



The Relationship between the Turkish EFL Students' Readiness for Online Learning and Their Perceptions of the Effects of Distance Education on Four English Language Skills

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ABSTRACT

Considering the increasing significance of distance or online education in English language teaching, understanding the factors that may affect English as a foreign language (EFL) students' learning and performance in distance or online education has become essential. One of these factors is readiness for online learning. The present study aimed to find out the relationship between the EFL students' readiness for online learning and their perceptions of the effects of distance education on four English language skills. It was designed as a survey study. 405 EFL students participated in the study. The data were collected through the Online Learning Readiness Scale and with four closed-ended questions which aimed to find out the EFL students' perceptions of the effects of distance education on their four English language skills. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and Pearson Correlation. The findings of the present study have indicated that the participants were ready for online learning, they thought that distance education enhanced their four English language skills, and the correlation between the focused variables was moderate and positive. The findings were discussed. The limitations of the study, suggestions for further research, and implications of the study were mentioned in the end.

INTRODUCTION

With Covid-19, distance education has become more significant than in the past because face-to-face education was ended and replaced with distance education to minimize the spread of the disease. In the post-pandemic era, it still preserves its significance in education because it was seen during the pandemic that when an event that interests everyone in a country or around the world happens, distance education can be utilized to continue instruction for a while. Therefore, it is essential for educators, designers, program developers, and policy-makers to understand distance education and the factors that can affect it in case there may be a sudden shift from face-to-face education to distance education due to several events, such as pandemics or natural disasters.

The concept of distance education, in its most primitive form, begins with teaching by letter; in its most advanced form, it involves attending a class on the other side of the

world through online computer applications. Distance education is common all around the world. Yet, there may be several factors that can be common or peculiar to countries and which can affect the utilization of distance education in countries in a positive or negative way. Readiness for online learning can be considered among those factors because it can be related to students' computer and internet self-efficacy, motivation for learning in online learning environments, online communication self-efficacy, control in online learning environments, and self-directed learning skills (that can be applied in online learning environments) (Hung et al., 2010), all of which can influence distance education. Online learning briefly refers to "the degree to which an individual or institution has the necessary prior knowledge/skills and affective characteristics, such as attitude and motivation in order to have the most effective e-learning experience" (Yurdugül & Demir, 2017, p.897). As the definition indicates, readiness for online learning can help students as individuals to meet the requirements of distance education so that they can benefit from it.

Understanding students' readiness for online learning is necessary for all stakeholders of education, such as teachers, because it can have direct or indirect effects on students' learning in online contexts. It can affect students' interaction in their learning positively (Demir Kaymak & Horzum, 2013) and online learning perceptions to some extent (Wei & Chou, 2020). It can increase their academic motivation (Horzum et al., 2015), while it can reduce their social anxiety (Cam & Isbulan, 2023) and academic procrastination (Ergene & Türk Kurtça, 2020). In addition, it can enhance their perceived learning in an indirect way (Horzum et al., 2015). It can also contribute to their satisfaction (Joosten & Cusatis, 2020) with the course (Wei & Chou, 2020) or online learning (Joosten & Cusatis, 2020; Rafsanjani et al., 2022). Moreover, it can have a positive impact on their academic performance (Cigdem & Ozturk, 2016; Ismail et al., 2022b; Taşkın & Erzurumlu, 2021; Wei & Chou, 2020) and engagement in online learning (Zeybek, 2022).

Understanding the readiness levels of students online learning becomes important regarding its effects on their learning in online contexts. According to the literature, the students in several studies were found to be ready for online learning (Ates-Cobanoglu & Cobanoglu, 2021; Cigdem & Ozkan, 2022; Cigdem & Yildirim, 2014; Cinar et al., 2021; Chung et al., 2020; İlic, 2021; Ismail et al., 2022b; Taşkın & Erzurumlu, 2021; Yeşilyurt, 2021) though their levels of readiness for online learning was found low in one study (Buzdar et al., 2016).

