	46.8	31.9	30.2
Partially agree	51.1	29.8	23.4	25.5	38.3	33.6
Disagree	8.5	42.6	17.0	12.8	14.9	19.1
Strongly disagree	8.5	12.8	10.6	6.4	6.4	8.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Mean	2.12	1.51	2.23	2.38	2.21	2.09

Q1. Spending a certain amount of time in an online course is important for me.

Q2. I do as much as set out to do in the online course.

Q3. I know my objectives to reach in an online course.

Q4. I know what I am trying to achieve in an online course.

Q5. I understand the work I am doing in the online course.

Analysis results in Table 4 show that the attitudes of students towards the online course according to five items under the category of task-orientation is 2.09, suggesting that they have partially positive attitudes with the items asked. It is worth noticing that 42.6% of the students think that they cannot do as much as they intend to do in the online course (question 2). In terms of objectives to reach in an online course, 36.2% of the students reveal that they know the objectives in dealing with the online course content. This finding suggests that they are aware of the course content

and course objectives in the online course in e-learning platform. In addition, they have knowledge about the quantity and quality of the workload in the online course. When the items, in general, are analyzed, mean scores belonging to items show that 30.2% of the students "agree" with the items showing that they have positive attitudes. On the other hand, majority of the students among other response rates (33.6%) have partially positive attitude towards task-orientation related items in online course that suggests that in spite of having a clear idea in relation to course objectives and works to do in online course, they cannot spend enough amount of time as they set out to do. On the other hand, another striking point here is that students have, again, partially positive attitude towards spending a certain amount of time in the online course. These findings may imply that they do not value the importance of spending some time online and as a result of spending, not enough time required to reach the online course objectives, they cannot complete the course content as they plan to do.

2- Attitudes of the students towards the online course in Academic Efficacy Category

In this study, the scale items related to academic efficacy have been tabulated in comparison to each other. The first item was sought responses related to the comparison of students' preference for face-to-face education or e-learning. The second item in academic efficacy category dealt with the supplementary function of e-learning to face-to-face education as seen in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Attitudes of the students towards online course in Academic Efficacy Category

	Question 9	Question 10	Average Score
Strongly agree	-	4.3	2.15
Agree	2.1	25.5	13.8
Partially agree	19.1	38.3	28.7
Disagree	42.6	17	29.8
Strongly disagree	36.2	14.9	25.5
Total	100	100	100
Mean	.87	1.87	1.37
Q9. Online courses are more productive than school hours for me.			
Q10. Online courses are very beneficial for my school courses.			

One of the reasons why students do not spend enough amount of time in the online course and why they fail to complete the tasks although they have an awareness

related to task objectives become clear with the analysis of the items in this category. In this category, students are asked to compare online courses with the school courses they have face-to-face. Analysis results in Table 5 show that the students benefit more from the face-to-face courses at school than they benefit from the online course. A great majority of the students (78.8%) think that online courses are not more productive than school hours. Another crucial finding in this category is that they also do not think online courses help them in their school courses. When responses given to question ten " Online courses are very beneficial for my school courses" have been analyzed, nearly 30% of them have positive, 32% of them have negative and 38.3 of the students have neutral attitudes towards the efficiency of online courses as supplementary to school courses. The most striking finding of this study is that students do not perform better or benefit from the online course, as they do not think an online course is helpful in their language learning.

Table 6. Attitudes of the students towards online course in Academic Efficacy Category

	Question 21	Question 22	Question 23	Question 24	Question 25	Average score
Strongly agree	31.9	23.4	2.1	6.4	-	12.7
Agree	23.4	21.3	10.6	8.5	2.1	13.8
Partially agree	29.8	21.3	25.5	25.5	27.7	25.9
Disagree	8.5	25.5	42.6	31.9	44.7	30.6
Strongly disagree	6.4	8.5	19.1	27.7	25.5	17.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Mean	2.65	2.25	1.34	1.34	1.063	1.72
Q21. I have difficulty in writing activities in online courses						
Q22. I have difficulty in listening activities in online courses						
Q23. I have difficulty in reading activities in online courses						
Q24. I have difficulty in grammar activities in online courses						
Q25. I have difficulty in vocabulary activities in online courses						

Students have also been asked to respond to the items regarding activities based on language skills and areas they do in online courses. It is seen that more than half of the students (55.3%) have difficulty in writing activities that are open-ended in nature. When it comes to listening skill, 44.7% of them state that they have difficulty in listening activities in the online course. On the other hand, only 34% of the students do not have difficulty in listening activities in the online course. The analysis of the responses given to question 23 shows that students have positive attitudes towards reading activities in contrast to writing and listening activities in the online course.

