REACHING THE ISOLATED EFL PREP-CLASS STUDENTS VIA GROUP VIDEO TASKS DURING EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING: STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract:

Due to Covid-19 pandemic precautions, the 2020-2021 academic year was a radical shift from face to face education to online at all levels throughout the world. Students who were newly enrolled to their university from different regions of Turkey started their lessons as EFL Prep-class students without meeting their classmates, feeling isolated. In order to make them feel in a classroom, create their sense of belonging and the rate of participation in lessons during emergency remote teaching, online group video tasks were designed for an EFL prep class. This study aims to investigate students' perceptions of the effects of online collaborative group video tasks on their English and some 21st-century skills. It has a sequential explanatory design that is a type of mixed-method research. The students were given three group video tasks during the semester. After they finished the tasks, a 4-point Likert-type scale questionnaire was administered to the whole class, groups' videos were analysed, and in order to get students' perceptions in-depth, semi-structured online interviews were held with six voluntary students. It was found out that group video tasks through online collaboration were beneficial for the development of the use of English, writing, pronunciation and speaking skills, helped students develop a sense of belonging to their class. These tasks made students learn how to make a presentation, helped them gain some digital skills such as using video-maker programs, as well. It was also found out that Microsoft Teams was a student-friendly platform for online classes.

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1. Introduction

According to the Covid-19 Higher Education Report by UNESCO in May 2020, while 1.57 billion students in the world were deprived of their schools and face-to-face education, 23.4 million of them were higher education students (UNESCO, 2020). The fact that the epidemic has affected the whole world to such a great extent in the field of education has also brought some inevitable problems. The sudden and unplanned transition of schools, including universities, to online education, has been defined as an "*emergency remote teaching*" (ERT) model (Hodges et al., 2020). Therefore, the process has been painful for millions of students and instructors who suddenly find themselves in front of screens unprepared for online education.

Students who switched to online education in the Spring semester of 2019-2020 academic year, with their classmates and instructors, had been able to meet face-to-face and somehow developed a sense of belonging. On the other hand, the ones newly enrolled in the 2020-2021 academic year had to participate in online education due to force majeure without sharing a classroom or establishing a social bond. It was not a coincidence that first-year students were found to be less motivated than older students during the learning process in the pandemic (Stevanović, et al., 2021). That was because of first-year students' not having any chance to meet face to face to develop sense of belonging. However, building a sense of community is even more important for online classes (Lomicka, 2020). While distance education was defined as an education method in which students voluntarily participate in a highly motivating way (Schweir & Balbar, 2002), it has become an obligation rather than a voluntary basis after the pandemic. This sudden obligation brought some challenges both for instructors and students in tertiary education around the world during ERT. For instructors, the challenges during ERT were like; access to the internet, adapting existing sources in virtual teaching (Hazaea et al., 2021), limited collaboration among students (Huang, Shi & Yang, 2020), negative feelings of instructors for delivering courses without interaction (Juárez-Díaz & Perales, 2021), unfamiliarity with digital platforms, and lack of student motivation and engagement (Nugroho et al., 2021).

For students, the challenges were not different from the instructors, especially issues like motivation and engagement were also their problems together with lack of faculty communication and increased anxiety (Petillion & McNeil, 2020). The studies in literature generally focused on needs analysis and they detected problems during ERT both for students and instructors. However, the common problem of both parties -student engagement- was not practically studied enough to find ways and suggestions for EFL instructors. This study differs in that sense by suggesting group video tasks for students' engagement and finds a solution to one of the neglected skill -speaking- especially during ERT (Karataş & Tuncer, 2020) for online EFL instructors. Thus, this

study aims to investigate students' perceptions of the effects of online collaborative group video tasks on their English and some 21st-century skills during ERT.

2. Literature Review

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasises the importance of social context and meaningful interaction in language learning where one can learn best with the help of other more knowledgeable peers. Instead of learning independently, assisted learning with a more competent peer makes one more knowledgeable, called as the zone of proximal development. Therefore, learners learn better when they work collaboratively through socialization. Teachers in Vygotsky's classes are facilitators and they are to design *meaningful activities* to scaffold the growth of language by adapting their own culture (Vygotsky, 1980). According to Siegel (2005), there are some characteristics of constructivist classrooms such as assimilating the prior knowledge, students being active creators, reflecting on what has already been known, collaborative groups, construction of newly learnt knowledge with the existing one. Within this theory, students can gain additional skills like writing short dramas, poetries, scenarios etc. leading students' curiosity to something new (Suhendi, 2018). These additional skills also lead students to gain digital skills, especially during ERT after Covid-19 as technology in a way has become a compulsory mean of education, so students have to cope with it. In fact, online education started without considering the readiness of students' digital literacy, nevertheless they developed the ability to adopt new technologies for learning purposes (Limniou et al., 2021).

Most of the studies analysed by Su and Zou (2020) share a common theoretical framework as referring to social constructivism. In their meta-analysis, based on the review of 398 SSCI articles from 2014 to 2019 about change in technology use, the promising technologies for future language education come out as online videos, e-books, voice recording etc. Here the futuristic technological change reflects in this study as online recorded students' videos. However, as known from Kozma (1991, p.179) and proved in a study by Zahn and others (2012), receiving the information by video media itself was not sufficient for students' learning but learning occurs as a result of an active constructive process where learners manage the available resources to create new knowledge by extracting the information and integrating it with already stored information in memory. Thus in this study, videos were not for students' passive receiving but they were actively creating their own video products, integrating new knowledge with resources available at hand.

Teachers' guidance and online feedback are also found beneficial in the review of Su and Zou (2020). Su and Zou (2020) have potential research suggestions like sharing whole class feedback and community building. Because success in distance education is directly linked to the development of a sense of belonging (Trespalacioz & Florez, 2019). It has been reported that the intrinsic motivation of students who attend distance education increases by means of activities that require cooperation (Gillett-Swan, 2017).

Here in this study, student-generated collaborative video tasks together with their whole class feedback in distance education could be said to have a direct link to creating both senses of belonging and motivation. As students are responsible for their content and the generation of their videos, collaborative video projects are also a rational method for improving speaking skills (Sari et al., 2020). It was observed that video projects improved not only English speaking skills, but also 21st-century skills such as knowledge creation, digital skills and collaboration (Puspa, 2016). A similar video project in EFL class through the Facebook community results in the development of speaking skills and developing students' own learning process (Sun & Yang, 2015).