Though the literature shows students' readiness levels for online learning were good, what can influence students' readiness for online learning is still significant to maintain their readiness. According to the literature, there are several factors which were found to have an impact on their readiness for online learning. Students' gender (Al Mamun et al., 2022; Firat & Bozkurt, 2020; Cinar et al., 2021; Taşkın & Erzurumlu, 2021), age (Firat & Bozkurt, 2020), employment status (Firat & Bozkurt, 2020) and computer ownership (Cigdem & Yildirim, 2014; Cinar et al., 2021; Taşkın & Erzurumlu, 2021) can influence their readiness for online learning. In addition, their smartphone ownership (Taşkın & Erzurumlu, 2021), web-based (Cigdem & Yildirim, 2014) or online (Cinar et al., 2021) education experience, self-directed learning skills (Karatas & Arpacı, 2021), and departments/majors/faculties (Ates-Cobanoglu & Cobanoglu, 2021; Cigdem & Yildirim, 2014; Cinar et al., 2021; Taşkın & Erzurumlu, 2021) can have an impact on it. Besides, their metacognitive awareness (Karatas & Arpacı, 2021), emotional intelligence (Buzdar et al., 2016; Engin, 2017), personality (Bhatt et al., 2021), 21st-century skills (Karatas & Arpacı, 2021), and living place (Al Mamun et al., 2022) can influence it. Moreover, it can be affected by the time they spend online (Cinar et al., 2021; Firat & Bozkurt, 2020), the high school they graduated from (Cigdem & Yildirim, 2014), in which grade they study (Al Mamun et al., 2022), ICT instruction (İlic, 2022), and the type of the university where they study (Al Mamun et al.,

2022). Also, it can be also under the effect of having internet connection (Ates-Cobanoglu & Cobanoglu, 2021; Cinar et al., 2021; Ismail et al., 2022b; Taşkın & Erzurumlu, 2021) and inability to be a multitasker (Ismail et al., 2022b).

As the main focus of the present study is on English as a foreign language students in Turkey, the researchers reviewed the literature in terms of the studies conducted on EFL students' readiness for online learning in the Turkish EFL context. They could only find one study. In this study, the participating preparatory EFL students in a Turkish university were found to be ready for online learning (Korkmaz, 2022). Their scores were high in computer/internet self-efficacy, online communication self-efficacy, and motivation for learning, but they were low in self-directed learning and learner control (Korkmaz, 2022). The researchers could find another study that was made in the Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic. This study shows that the participating preparatory EFL students were ready for online learning (Serttaş & Kasabalı, 2020). Their scores in self-directed learning, motivation for learning, and online communication self-efficacy were higher than their scores in learner control and computer/internet self-efficacy (Serttaş & Kasabalı, 2020). Computer/internet self-efficacy, self-directed learning, learner control, motivation for learning, and online communication self-efficacy are parts of the online learning readiness model adopted in the present study (Hung et al., 2010). In addition to these studies, the researchers could reach another study that was carried out with foreign language students in Malaysia. This study also indicates that most participating foreign language learners were ready for online learning (Ismail et al., 2022a).

As the literature above indicates and to the best of the researchers' knowledge, there is a need for further studies on Turkish EFL students' readiness for online learning in terms of several aspects mentioned in the fifth paragraph above. In the present study, the researchers chose one of these aspects which was the effects of Turkish EFL students' readiness for online learning on their English language learning performance because of two reasons. The first reason is that like face-to-face English language education, distance/online English language education was found to contribute to the improvement in EFL students' writing (Sariani et al., 2021), reading (Reflianto et al., 2021), and speaking (Ismail Al-Oqaily et al., 2022), and to be effective in EFL students' learning how to listen and speak in English (Megat-Abdul-Rahim et al., 2021). The second reason is that such studies can provide different stakeholders of education with data about the effectiveness of distance English language education in students' English language learning so that they can make changes if necessary to make distance English language education effective. Therefore, the present study aimed to find out the relationships between the Turkish EFL students' readiness for online learning and their perceptions about the effects of distance education on their four English skills to understand the effect of online learning readiness on English language performance.

1. What is the Turkish EFL students' readiness for online learning?
2. What are the Turkish EFL students' perceptions of the effects of distance education on the improvement of their reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills?
3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the Turkish EFL students' readiness for online learning and their perceptions of the effects of distance education on their reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills in English?

To explain the effects of Turkish EFL students' readiness for online learning on their English language learning performance, their students' perceptions about the effects of distance education on their four English language skills were used because of the predetermined issue (i.e., participants may not want to share their grades).

METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework of the Present Study

The theoretical framework of the present study is based on the subscales or subdimensions of the Online Learning Readiness Scale developed by Hung et al. (2010). According to Hung et al. (2010), the scale is composed of five subdimensions or subscales which are computer/internet self-efficacy, self-directed learning, learner control, motivation for learning, and online communication self-efficacy. The first subdimension deals with how confident a student feels in using a computer, programs required for online learning, and the internet (Hung et al., 2010). The focus of the second subdimension is on whether the student can take responsibility for their learning by doing several things such as implementing their study plan and time management (Hung et al., 2010). The third subdimension deals with to what extent the student has control over their learning (Hung et al., 2010). The fourth subdimension shows how motivated the student is for their online learning (Hung et al., 2010). The last one concentrates on how confident the student feels in communicating their ideas while using offline and online communication tools (Hung et al., 2010). This theoretical framework can give instructional designers and online instructors/teachers information about how ready their students are for online learning so that better online courses/programs can be developed, and students can improve their learning in online education (Hung et al., 2010).

Research Design

Survey research design can be used to “describe and explore variables and constructs of interest” (Ponto, 2015, p.171). Accordingly, it was utilized in the design of the present study because the researchers in the present study aimed to describe the readiness of the Turkish EFL students for online learning and explore the relationship between the online learning readiness levels of the Turkish EFL students and their perceptions of the effects of distance education on their four language skills in English.

Participants

405 Turkish students (240 females and 165 males) who studied English in an English preparatory program at a Turkish university participated in the research. 267 of them graduated from Anatolian high school, 69 from science high school, 27 from religious high school, 14 from open high school, 12 from basic high school, 11 from vocational high school, two from Anatolian teacher high school, two from military high school, and one from super high school. 262 participants were students of the faculty of engineering, 88 of them were students of the faculty of architecture, and 55 of them were students of education. While 377 had a computer, 28 of them did not have a computer. Also, 225 of them experienced web-based learning, but 180 of them did not have this experience.

Data Collection Tools

The data were collected through the Turkish version of the Online Learning Readiness Scale developed by Hung et al. (2010) and adapted to the Turkish educational context by İlhan and Çetin (2013) with four closed-ended statements which asked the

participants whether distance education improved their listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills. The scale is an 18-item five-point Likert type. It is composed of five subscales: computer/internet self-efficacy, self-directed learning, learner control, motivation for learning, and online communication self-efficacy. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the sub-scales and the total scale were measured as 0.763, 0.702, 0.626, 0.793, 0.813, and 0.883 respectively in the present study. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the four closed-ended items added by the researchers was 0.823.

Data Collection Procedure

The data were collected online through SurveyMonkey during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns in the fall term of 2020 and 2021 academic year.

Data Analysis

The data for the first and second research questions were analyzed through descriptive statistics. For the third research question, Skewness and Kurtosis values of the total scale, its subscales, and the four closed-ended items were calculated to check whether the quantitative data were distributed normally through SPSS 20 for MAC. The calculated Skewness and Kurtosis values are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The Skewness and Kurtosis Values of the Total Scale, Its Subscales, and the Four Closed-ended Items

	Skewness	Kurtosis
The Online Learning Readiness Scale	-.350	.795
The computer/internet self-efficacy subscale	-.476	.465
The self-directed learning subscale	-.772	1.372
The learner control subscale	-.224	-.118
The motivation for learning subscale	-.591	.781
The online communication self-efficacy subscale	-.619	.316
The first closed-ended item	-.277	-1.318
The second closed-ended item	-.243	-1.274
The third closed-ended item	.152	-1.208
The fourth closed-ended item	-.641	-.970

As Table 1 indicates, all Skewness and Kurtosis values were between +1,5 and -1,5, which means that the quantitative data in the present study were distributed normally because any Skewness and Kurtosis values between +1.5 and -1.5 show that the data are normally distributed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Therefore, the data for the third research question were analyzed through Pearson correlation.

RESULTS

The findings of the present study were presented according to the research questions in order.

Research Question 1: The Turkish EFL Students' Readiness for Online Learning

The Turkish EFL students' readiness for online learning was analyzed in terms of the five subscales of the Online Learning Readiness Scale. Table 2 below indicates the mean scores of the Turkish EFL students related to the subscales and total scale.

Table 2. The Mean Scores of the Turkish EFL Students Related to the Subscales and Total Scale

Subscales and total scale	<i>x</i>	<i>Sd.</i>
CIS*	3.5761	0.74205
SDL*	3.7116	0.59202
LC*	3.1852	0.78734
MfL*	3.5846	0.7595
OCS*	3.5383	0.86394
OLRS*	3.5442	0.55161

* CIS stands for computer/internet self-efficacy, SDL for self-directed learning, LC for learner control, MfL for motivation for learning, OCS for online communication self-efficacy, and OLRs for the Online Learning Readiness Scale.