Majority of the students (61%) state that they do not have difficulty in reading activities while only 12.7% of them have difficulty in reading activities.

In terms of language areas, average scores of question 24 and 25 suggest that 34.4% have positive attitudes towards grammar and vocabulary activities. 7.1 of the students have difficulty in language areas. From the results, it is possible to conclude that students have difficulty in writing and listening activities, but they have positive attitudes towards reading. Additionally, they do not have difficulty in grammar and vocabulary activities in the online course. It is worth noting that although they do not have difficulty in activities except for writing and listening, as they think online course does not help them in their school courses, they do not benefit from the online course as they plan to.

3- Attitudes of the students towards the online course in Information Design and Appeal Category

One of the potential problems related to online learning is that design of the online course and activities should be appropriate to students' language levels and easy to use. Warschauer and Whittaker (1997) state that technical difficulties overwhelming students are not likely to bring desired results.

In adapting the scale into this study, items related to design and appeal of the online courses have been included considering that a students' attitudes might have been affected from the design and complexity of the program if existed.

Table 7. Attitudes of the students towards online course in information design and appeal category

	Question 11	Question 12	Question 14	Average Score
Strongly agree	10.6	14.9	14.9	13.4
Agree	38.3	29.8	29.8	32.6
Partially agree	23.4	34	23.4	26.9
Disagree	17	14.9	12.8	14.9
Strongly disagree	10.6	6.4	19.1	12.0
Total	100	100	100	100
Mean	2.21	2.31	2.08	2.2

Q11. It is easy to use online course system.

Q12. Materials in online courses are appropriate to my level.

Q14. Multimedia used in online course enhances my understanding.

Responses given to question 11 show that the use of online course is easy for the students. Nearly half of the students (48.9) have positive attitudes towards the online

course in terms of its design and it is understood that the online course system does not have any complexity which can cause difficulties when using it. Items related to materials and multi-media (animation, sound, video etc) used in an online course have been found to be positive on part of the students. 29.8% of the students responded that materials in an online course are appropriate to their level. Similarly, 29.8% of them stated that multimedia used in online course enhanced their understanding.

Table 8. Attitudes of the students towards online course according to enjoyment

	Question 15	Question 16	Average Score
Strongly agree	2.1	4.3	3.2
Agree	8.5	21.3	14.9
Partially agree	46.8	36.2	41.5
Disagree	12.8	17.0	14.9
Strongly disagree	29.8	21.3	25.5
Total	100	100	100
Mean	1.404	1.702	1.55

Q15. Courses in online system are enjoyable for me.

Q16. I am content with the activities in online courses.

Even though students think that design, materials and multimedia used in the online course are appropriate for them, they do not enjoy the courses in the online system. The positive responses to the question 15 "Courses in online system are enjoyable for me" show that only 10.6% of them think an online course is enjoyable. However, 29.8% of the students strongly disagree that online course is enjoyable in spite of the appropriateness of the design and materials used in an online course as they state. Similarly, 38% of the students are not content with the activities in the online course. When compared to negative attitudes, nearly 25.6% of the students are content with the online course. This finding suggests that the reason why students do not see the online course as enjoyable may be related to difficulties of the activities taking place in the online course.

4- Attitudes of the students towards the online course in Anxiety Category

Table 9. Attitudes of the students towards online course in anxiety category

	Question 19	Question 20	Average Score
Strongly agree	8.5	23.4	15.9
Agree	31.5	36.2	33.8
Partially agree	31.9	10.6	21.2
Disagree	21.3	19.1	20.2
Strongly disagree	6.4	10.6	8.5
Total	100	100	100
Mean	2.148	2.425	2.28
Q19. I have difficulty in completing the tasks in online courses.			
Q20. I feel nervous in completing the tasks in the given time.			