Studying the learner autonomy and the effectiveness of Zoom platform, Lenkaitis (2020) finds the tool beneficial for collaboration but suggests giving feedback to students for future study, which is fulfilled in this study on Ms Teams.

As a response to Bailey and Lee (2020) who suggest educators develop *innovative solutions* based on best practices to ensure covering learning objectives after the pandemic, group video tasks in this study have been designed in the hope of enlightening the path for the educators in the midst and post-pandemic conditions. One of the challenges of online education under pandemic conditions was figured out as inexperienced online instructors having difficulty in getting students' attention towards lessons (Bailey & Lee, 2020) and this can be overcome by this study's suggestion, implementing group video tasks in their classes.

In this study, the effect of whole class feedback and sense of belonging have been analysed to fill the gap in the literature and tried to fulfil one of the important suggestions by Su and Zou (2020), as well. In addition, the selected studies in their review are generally from primary or secondary school, here in this study the case in a higher educational institution is analysed.

Thus, due to the fact that interaction, motivation, sense of belonging, improving speaking and digital skills in distance education were big challenges, as a facilitator, video tasks from the main course book were adapted to students' own life-experience based on sociocultural theory. By scaffolding in the use of target language, while students' creating their own videos, students interacted and solved problems in groups to reach a common goal. This kind of activity design and facilitating have positive effects on sharing, discovery and are essential to students' learning online (Wang & Liu, 2020).

In this conceptual framework, the research question was "*What are the higher education EFL Prep-class students' perceptions of the effects of online group video tasks on their learning English and their digital skills?*"

3. Methodology

The present study has a sequential explanatory design that is a type of mixed-method research (Creswell, 2012). Firstly, as a quantitative method, a survey was used to gather the whole class' views about online collaborative video tasks and secondly, as qualitative methods, interviews and document analysis were done.

3.1 Research Context

The study was carried out in one of the classes of the school of English as a foreign language (EFL) catering for the needs of students' departmental studies at a state university in the northwest of Turkey. After Covid-19, the Council of Higher Education (CHE), authority in Turkish Higher Education, decided for universities to continue theoretical lessons online. The university's online learning platform was chosen as Microsoft (Ms) Teams and this study was carried out via this platform. The necessary permission for the study was obtained from the School of EFL, and the Research Ethical Committee of the University.

3.2 Data Collection Instruments and Participants

The instruments used for data collection in this study were a 4-point Likert questionnaire adapted from Novitasari (2019) that had been adapted from Felix-Aguelo (2017) and a semi-structured interview guide designed by the authors. Starting from A1 CEFR level, 25 out of 26 students (15 males, averagely 18 years old) responded to the questionnaire. Afterwards, six students participated in the interviews. The interview guide was designed based on the Onion Reflection Model proposed by Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) to get the deeper reflection of the students about group video tasks. According to Onion Reflection Model, six levels affect someone in functioning a specific role in life. It is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Onion reflection model (Korthangen & Vasalos, 2005)

Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) elaborated the model as: (1) The environment is everything outside the person that he/she encounters. (2) Behaviour refers to an attitude of the person that described how he/she behaves. (3) Competencies are any abilities that a person can perform. It deals with the knowledge or skills that he/she masters. (4) A belief is an assumption or conviction of the person. (5) Identity is related to self-

conceptualisation, how the person sees him/herself. (6) A Mission is any inspiration or hope that plays a role in a particular person's life.

In order to increase the validity and reliability, only related questions were embedded into the Onion Model as the areas were already certain. Those interview questions were checked in terms of content relatedness and language by two Instructional Technology experts and two English instructors. Including students from different perspectives, six voluntary students to be interviewed were selected through maximum variation sampling (See Table 1).

Table 1: Features of the Participants

Participants	Gender	Level of being active in groups	English competency (CEFR)
Student1 (St1)	female	Active	A2 level
Student2 (St2)	male	Semi-active	A1 level
Student3 (St3)	female	Semi-active	A1 level
Student4 (St4)	male	Active	A2 level
Student5 (St5)	female	Timid & Passive	A1 level
Student6 (St6)	male	Passive	A1 level

3.3 Procedure

This study was conducted in the 2020-2021 academic year Fall semester, when students enrolled in the university, had no chance to meet face to face. Each prep-class had two instructors as main and support teachers. The first author was the main instructor of the class. The class, consisted of 26 students from different regions of Turkey, attending lessons synchronously on Ms Teams. As each lesson lasted 30 min. and there was a lot to cover, there was very little time for interaction and creating a classroom environment. Thus, three online group video tasks were assigned on the 3rd, 5th and 7th week of the term, referring to the main course book "New English File 4th Edition" by Oxford Publishing.

Towards the end of the term, the questionnaire was conducted online with Ms Forms. At the end of the term, the six voluntary participants were interviewed online with Ms Teams individual call.

The data from the questionnaire were analysed through descriptive statistics; especially percentages were used. The interview data were analysed through the content analysis method. To prepare for the analysis, all interviews' recordings were transcribed, using a verbatim approach. Using a deductive approach, interview transcripts were analysed under the themes of the Onion Model and the codes were double-checked for accuracy by the researchers.

3.4 Group Video Tasks

As these tasks were assigned after covering the specific unit of the main course book, a similar topic was adapted for a video creation by the instructor. For instance, the elementary book has a unit about "Blue Zones" in which there is a passage about people living longer for some reason. Having covered the unit in class, the video task was assigned to students asking them to find similar zones in Turkey in the 3rd week. Thus

students who met in sub-channels of the Ms Teams decided on the region like the Blue Zone in Turkey and created their content and videos.

On the 5th and 7th week, the assigned video topics were parallel to the main course book's units as well. The former one was about the most and the least loved days of the week, months of the year and seasons. The latter was about ordering food and drink in a restaurant. Students were free to choose in the selection of digital tools while creating their videos such as PowerPoint (PPT) and pictures, video maker programs, Ms Teams video creation features or Snapchat filters etc. Videos were generally 3 to 4 min. length. Students in groups were all visible and speaking in front of the camera one by one in their videos. They were also requested to add subtitles to their videos for their peers to follow and find the potential pronunciation and use of English mistakes.