According to Table 2, the readiness levels of the participants in the present study were above the medium level in the five subscales of the Online Learning Readiness Scale considering their mean scores related to the five subscales. In addition, they had the highest mean score in the self-directed learning sub-scale, while their lowest score was in the learner control subscale.

Research Question 2: The Turkish EFL Students' Perceptions of the Effects of Distance Education on Their Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing Skills in English

Table 3 below presents the descriptive statistics related to the effect of distance education on their reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills in English.

Table 3. The Descriptive Statistics Related to the Effects of Distance Education on Their Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing Skills in English

Skills	CD*		D*		PA*		A*		TA*	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Reading	31	7.7	67	16.5	125	30.9	0	0	182	44.9
Listening	31	7.7	62	15.3	137	33.8	0	0	175	43.2
Speaking	55	13.6	87	21.5	140	34.6	0	0	123	30.4
Writing	28	6.9	42	10.4	114	28.1	0	0	221	54.6

* CD refers to certainly disagree, D to disagree, PA to partially agree, A to agree, and TA to totally agree.

As seen in Table 3, 125 participants partially agreed that distance education improved their reading skills, and 182 participants totally agreed with that, yet 98 participants did not agree with it. Despite 93 participants who disagreed, 137 participants partially and 175 participants totally agreed that distance education improved their listening skills. While 142 participants disagreed that distance education improved their speaking skills, 140 participants partially and 123 participants totally agreed with it. 221 participants totally agreed that distance education improved their writing skills, and 114 partially agreed with it, but 70 disagreed with it. Overall, the number of participants who agreed and partially agreed that distance education had a positive impact on their reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills in English is quite higher than the participants who disagreed with it.

Research Question 3: The Relationship between the Turkish EFL Students' Readiness for Online Learning and Their Perceptions of the Effects of Distance Education on Their Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing Skills in English

The Pearson correlation efficiencies between the Turkish EFL students' readiness for online learning and their perceptions of the effects of distance English language teaching on their reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills in English are given in Table 4 below.

Table 4. The Pearson Correlation Efficiencies between the Turkish EFL Students' Readiness for Online Learning and Their Perceptions of the Effects of Distance Education on Their Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing Skills in English

		CIS*	SDL*	LC*	MfL*	OCS*	OLRS*
Reading	Pearson Correlation	0.481**	0.273**	0.407**	0.41* *	0.283**	0.452**
	Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N.	405	405	405	405	405	405
Listening	Pearson Correlation	0.349**	0.293**	0.418**	0.446**	0.328**	0.487**
	Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N.	405	405	405	405	405	405
Speaking	Pearson Correlation	0.318**	0.349**	0.404**	0.419**	0.334**	0.487**
	Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N.	405	405	405	405	405	405
Writing	Pearson Correlation	0.216**	0.291**	0.365**	0.409**	0.269**	0.417**
	Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N.	405	405	405	405	405	405

* CIS stands for computer/internet self-efficacy, SDL for self-directed learning, LC for learner control, MfL for motivation for learning, OCS for online communication self-efficacy, and OLRS for the Online Learning Readiness Scale.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 4 shows that there was a moderate correlation between the EFL students' perceptions of the effect of distance education on their reading skills and three subscales (i.e., computer/internet self-efficacy, learner control, and motivation for learning) and between it and the Online Learning Readiness Scale, while there was a low correlation between reading and two subscales (i.e., self-directed learning and online communication self-efficacy). Though the correlation between the EFL students' perceptions of the effect of distance education on their listening skills and self-directed learning was low, the correlations between it and other subscales and between it and the Online Learning Readiness Scale were moderate. The correlations between the EFL students' perceptions of the effect of distance education on their speaking skills and the Online Learning Readiness Scale and also between

it and all subscales were moderate. Although the correlations between the EFL students' perceptions of the effect of distance education on their writing skills and the Online Learning Readiness Scale and between it and two subscales (i.e., learner control and motivation for learning) were moderate, the correlations between it and other subscales (i.e., computer/internet self-efficacy, self-directed learning, and online communication self-efficacy) were low.

DISCUSSION

The findings were discussed under three titles which were prepared according to the research questions.