In investigating the anxiety factor in online course, students were asked if they had difficulty in completing the tasks in an online course labelled as question 19. Results show that 31.5 of the students have difficulty in completing the tasks and time constraint in completing tasks results in anxiety on the students. Nearly 60% of the students stated that they feel nervous in completing the tasks in an online course. The task difficulty and time constraint may be the reason for their anxiety in an online course. The units in an online course are scheduled by classroom teachers and students are required to finish the tasks within the given period of time. There may be differences in the scheduling the units depending on the class teachers. It is the teacher who decides which units, tasks and activities to be completed by the students within a certain time period.

5- Other Items

Some of the items in the questionnaire have been analyzed out of the above-mentioned categories. These items aim to assess whether the online course has a priority on part of the students (question 7), their attitudes towards grades they get in an online course (question 17) and finally if it leads to cooperation among students (question 18).

Table 10. Attitudes of the students towards online course

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	8.5	8.5	8.5
	Disagree	5	10.6	10.6	19.1
	Partially agree	17	36.2	36.2	55.3
	Agree	12	25.5	25.5	80.9
	Strongly agree	9	19.1	19.1	100.0
	Total	47	100.0	100.0	

Item: I start doing my online work after I finish other activities

Students are required to access online course regularly based on the schedule the classroom teacher assigns to them. When responses to question 2 "I spend time as I set out to do" are analyzed (see Table 4), 55.4% of them stated that they do not spend enough time as they intend to do. This case is also supported by the results of question 7. Students do not see the online course as a priority in their life out of school. 44.6% of them state that they start doing online work after they finish other activities. This finding is not surprising in that students do not consider online course as beneficial for them and they believe it does not help them in their school courses. Additionally, the activities in online course seem to cause anxiety on the students. Thus, they access online course after their other activities. Even when they access it, they spend less time than they plan to.

Table 11. Attitudes of the students towards online course (question 17)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	10.6	10.6	10.6
	Disagree	9	19.1	19.1	29.8
	Partially agree	19	40.4	40.4	70.2
	Agree	10	21.3	21.3	91.5
	Strongly agree	4	8.5	8.5	100.0
	Total	47	100.0	100.0	

Item: It is easy to get high grades in online courses

Another crucial point in an online course is that students can do the activities as much as they want until they get the highest grades. The online course system enables students to repeat the activities so that they can get higher scores by practicing the same task, activity or quiz. In fact, students are informed about this chance by their

classroom teachers. Additionally, the backwash effect of the grading system is supposed to make students log into online course more and get higher grades as grades in an online course have a direct effect in their failure or success in preparatory class. However, responds to question 17 "It is easy to get high grades in an online course" show that majority of the students (40.4%) partially agree with the item. Although quizzes are in parallel with the face-to-face course, students seem to ignore the importance of online course in getting high grades which are added into their quizzes they have formally at school. Additionally, they can get help from their friends and yet get high grades. In order to investigate if they help each other in online courses, they were asked if they help their friends or not.

Table 12. Attitudes of the students towards online course (question 18)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	10.6	10.6	10.6
	Disagree	13	27.7	27.7	38.3
	Partially agree	14	29.8	29.8	68.1
	Agree	12	25.5	25.5	93.6
	Strongly agree	3	6.4	6.4	100.0
	Total	47	100.0	100.0	

Item: I help my friends in online courses

In investigating whether students cooperate in online course, they were asked if they helped others in online course and results show that while 38.3% of the students do not help their friends in online course, nearly 32% of them stated helping their friends.

Results of Students' Online Course Scores and General Score Averages

To assess the effectiveness of the online course in terms of students' success, means of online quiz scores and general score averages from three elementary classes in which attitude scale was administered have been calculated. For the analysis, 75 students' scores have been calculated. General score averages include 2 midterm exams, 4 quiz scores the students had in their class hours formally and 4 online quiz scores.