For each video task, considering their gender, students were divided into five different heterogeneous groups. They uploaded their videos to the class sub-channels in Ms Teams to be evaluated and get feedback both from peers and the instructor during class time. The videos produced by the groups were analysed in terms of their features. For the features of students' group videos, please refer to the appendices.

4. Results

4.1 Survey Results

It is seen that students' views were generally positive (See Table 2) about online group video tasks. As for the general benefits of using group video tasks in learning English, a significant amount of students agreed or strongly agreed that they made use of video tasks such as learning English (items 1&2) in an interesting way, which also contributed to their participation (item 7) and knowledge (item 5) through the collaborative way of studying. Only 20% of students disagree on understanding the working process through these tasks.

For the questions of specific benefits in speaking skills, more than 80% of students agreed that these tasks were beneficial for their speaking skills, especially by developing ideas (item 13) within a group to speak more confidently (item 12), naturally improving their English speaking competency by exchanging information and solving the problems actively together (item 10).

About the questions of specific benefits in e-learning and digital skills, 84% of students agreed that they benefited from these tasks by improving their digital skills (item 6) and 80% of them agreed that these tasks helped them feel belong to their class (item 14).

The items about the negative aspects of video tasks highlighted that nearly all students (98%) disagreed regarding these tasks as a waste of time and involving group members in tasks as difficult (items 4 & 9).

Table 2: Students' views about online group video tasks

Aspects	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
General benefits	1. Group video tasks helped me learn English easily.	10 40%	**15** **60%**	0 0%	0 0%
	2. These tasks made learning English more interesting.	**11** **44%**	**11** **44%**	3 12%	0 0%
	3. These tasks enhanced my communication skills.	**12** **48%**	11 44%	2 8%	0 0%
	5. These tasks helped me gain more knowledge through working in a team.	12 48%	**13** **52%**	0 0%	0 0%
	7. I became more participative in English class through these tasks.	**15** **60%**	9 36%	1 4%	0 0%
	8. These tasks made me understand the working process.	8 32%	**12** **48%**	5 20%	0 0%
Specific benefits in speaking	10. These tasks helped me become more confident in doing speaking activities by participating in sharing information, making decisions, and solving problems.	7 28%	**17** **68%**	1 4%	0 0%
	11. These tasks could improve my speaking skills through working in a team.	9 36%	**13** **52%**	3 12%	0 0%
	12. These tasks helped me get better confidence to speak.	9 36%	**12** **48%**	4 16%	0 0%
	13. These tasks helped me grasp more ideas to speak about.	8 32%	**15** **60%**	2 8%	0 0%
Specific benefits in e-learning and digital skills	14. Thanks to these tasks, I felt like I belong to the class.	**11** **44%**	9 36%	3 12%	2 8%
	6. My digital skills improved while doing these tasks.	**12** **48%**	9 36%	3 12%	1 4%
Negative aspects	9. It was difficult to actively involve my group members in group activities.	0 0%	3 12%	**16** **64%**	6 24%
	4. It was a waste of time explaining things to my group members.	0 0%	3 12%	10 40%	**12** **48%**

4.2 Semi-structured Interview Results

Six students have been interviewed individually at the end of the term. They have approximately eight or nine years of experience in English learning which they have found easier, less challenging and less dense when compared to their university-level class. All participants believe to be able to conduct learning English as a foreign language online although it is all their first time experiencing online education due to Covid-19.

A. Environment

The first layer of the Onion Reflection Model is the environment. It can be said to change after Covid-19 for every learner around the world dramatically. The followings are the emerging themes:

A.1 Siblings

From the interviews, half of the participants have one or two siblings who had to take their online lessons at the same time at home; therefore, overlapping lessons created both noisy environment and technical problems such as decelerated speed of internet connection.

A.2 Having a Room of One's Own

Except for St1, the others have their own room where they could silently attend the lessons, so they had their own room to study and concentrated well.

A.3 Internet Connection

All the participants reported that they connected to their lessons through Wi-Fi at home and this positively affected their concentration.

A.4 Information Technology Device

Five students preferred laptops to enter lessons, one used a tablet. Sometimes in case of any technical issue in laptops, they started to take their lessons via mobile phones since Ms Teams supports a mobile phone application as well. However, there were some disadvantages of having classes via mobile phones stated by three students like; it was not easy to hold the phone and listen to the lesson at the same time, moreover, the font size of the screen was very small to read and follow compared to the laptop screen and the last disadvantage was that it was not possible to start or record a meeting on Ms Teams' mobile phone application.

A.5 Video Conference Platform

All of the participants had a positive attitude towards Ms Teams as a learning tool and they found it user-friendly and student-oriented, while they found the Zoom platform as a more meeting area rather than educational purposes.

For instance; St2 made a positive comment about the contribution of the **sub-channels** of Ms Teams for their group video tasks as "*It is useful because we can meet our friends in sub-channels while doing group work, there is not much confusion since each group has a name in the sub-channels, there is no need to open another meeting.*"

For the easiness of **screen-sharing of Ms Teams**, St1 stated: "*Screen-sharing can easily be done by everyone, no need to be the host, in Ms Teams and I think it is much easier than other video conferencing applications such as Zoom. In Zoom, the person who "hosts" the meeting can only share the screen.*"

For the **homework section** of Ms Teams, St3 stated: "*Homework submission and the feedback part is a very good thing because it does not make it difficult for the teacher, and we can reach the feedback easily.*"

For the **audio and video recording** feature of Ms Teams, St5 stated, "*It is very good for us to download the recorded lesson and watch later. Especially I download most lectures to overview the lessons before the exam.*"

It can be concluded that the participants found Ms Teams multi-functional, more useful than alternative platforms as it is a single integrated platform for recorded lesson delivery, via its chat or break-out rooms, homework submission and its user-friendly feedback interface, file and screen sharing, collaborative work with its sub-channels with a single login account. Similarly, other researches also find Ms Teams functional as it provides better features such as collaborative discussion channels and chat rooms, video conferencing, content and screen sharing like a social media tool (Buchal & Songsore, 2019).