The Turkish EFL Students' Readiness for Online Learning

The studies made with students in general (Ates-Cobanoglu & Cobanoglu, 2021; Cigdem & Ozkan, 2022; Cigdem & Yildirim, 2014; Cinar et al., 2021; Chung et al., 2020; İlic, 2021; Ismail et al., 2022; Taşkın & Erzurumlu, 2021; Yeşilyurt, 2021) and EFL students in particular (Serttaş & Kasabalı, 2020; Korkmaz, 2022) in the literature have indicated that they were ready for online learning. Similarly, the findings of the present study have shown that the participating EFL students were ready for online learning. Like the participating EFL students in Korkmaz's (2022) and Serttaş and Kasabalı's (2020) studies, the participating EFL students' score in the learner control subscale was low, which may result from the fact that they may have got used to teacher-centred face-to-face education when they were in primary, middle, and high schools, so they may not be familiar with taking the control of their own learning. Unlike the EFL students in Korkmaz's (2022) study, the EFL students in the present study had the highest score in the self-directed learning scale, which may stem from the fact that online learning can be considered as a learning environment in which teacher-centeredness reduces, while student-centeredness increases due to its nature, so this may cause them to understand the significance of their responsibility in their learning. Like the EFL students in Korkmaz's (2022) study, the EFL students in the present study had high scores in the computer/internet self-efficacy and online communication self-efficacy subscales. This may be explained by the technological advancements and the way they change how people communicate with each other. That is, computers and smartphones are very common, and people can connect to the Internet wherever they want; therefore, these may have caused the EFL students in the present study to have high levels of computer/internet self-efficacy. In addition, online communication tools such as emails, chat, and instant messaging services are commonly used by people to communicate, so this common use of online communication tools may have contributed to the EFL students' online communication self-efficacy in the present study. Like the EFL students in Korkmaz's (2022) and Serttaş and Kasabalı's (2020) studies, the EFL students in the present study had high scores in the motivation for learning subscale, which may be because they have high self-efficacy in using computers, the internet, and online communication tools, and distance education can enable them to use computers, the internet, and online communication tools, so this may have motivated them to learn in distance education.

The Turkish EFL Students' Perceptions of the Effects of Distance Education on Their Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing Skills in English

According to the findings of the present study, most of the participating EFL students thought that distance English language education could help them to improve their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. That according to the EFL students' perceptions in the present study distance education could enhance their writing, reading, and speaking was corroborated by the findings of Sariyani et al. (2021), Reflianto et al. (2021), and Al-Oqaily et al. (2022) in the literature. Also, the fact that the participants' perceptions in the present study have showed distance education could improve their listening can mean that distance education was effective in their learning how to listen in English, which was in line with the literature (Megat-Abdul-Rahim et al., 2021).

The Relationship between the Turkish EFL Students' Readiness for Online Learning and Their Perceptions of the Effects of Distance Education on Their Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing Skills in English

The findings of the present study have indicated that there were moderate and positive correlations between the readiness levels of the EFL students for online learning and their perceptions of the effects of distance education on the improvement of their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. This may result from the fact that readiness for online learning could facilitate learning how to read, listen, speak, and write in English and practicing four language skills in English as the EFL students in the present study could easily get adapted to distance education and meet the requirements of four-skill instruction.

According to the present study, the EFL students' perceived improvement in their reading skills was correlated with their readiness for online learning in terms of computer/internet self-efficacy, learner control, and motivation for learning moderately and positively, while it was correlated with their readiness in terms of self-directed learning and online communication self-efficacy lowly and positively. The moderate correlations may stem from the following reasons. The EFL students in the present study might need to use their computers or mobile devices and the internet effectively to read a text in English and do exercises. Reading may be considered an individual activity considering its nature in which a person can read and do the activity on his/her own, so reading online might require them to have a certain degree of learner control. In addition, English language learning requires EFL students to be motivated in learning English online and offline because without motivation, they may lose their interest and become less engaged in learning English, which may mean that the EFL students could maintain their motivation to learn English online to some extent. In terms of low correlations, the EFL students in the present study might not be used to directing themselves in reading in English or taking responsibility for their reading in English to some extent as they may be used to teacher-centered face-to-face English education. While reading a text in English and doing the activities related to it, the EFL students in the present study might study alone, so they might not need to communicate with each other a lot by using online communication tools except for the times they shared their answers with their EFL instructors.