Table 13. The Exam Score Averages of the Students in the Fall Term

	Online Quiz Scores	General Score Averages	Mean
A1	30.89	56.2	43.5

Students are able to see their grades in an online course as the system automatically grades their scores except for open-ended questions in writing which are graded by the classroom teacher. As mentioned before, they can repeat the quizzes until they get the highest score. However, as it is clear from the table above, students' online quiz scores which have already been added to their overall scores at school is quite low as 30.89. General score average in which online course grades are included is 56.2 suggesting that online score average is quite low when compared to face-to-face instruction scores.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study aimed at investigating the attitudes of students towards e-learning and its effects on students' success. Findings reveal that students do not place emphasis in on online course and do not spend enough amount of time to complete the activities. Although some advocates of e-learning support it thanks to its positive sides, some studies support the findings of this study (Hara and Kling, 1999; Ralston-Berg, Buckenmeyer, Barczyk, & Hixon, 2015; Stern, 2004). Findings of these studies show that when there is lack of guidance or the conditions which cause frustration on the part of the learners leads them to undervalue e-learning; namely, they do not benefit from the e-learning as intended. As findings of the current study suggest most of the students spare some time to the online course after they do other activities which indicate that e-learning is not a priority for them which may also be attributed as a factor for their indifference towards e-learning. As Romero and Barbera (2011) state, the amount of time the students spend on tasks in e-learning is directly related to students' performance on learning. They also highlight that not only the amount of time but also its quality is a major factor in benefitting from e-learning. Thus, students have to be directed to allocate enough time to e-learning in online courses and they should be encouraged to increase their willingness to spare quality time as suggested by Romero and Barbera (2011).

One of the most striking findings of the study is that students do not place importance to the online course since they do not think an online course is beneficial to them and they prefer face-to-face formal education rather than e-learning. According to Stern (2004) whose findings are in close correlation with those found in this current one states that there are several factors affecting the effectiveness of online courses to be preferred when traditional learning is taken into account. As she asserts, the reasons why formal traditional education surpasses e-learning when learner preferences are considered stem from the fact that e-learning does not offer the sense of “learning community” created in the classroom. Namely, in a classroom environment, the students have the chance to take action based on their learning experiences by interacting with other students, or by interacting with the teachers for more substantial activities or examples when required. Additionally, feedback received in a classroom environment is an indicator for the students regarding their learning. However, as Stern (2004) claims most of these factors intervening in students’ learning in the classroom are unsatisfying in e-learning conditions since there is no chance to receive instant feedback from the peers or the teachers as well as lack of interaction. Similarly, Hara and Kling summarize the factors which interfere the student learning online platforms as lack of feedback and ambiguous instructions in online courses. Thus, in language learning, the importance of interaction and feedback is undeniable and these might be attributed to the factors for students’ preference towards formal learning rather than e-learning.

The other finding of this study is that students are partly content with the multimedia and activities offered in the online course. Alsadhan, Alhomod and Shafi (2014) highlight the importance of design and integration of multimedia in online courses since continuous enrolments into e-learning make them crucial to provide for high-quality interactive e-learning. The activity types available or the infrastructure of the course including the design contribute to students’ involvement in e-learning and need special interest especially in the planning stage of building the platform. Lack of design issues addressing various learning styles for end users in e-learning is of paramount importance which otherwise turns into a barrier for students in e-learning environment (Bağceci & Cinkara, 2013; Lakbala, 2016). Based on the findings of the study conducted by Ralston-Berg, Buckenmeyer, Barczyk, & Hixon (2015), it is clear that students ask for clear instructions as to what and how to do the tasks and

principles of instructional design are regarded as influential in terms of success in the learning experience.

Although it is possible that students can get high grades in an online course and increase their overall scores, their attitudes are partly positive and their scores in an online course are quite low with an average of 30,89 out of 100. One of the reasons why they have partially positive attitudes towards online course may be that they feel nervous in completing the tasks on time and they have difficulty in completing the activities and tasks within the given time. This may be due to students' access to computer and internet connection. As Bağceci and Cinkara emphasize students' access to the internet is still limited and not all students have their own computers and are bound to use university sources. Hara and Kling (1999) also state that lack of accessibility to internet and technology may cause frustration on the part of learners which may demotivate them. Another reason for this finding might be related to the guidance of the formal course instructor. As Selvi (2010) explains the competencies of course instructors to navigate, inform students and to draw a clear framework of the e-learning environment contribute to increasing students' motivation which may affect their success in turn.

As a summary, it can be said that e-learning based on blended online course supplementary to face-to-face education should be carefully designed and the preparatory English education programs should be reviewed again in terms of online course, and instructors at preparatory classes should be encouraged more to guide the students and support them to use online course more.

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