So the environment for students is no longer restricted to an actual four walls classroom. After the pandemic, new environmental factors can be listed as: participants having siblings with overlapping classes, having a room of one's own, internet service, technological tools and the video conference platform.

B. Behaviour

During the interviews, several points are emphasized by students as behaviours. They named these as: developing leadership, time management, communication skills, collaboration, interaction, sense of belonging, giving constructive feedback etc. The most frequently mentioned ones are developing their communication skills, interaction, sense of belonging and collaboration.

B.1 Communication Skills, Interaction and Sense of Belonging

For a group of students never met before, having been obliged to prepare a video assignment with five members was not an easy task in online education. However, this was exactly where they had to talk to each other by turning their cameras on, finding a common idea to work on, or asking for each other's help. Thus, as a nature of group work, it was high time when students communicated and naturally interacted with each other. Not only because the duration of online classes was less than face-to-face education, but also the loaded academic syllabus inevitably hindered the quality time of interaction during online class hours. St3 stated: "*Because we already have limited time in the lesson, we do not have much conversation. In these video assignments, there is a conversation inevitably even while preparing the video, you know it was like, you feel more in the classroom environment*." From the statement above, it can be said that communication, interaction and a sense of belonging to a class go hand in hand.

It was not a coincidence that except for one student who deliberately avoided himself from the tasks, all participants accepted that the group video tasks helped them a lot to feel themselves a part of a classroom. They also felt that if there weren't these tasks, whose members were changed in each assignment, they would not have been able to meet and interact with all the classmates online as St1 expressed: "*Thanks to the video assignments, you say "Oh yes, they laugh at the things I laugh at, too [...] you start talking, and then this thing moves to WhatsApp. It feels like you're climbing a friendship ladder.*" Furthermore, the students felt these tasks as homework at first, but after a while, as St5 stated, they turned into a kind of pleasing activity in which they enjoyed, interacted with each other while practising English.

During the preparation stage, students met in Ms Teams' sub-channels as a group; thus, this kind of task helped them get to know each other, chat freely and communicate. St4's ideas summarized the whole process as: *"In general, you are humorous when preparing the task, the part that we call backstage is always funnier than in front of the camera, and it takes longer, you laugh for one hour, you talk for half an hour, a five-minute video comes out."*

B.2 Collaboration

Students started to develop the behaviour of collaboration substantially with the help of these tasks. Almost all of them loved working together and they also realized that, unlike individual tasks, they could have better performance when working together. St4 said, *"Working in a group is better for me, I realized that when I do homework with the group, I do it better, more eagerly."*

Almost all the students understood what collaboration was and tried hard to be equal in workload even though there were more motivated, competent and leader like students who could be said to do more than others.

Students also liked to edit their own grammar or pronunciation mistakes. As these tasks were not competitive but collaborative, students tended to correct each other's mistakes eagerly before recording their final video. This situation was emphasized by four students as developing their ability to give constructive feedback. As the work was not individual but the prestige of a team, they all wanted to create something good to be discussed during class time. Thus this situation directly affected their motivation to lessons, as the remarkable idea comes from St6: *"Even though I don't like group-works, it created motivation because doing the same thing every day, the boredom and monotony could bother people, dealing with such different things in the meantime increase the motivation to lesson."*

In summary, when a group of students show a great deal of effort together and come out with a product like a video, its being evaluated in front of the whole class have a positive effect on active participation. When the students are active participants in online education, behaviours like a sense of belonging, interaction, communication and collaboration can develop a lot.

C. Competencies

In the third layer in the Model, competencies gained through these tasks were both asked by the questionnaire and deeply analysed by the interviews. Students stated to have developed several competencies both in English and in digital skills which are among the essentials of 21st-century skills (Fadel, 2008). Competencies can be said to divide into two categories; language and digital skills.

C.1 Language Competencies

C.1.1 Writing Skill, Grammar & Vocabulary Usage

Apart from developing their speaking skill which was apparent from the results of survey, all the participants also agreed that their writing, grammar and vocabulary in English certainly improved.

While creating their videos, students generally said to have discussed in Turkish, took notes, and then translated all the sentences in English where they needed to use the grammar that they had already learnt or they had to learn the new ones from a more competent student in the group. They used the specific content vocabulary by checking both the specific unit of the book and the digital dictionaries at hand. By creating their own content, students developed both their writing skills and had a chance to practice the unit vocabulary and newly-learned grammar structure- the process through which they found their learning as more permanent. This finding was supported by Shea and Shanahan (2011), concluding that when students hear, see and produce their content, they increase their ability to retain the information. Here, St2 summarized this: *"Our writing skills have improved a lot because writing a script and translating it from Turkish to English is writing, after all, blending them with our grammar and vocabulary has a great impact on our writing skill."*

C.1.2 Pronunciation

All the students developed their pronunciation notably. Because students presented the tasks, they had to check all the sentences they had written, before recording the final version of the video. They said to have made several rehearsals during their group meetings in sub-channels and checked the pronunciation of lots of words from dictionaries and they corrected each other's mistakes. St3 expressed, *"I feel the most improvement in pronunciation and speaking skills because although we sometimes read by looking at the screen, we still had pronunciation mistakes and I think we improved by correcting them."*

C.1.3 Listening

Although two students talked about this, they had in fact mentioned the prominent part. While recording their videos, students had to follow each other by listening to where to interfere or to stop. The listening skill was said to develop also by listening to other groups' videos. As the videos were watched in class, students had to listen to each other's work and understand the content to give constructive feedback. St6 said; *"Because we have to listen to and interpret other groups' tasks, our listening skills have developed."*

C.1.4 Presentation Skills

Except for one student, all of them thought to improve their presentation skills through these tasks. For most of them, it was their first time to present something in English or using PPT. Their presentation skills developed especially when their first and the last tasks were compared. The improvements were also in their creativity and the content of their videos. St5 told that they understood how to start a video, how to turn-take and link their speech to each other meaningfully, and St4 added that he understood even how to hold the camera and where to stand in front of the screen. In addition, St2 expressed, *"In our first video, there were sometimes synchronization problems, because somebody had to play the slide, the other not to forget their words and continue, I think we developed this by trials."*

C.2 Digital Competencies

The participants also gained improved digital skills such as: editing, cutting or montaging a video, PPT usage, pasting visuals on slides, using Snapchat filters, creating, downloading and uploading the video using Ms Teams features (Figure 2). The most

general idea about digital skills by St5 was: "*I think these group assignments improved our technological skills, so everyone learned to use many applications in some way or we had to learn and this was already very good.*"

Survey results showed that female students thought that they had developed their digital skills more than males. When the possible reasons behind this were asked to students during interviews, it was all agreed by the students that boys were more into the computer and digital world via games from the very early ages, unlike girls.