The findings of the present study have shown that the correlation between the EFL students' perceived improvement in their listening skills and their readiness for online learning in terms of self-directed learning was low and positive, but other correlations between them were moderate and positive. The moderate correlations between them may be explained by the following reasons. Like reading, listening can be considered an individual activity considering its nature where a student can listen to a recording in English and do the

related activities individually, which might require the EFL students in the present study to take control of their listening learning. In addition, the participants in the present study needed to use their technological devices including their computers and the internet to listen in an online learning environment. To improve one's listening skills, that person should be motivated to learn English. Similarly, the participants in the present study might need to be motivated while they learned how to listen in English and practised listening. In distance education, listening cannot just be limited to listening activities because it is included in different types of English language teaching activities in distance education like it is in face-to-face education, which requires using online communication tools effectively. Similarly, the EFL students in the present study could use online communication tools effectively to some extent. The low correlation may be because considering the nature of a listening lesson, EFL students follow certain steps (pre-, while-, and post-listening) in a listening lesson, so in these lessons, an English language teacher can lead students through these stages, and students may not need to take responsibility for their listening learning to some extent. This might be what happened with the EFL students in the present study.

The findings of the present study have revealed the correlations between the EFL students' perceived improvement in their speaking skills and their readiness for online learning in terms of computer/internet self-efficacy, self-directed learning, online communication self-efficacy, learner control, and motivation for learning were moderate and positive. The correlations may result from the following causes. Speaking is a productive skill which can require EFL students to (a) take responsibility for their learning as it requires production, (b) communicate with their teachers and peers in distance education by using online communication tools since it is an interactive and collaborative activity, (c) take control of their speaking learning as it can require careful planning and implementation to produce by using English, and (d) be motivated to learn how to speak and practice speaking because lack of motivation may cause EFL students to lose their interest in speaking in English. Using technological devices, such as computers, and the internet effectively can be considered important to learn how to speak and practice speaking in distance education, so EFL students should use them effectively. As a result of these causes, the EFL students in the present study might take the control of and responsibility for their speaking learning, use technological devices, the internet, and online communication tools effectively in their speaking learning, and be motivated for their speaking learning in distance education.

According to the findings of the present study, the EFL students' perceived improvement in their writing skills was correlated with their readiness in terms of learner control and motivation for learning moderately and positively, yet it was correlated with their readiness for online learning in terms of computer/internet self-efficacy, self-directed learning, and online communication self-efficacy lowly and positively. Writing is a productive skill which requires careful planning and implementation as it is composed of several stages, such as pre-writing, while-writing, editing, and publishing. Such a control requires taking control of their writing learning and being motivated to write in English, which may explain the moderate correlation between the EFL students' readiness for online learning in terms of learner control and motivation for learning and their perceived improvement in their writing skills in the present study. Writing lessons in distance education may require EFL students to write paragraphs on online programs synchronously, and basic computer skills may be necessary to use such programs. Also, writing lessons may be implemented through writing assignments in distance education, so it may require a low level of communication between English language teachers and EFL students. These two cases may have led to the low correlations of the EFL students' perceived improvement in their writing skills with their readiness for online learning in terms of computer/internet self-efficacy and online communication self-efficacy successively in the present study. The low

correlation between the EFL students' perceived improvement in their writing skills with their readiness for online learning in terms of self-directed learning in the present may be because they might be used to teacher-centered writing lessons more than they might be accustomed to student-centered writing lessons.

CONCLUSION

The present study has focused on the relationships between the EFL students' readiness for online learning and their perceptions about the effects of distance education on their four English language skills. Its findings have indicated that the participating EFL students were ready for online learning and believed that distance education improved their reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills in English. Also, they have revealed that there was a moderate and positive correlation between their readiness for online learning and their perceptions about the effects of distance education on their four English language skills.

Pedagogical Implications of the Present Study

There are two implications of the present study:

1. Schools and universities should organize training for their EFL students to improve their readiness for online learning in terms of how they can (a) use their technological devices and the internet more efficiently, (b) take responsibility for and control their learning, (c) maintain their motivation in online learning environments, and (d) use online communication tools more effectively.
2. Schools and universities should also train their English language teachers/instructors in terms of how they can contribute to the readiness of their EFL students for online learning.

Limitations of the Present Study and Suggestions for Further Research

The present study was designed as a quantitative study, which did not include any qualitative data. It also focused on the relationship between the readiness of EFL students for online learning and their perceptions of the effects of distance education on four English language skills, but it did not include the EFL students' grades in this process. Therefore, further research should include (a) qualitative data to enrich the data that will be gathered quantitatively and (b) students' grades to analyze the effects of distance education on their four English language skills so that a better understanding of the relationship between readiness for online learning and the effects of distance education on four English language skills in English.

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