D. Beliefs

All the participants agreed to believe in the power, necessity and usefulness of these tasks during distance education. St1, for instance, stated the necessity to come together with her classmates which were only possible with these tasks because according to St5 if it had not been for these tasks, her classmates would not have bothered to meet online to chat or discuss. Thus, these tasks in a way created a kind of an obligation for students to meet in sub-channels. This situation was linked to feeling themselves in a classroom by St3, St4 and St6, especially in a situation where the students' cameras had to be off during online lessons due to the need of maintaining the uninterrupted internet connection. St1 found these tasks as a supplementary part of distance education as: "*These videos will complement distance learning. In other words, distance education alone is very deficient. I need to socialize, talk to my friends and show my performance to my teacher that I can do something in English.*"

In short, with the help of video tasks, students were able to meet, socialize and showed their abilities both to themselves and to their instructor.

E. Identity
E.1 Students' Personality and Learning Habits

The question about whether these tasks were suitable to their personality or learning habits were answered as "yes" by four students as they like being in a group or they generally prefer learning together. For the other two students, the situation for St6 was that he did not prefer learning within a group but individually. Because when the group members were not as meticulous as he was, he got irritated. Interestingly, he must have observed the benefits of these videos and despite his dislike of these tasks, he supported them to be applied in class. As for the other student, even though she was a sociable person when it comes to doing something in English, she said to have a psychological barrier, especially speaking in English. However, she was happy to remove this barrier by practising video tasks with the help of her classmates, being sure of everyone's supporting each other, not making fun of one another. Three of them have said to change their learning habits of English into positive ones.

E.2 Speaking in Front of Camera

Except for two students, participants found speaking in front of cameras strange but funny. It was strange for them because it was their first time to meet their classmates as it had not been possible to do ice breakers for 26 students online due to time constraints.

That's why generally students saw their faces within these tasks. They also found speaking in front of cameras funny because there were some moments when they had role played without knowing each other well.

While St6 did not like turning his camera on for being a bit shy, St1 found it fine as she explained: *"It's good because nobody sees anyone, so if they say that the school is opening tomorrow, I don't think we would get to know each other if group video tasks were not assigned."* As students' cameras were off during online lessons to maintain the internet flow, it could be inferred that the more video tasks the students did, the more interaction occurred, and thus turning on cameras did not become a problem for the ones who hesitated to open theirs.

E.3 Uploading Videos to YouTube vs. Ms Teams' Sub-channels

Having finished their rehearsals, students were requested to upload their videos to sub-channels. During class time, the instructor clicked to the specific channel of the group and watched the video whole class to give feedback. Those sub-channels were only accessible to the members of the class. Thus Ms Teams' sub-channels are more private and close to public access. During the interview, when students were asked about if these tasks were asked to be uploaded on YouTube not to sub-channels, how they would feel, there were similar arguments from participants. For instance, St1 stated that she would prefer to upload to YouTube because she thought to do a good job so why not other students from other classes or universities could watch and got inspired. Except for one student, other five students did not see uploading videos to YouTube as a problem, because they thought that no one will open and watch their videos there, however; they were also aware that there were shy students who did not prefer YouTube which is open to everyone even if there will be less number of the audience watching them. The risk of reaching their videos on an open public platform could make some students nervous. St5 explained it as follows: *"I don't mind uploading videos to sub-channels in Teams, but since I don't know people who are going to watch on a channel like YouTube, it made me feel anxious, I know that a platform open to everyone would leave me hesitant, but I would prefer Ms Teams because sub-channels are still a special place for our class."*

E.4 Whole Class Feedback

All the participants found sparing the last hours of some days for watching the videos within class time as necessary and beneficial. They stated to have learned both from their own and other groups' video feedback because the mistakes or weaknesses in their videos were more or less the same. Thus, participants in the interview valued the peers' feedback and paid more attention to teacher feedback and if it weren't the teacher feedback, these tasks would be insufficient in terms of language development. Not only English in terms of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary feedback was delivered but also the content and organisation of their videos were evaluated. Thanks to the feedback session, common mistakes were prioritised which enabled learning to be more permanent. In this study, there was short, condensed teacher feedback to a whole class, as tailor-made and holistic one which catered for the needs of students in terms of

language acquisition and some skills required such as analytical and critical thinking ability for the content and organisation of the videos.

F. Mission

The last layer is mission. Having done these tasks, whether the students have some ideas about their future learning was questioned. Four out of six students were able to develop unique ideas with these tasks. For instance, St1 came up with an idea of writing short paragraphs including some vocabulary that she had difficulty in memorising and pronouncing and planned to shoot a video of her own monthly, so at the end of the academic year, she said to have at least 12 videos to which she could refer whenever she needed.

Similarly, St2 regarded these tasks as a kind of concrete material at hand to see his progress in English. Apart from this, he and St5 stated to have met some of their friends on Ms Teams to make their writing tasks be checked by a more competent friend at their own will. From this, it can be inferred that students made use of these tasks' feedback sessions and they internalized them so without any obligation, they just met online and gave feedback to each other.

Likewise, these tasks can be said to broaden the students' horizon both for language learning and personal development. St3 came up with a distinctive idea: "*I've watched many videos to come to this department, but those videos are getting outdated. For friends studying to enter university, I want to prepare videos to inform on YouTube. **These assignments showed me that I can do something online because we think that we cannot do it unless we see or try it***, *so starting from somewhere at least open the doors and gives us different ideas.*" To conclude, video tasks in online education both have positive effects on students' language competency and paved the way for new ideas in their future.

5. Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate students' perceptions of online group video tasks that were designed to develop students' English in four skills by creating an engaging and collaborative online classroom atmosphere. According to the questionnaire applied to the whole class, similar findings were obtained with the studies of Felix-Aguelo (2017) and Novitasari (2019). Both in theirs and here, in this study, students liked working collaboratively and developing their English. They engaged and interacted in a motivational way, enhanced their confidence to practice speaking in English, got meaningful feedback and solved problems together to create their own videos. The difference of this study from studies in the literature was that face to face spontaneous in-class group works were transferred and designed as online video tasks here. From the qualities of the video products (see the appendices), it was understood that the more feedback the students get from their teacher in class, the better, longer and more creative videos came out. Students tend to use more digital tools towards the end of the tasks and they are more into the work by active participation and they were observed to be more

motivated as they get used to these tasks through online collaboration. Therefore, in this study, the students' development of digital skills was also observed as these tasks were applied online. These collaborative student-generated video products with their quality analysis show evidence of how online conference tools can be turned into practical, student-friendly and collaborative learning environments step by step to foster student learning. In addition, there are some other prominent results from the interviews that can be discussed in the framework of the Onion Model.

First of all, for the environment layer in the Model, although all the students had Wi-Fi at home, half of the participants reported that overlapping lessons with their siblings created both noisy environment and technical problems such as decelerated speed of internet connection. They are nevertheless in better conditions than students lacking Wi-Fi at home who had concentration problems due to the necessity to go to cafes or net shops which were noisy and full of people (Ngoc & Phung, 2021).

All of the participants had a positive attitude towards Ms Teams as a digital learning tool and they found it user-friendly and student-oriented. St5's making use of Ms Teams in terms of lessons being video recorded and revisited again is also similar to one of the findings of Yen and Nhi (2021). In their research, they found that for their students, the biggest benefit of online lessons via Ms Teams was lessons being easily downloaded from the platform and watched afterwards.

For the behaviour layer, as a sense of belonging, interaction and communication can be linked to each other (Rowan et al., 2021) here, it was clear that video tasks designed for this class were successfully effective. Trespalacios and Florez (2019) found that scaffolding interactive activities do not only support connectedness but also foster online students' sense of community. Thus the more interaction happens, the more sense of belonging increases in a class. The sense of belonging is closely related to the inner motivation of students with which you can also teach them the language. This idea was also supported in a study in which students said to have a positive effect on their motivational level when getting along well with their classmates (Chang, 2010) in traditional education. Thus, lack of sense of belonging is one of the most crucial issues to be solved in online education and the first step to overcome it is to form a proper interactive classroom. Here, group video tasks were designed to help fill this gap and it worked well.

Designing a task with four/five members had a positive effect on developing collaboration skills of students and this finding was consistent with the findings of Nielsen and others (2010) in an online course, examining the student's individual vs. group behaviours that inactive or invisible students who can easily lose their track, especially in virtual class appear to be more active and take responsibility in small group tasks. Thus, it can be inferred that group tasks develop both students' skills of collaboration and their motivation level to lessons. When the motivation increased, their satisfaction level increased as well. Almost all the participants in this study expressed the feeling of satisfaction with their tasks which was not an unexpected finding because

increased group participation in a class leads to better learning outcomes and enhanced satisfaction among students (Al Natour & Woo, 2021).

For the competency layer in the Model, in studies done by Al Natour and Woo (2021) and Puspa (2016) online video presentation method enhanced the learning outcome because video technology allowed students to be more creative by adding elements such as sounds and animation to videos, thus their videos' content becomes more original when compared to face to face presentations and this was also observed here that students learnt how to add sounds, effects, subtitles even add Snapchat filters (Figure 3) which made their videos more original and develop their digital literacy. Sari and others (2020) also reported that not only their students' digital skills but also their general knowledge, translation and writing ability developed. Here in this study, apart from writing and translation abilities, more competences were added by the students like listening, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary development.

Especially the studies in which the EFL instructors made their students prepare a video, there were similar findings with this study. In a YouTube project done by Sari and others (2020), students learnt how to shoot and edit the videos, add subtitles with video-maker programs. Therefore, it can be said that it is both in their and here in this study, making students prepare their own videos certainly boosted their technological abilities (Figures 4&5). This is apparent in this study, especially with female students who had less digital knowledge than males and needed to deal more with video making and editing programs thus learnt how to use them effectively.

According to the recent study conducted by González-Lloret (2020), well-designed synchronous group tasks with videoconferencing tools can be beneficial if there is equitable participation of all group members, time for interaction and feedback acceptance. Parallel to that study, in this study, the benefits of acquiring language and digital skills are evident.

For the identity layer in the Model, Su and Zou (2020) discussed the important role of teacher feedback as students like receiving it because the teacher both figures out their mistakes and gives better advice. Here in this study, students highly appreciated the whole class teacher feedback.

About the privacy issue under the identity layer, in order to avoid students' cameras being off, they can be told to open their cameras, especially in the first two tasks. There may be some students who prefer not to open theirs for some reasons such as their physical appearance or background view of their room which have been found as two mostly stated reasons by a recent study (Castelli & Sarvary, 2021). The solution to these is likely to talk to students openly about the rationale of being seen during the task to increase the sense of belonging, and to use Ms Teams effectively to eliminate the background view problem. It has already had filters like blurry or different settings that can be applied when the cameras are on, so the background becomes invisible (Figure 6). In an article integrating Web 2.0 tools, like Facebook in a speaking class, the authors need to warn the teachers about the students' privacy. While students in that study like the idea of sharing videos online to improve their English, only a small number of them

appear in their videos due to uneasiness of showing themselves in an open tool because they don't want to reveal their identity in such an environment like Facebook (Sun & Yang, 2015). In this study, students have similar privacy concerns which were solved with the help of Ms Teams enabling them to create private sub-channels in online classrooms (Figures 7 & 8).

6. Recommendations

While doing these tasks, students had some difficulties like gathering four/five members at the same time. This was in fact easier during the lockdowns due to restrictions on a national scope, making students spend their time at home. If these tasks were requested to do in face-to-face or in a hybrid education model, the total class hours should be reduced to a half-day. That's because, in face-to-face education, students need more time to commute home, transport them to school or arrive at the dormitory and have a rest. Thus, they will need a compact lesson schedule to be able to spare time for the tasks. The authorities and school directors should take lesson-schedule into consideration for students to be able to conduct these tasks smoothly.

The second concern expressed by another student was about these tasks being less efficient if they were asked to do in face-to-face. That's because, in face-to-face education, personal relationships are built faster. This may lead to some issues like not wishing to be with some members while doing tasks. As St5 explained, the friendship bone is not expected to be built in online education as fast as face-to-face. Here, instructors can adjust the dynamics of the group by considering the English competency, gender and personal issues while trying to form heterogeneous groups. Although students get to know each other quickly in face-to-face education, so do teachers know their students easily and have more ideas about their classroom dynamics.

One limitation was about the internet connection which cannot be interfered with personally. It was about whether the students were from the rural or urban regions and their internet infrastructure. As distance education was an urgent practice, the countries can be said to invest in Internet infrastructure to develop more. For example, the OECD report explained the increasing demand for Internet usage and the need for the development of infrastructure and OECD countries are still working on this (OECD, 2020). Thus, this kind of internet connection problems is likely to reduce in the following academic semesters all around the world.

The last concern, mentioned by St6, was about the grading of these tasks. Although in online education, they weren't graded, the student highlighted this issue because, in his opinion, it would not be so fair to be graded individually as these were group tasks. In fact, collaborative learning requires an overall grading as all the members are responsible for one another. But in order to avoid the stress a bit here, apart from groups' getting overall grades, they can also get the mark as "complete" or "incomplete" only by completing the task as a prerequisite for their upcoming individual graded speaking tasks. In order to avoid students making up excuses, grading is not a good solution

according to Brindley and others (2009). In their study, comprising more than three years of data, increasing students' participation in online collaboration did not really possible with grading but they suggest some instructional strategies for instructors such as; facilitating learner readiness and scaffolding, establishing learner autonomy, nurturing a sense of community, monitoring the groups closely, being available to students' individual questions, making tasks relevant to students' lives and providing sufficient time for group works. Thus, well-explained expectations help students do tasks in a motivating way. In addition, these tasks can be integrated into the curriculum as a set of institutional study so that all the students will know about their presence of them in the syllabus, know the expectations already at the beginning of the semester, so it can be a kind of institutional practice on a larger scale without grading. This will make it possible to involve more classes and a high number of students in these tasks. Getting not only students' but also instructors' reflections about these tasks are also suggested for future studies.

7. Conclusion

To conclude, although these tasks were designed and applied during the pandemic lockdowns, they are practical and applicable for many instructors and authorities both during pandemic or post-pandemic education models such as blended learning, hybrid education, distance education even in traditional education to attract students' attention, increase their participation, sense of belonging and English skills, especially in the tertiary education level of English language teaching.

Conflict of Interest Statement
No potential competing interest was reported by the authors.

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Appendices

A. Features of Group Videos as Products
a. 3rd week - Analysis of groups' first videos
How many: 4 group videos
Duration: min.00.43 minutes- max. 1.42 minutes
Content: In terms of grammar and vocabulary, all the groups try to use "simple present tense, using the content related vocabulary about long life secrets like "food, drink, life style, habit" etc.
Organization: They seemed not to know how to start or finish a video or a presentation, sudden beginnings and endings.
Tools: Groups preferred *PowerPoint* embedding pictures and sentences sharing it with Ms Teams while presenting, second group preferred *Ms Word document* with sentences and pictures copied on it, the last group only used *Ms Teams conference features* opening their cameras on and present.

b. 5th week - Analysis of groups' second videos (after getting their first feedback to their 3rd week videos)
How many: 5 group videos
Duration: min. 02.04 minutes – max. 03.38 minutes. (Videos are getting longer.)
Content: Grammar usage is still with simple sentence structure with daily routines of S. Present Tense and –Wh Question and answers.
Vocabulary for these videos are about the main course unit which are about "days-seasons, climate-weather conditions, months and special days like Valentina's or New Year.
Organization: Receiving their first feedback about these tasks, students are now more aware of how to start or finish their video presentations, also the transitions between group members are better and they have eye contact with each other during presentations. Students are observed as more active and engaging.
Tools: They prefer Ms Teams recording features to create their videos but getting help from other video programmes to add subtitle, all groups turn their cameras on, one group prefers PPT and pictures, one group prefers role-playing.

c. 7th week - Analysis of groups' last videos
How many: 5 group videos
Duration: min.02.23- max. 10.42 minutes
Content: Grammar is compatible with what they have learnt like "countable & uncountable, how many, how much, a lot of, some, any" etc.
Vocabulary usage is related to ordering a food in/ from a restaurant. E.g." foods & drinks, asking for bills, looking for menu etc."
Organization: No sudden beginning and endings, more creative videos like role-playing famous politicians or creating story time for a radio with their own plot.
Tools: Using Snapchat filters, PPT usage with sentences and pictures copied, more groups adding subtitles to their videos which means they use different video-maker programmes to edit and montage their products.

**B. Screen Shots from Some Group Video Tasks and Ms Teams**

Figure 2: One of the 5th week group video task. Students role-play like a grandma, or a brother to present the important days for members of a family just by using Ms Teams' video features

Figure 3: Screen shots from the 7th week, restaurant-themed video task, students developing their digital skills by using Snapchat filters, adding speech bubble and special effects
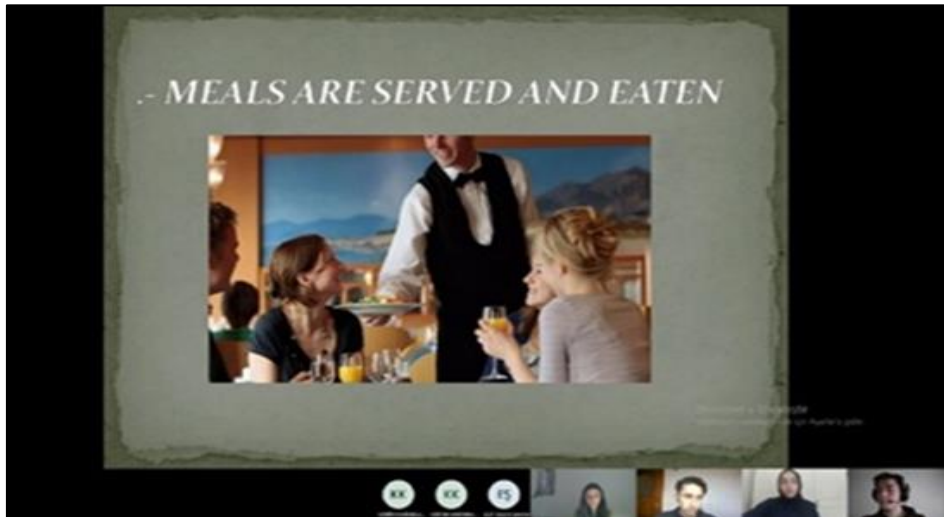
Figure 4: Another group's restaurant-themed video task. Students use
PPT by embedding pictures, sentences while presenting in Ms Team

Figure 5: One of the spontaneous homework about distance vs face to face education,
prepared and inspired from group video tasks, students preferring the
video-maker program, Inshot, adding sub-titles and pictures
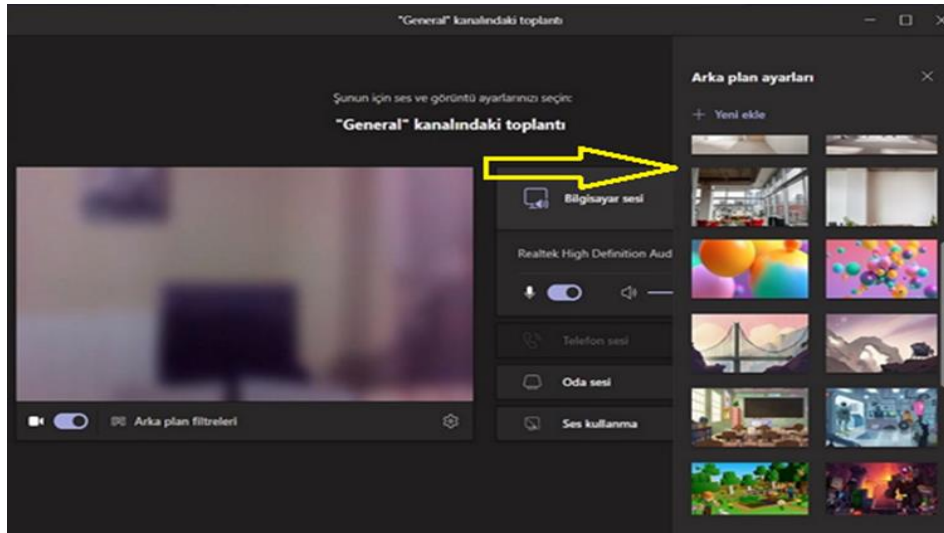
Figure 6: Ms Teams background filters from being blurry to colourful ones
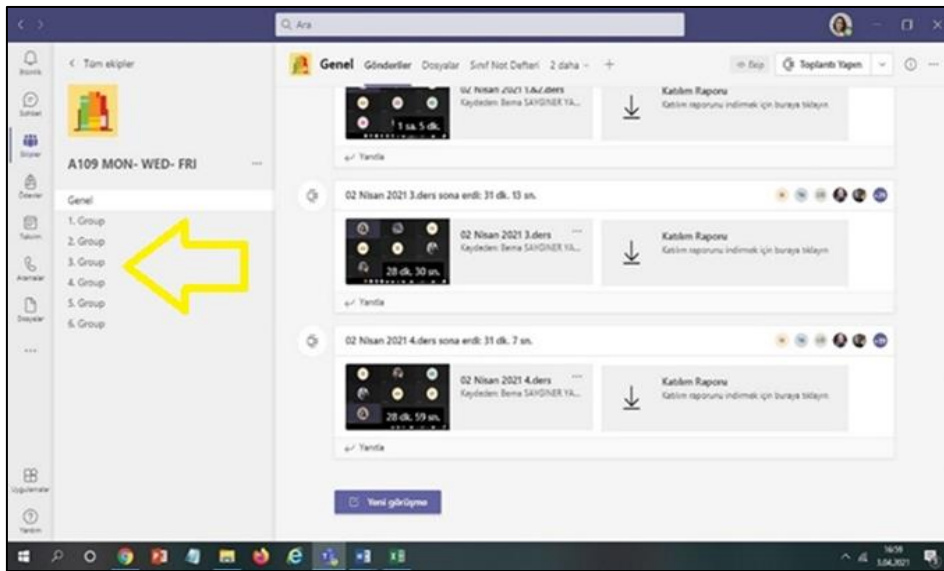
Figure 7: Ms Teams' sub-channels that can be formed
by instructors with any name under a classroom
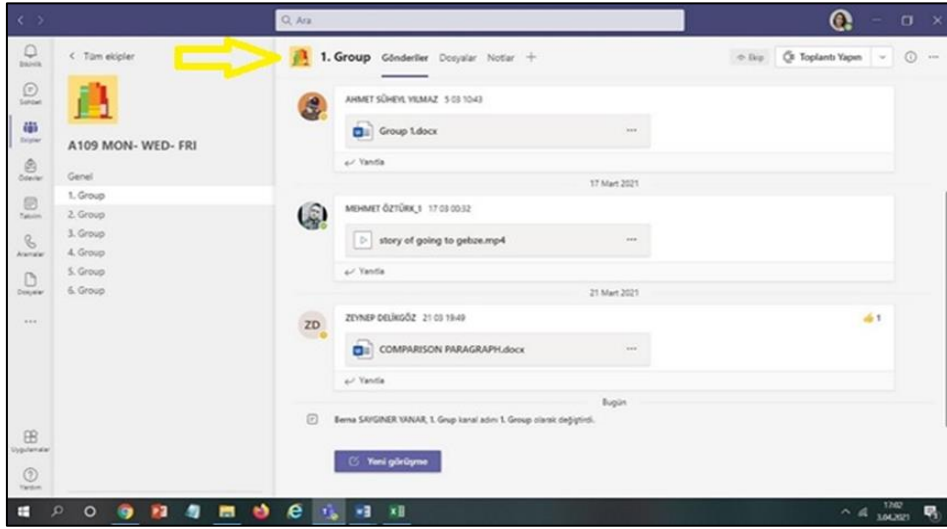
Figure 8: One of the sub-channel which is only open to the members of the classroom where students can meet online, share files, and post videos