REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
ÇAĞ UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

THE ATTITUDES OF ELT INSTRUCTORS TOWARD BLENDED LEARNING AT ZIRVE UNIVERSITY

THESIS BY
MUSTAFA KEMAL SAZAK

SUPERVISOR

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ

MASTER OF ARTS

MERSİN, JANUARY 2014

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

ÇAĞ UNIVERSITY

DIRECTORSHIP OF THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

We **certify** that thesis under the title of "**THE ATTITUDES OF ELT INSTRUCTORS TOWARD BLENDED LEARNING AT ZIRVE UNIVERSITY**" is satisfactory for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts** in the Department of **English Language Teaching**.

.....
Supervisor- Head of Examining Committee: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ

.....
Member of Examining Committee: Assist. Prof. Dr. Hülya YUMRU

.....
Member of Examining Committee: Assist. Prof. Dr. Kim Raymond HUMISTON

I certify that this thesis conforms to formal standards of the Institute of Social Sciences.

.....
23 / 01/ 2014

Assist. Prof. Dr. Murat KOÇ
Director of Institute of Social Sciences

Note: The uncited usage of the reports, charts, figures and photographs in this thesis, whether original or quoted for mother sources is subject to the Law of Works of Arts and Thought. No: 5846.

ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis advisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Şehnaz Şahinkarakaş, for her guidance, encouraging attitude, and patience during my study. I will always feel lucky to be a student of her. Without her support, this study would not be possible.

I owe special thanks to Assist. Prof. Dr. Hülya Yumru, Assist. Prof. Dr. Erol Kahraman, and Assist. Prof. Dr. Kim Raymond Humiston for their contribution and help.

I also would like to thank my colleagues and friends Swapna Shanmugavelayutham, Gamze Sökücü, and Hasan Savaş for their being with me and editing my study. I will never forget their support.

I especially want to thank my family for their support in every single way because without my family I wouldn't have been able to do this at all.

23.01.2014

Mustafa Kemal Sazak

To my family

and my beloved love, Nikita, the Siamese.

ÖZET

ZİRVE ÜNİVERSİTESİ'NDE ÇALIŞAN İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN HARMANLANMIŞ ÖĞRENİME KARŞI TUTUMLARI

Mustafa Kemal Sazak

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı

Tez Danışmanı: Doç Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ

Ocak 2014, 76 sayfa

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Zirve Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda görev yapan İngilizce okutmanlarının harmanlanmış öğrenime bakış açısını ölçmek, ve bir öğrenme yönetim sistemi olan Schoology'nin harmanlanmış öğrenim amaçları doğrultusunda kullanımının doğasını ortaya çıkarmaktır. Çalışmaya Zirve Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda görev yapan 35 İngilizce okutmanı katılmıştır. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak Moukali (2012) tarafından geliştirilmiş bir anket kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda elde edilen bulgular, Zirve Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda görev yapan İngilizce okutmanlarının harmanlanmış öğrenime karşı pozitif tutumlarının olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, araştırma sonucunda harmanlanmış öğrenimin dil öğretim ve öğrenim çevrelerinde daha başarılı olabilmesi için ankete katılan katılımcılar tarafından fikirler beyan edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Harmanlanmış Öğrenim, Eğitim/Öğretim Metodları, Öğrenme Yönetim Sistemi, Öğretmen Tutumları.

ABSTRACT

THE ATTITUDES OF ELT INSTRUCTORS TOWARD BLENDED LEARNING AT ZIRVE UNIVERSITY

Mustafa Kemal Sazak

Master of Arts Thesis, Department of English Language Teaching

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ

January 2014, 76 pages

The aim of this study is to find the attitudes of instructors toward blended learning at School of Foreign Languages, Zirve University, and to find out the nature of Schoology, a learning management system, for blended learning puproses. The participants who participated in this study were 35 English language instructors working at Zirve University. A questionnaire developed by Moukali (2012) was used as a data collection tool in this study. The findings revealed that the English language instructors working at Zirve University have a positive attitude toward blended learning. On the other hand, the opinions of the participants to make blended learning more successful in language teaching and learning environments were reflected comprehensively in the study.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Teaching/Learning Methods, Learning Management Systems, Attitudes of Teachers.

ABBREVIATIONS

ELT: English Language Teaching

SFL: School of Foreign Languages

LMS: Learning Management System

IT: Information Technology

PBL: Problem-Based Learning

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 5

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains six sections. The first section is about the background of the study. The statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and research questions follow this section. Lastly, significance of the study and operational definitions are included.

1.1. Background of the Study

As technology is seen in every part of life, e-learning has always been an important part in English language teaching. This shift to technology has brought many definitions for some terms such as online learning, distance learning, or e-learning. One of them is called "blended learning". According to Singh and Reed (2001), "blended learning can be described as a learning program where more than one delivery mode is being used with the objective of optimizing the learning outcome and cost of program delivery" (p. 1). In the same study, Singh and Reed point out that "the original use of the phrase 'Blended Learning' was often associated with simply linking traditional classroom training to e-learning activities."

The origin of the first example of blended learning is unknown. However, according to Marsh (2013), blended learning "first appeared around 2000, but just as the practice of blending learning is not a new way of teaching, neither is it a single method of learning, nor is the practice of blending different learning approaches, strategies, and opportunities unfamiliar to teachers." The effectiveness of blended learning depends on the environment of the institutions that are using it. There are many factors affecting the quality of blended learning. Some of them are, strong Internet connection, quality of instructional methods, content presentation, effective use of time, and support provided to the learners. If one of these factors lacks in the environment of blended learning, the quality of education given may decrease.

At Zirve University, every teacher and student gets a MacBook Pro or Macbook Air computer. These computers are provided by Zirve University for free. The Internet connection of the university is known to be one of the strongest Internet connections in Gaziantep. There are lots of online facilities provided to the teachers and students. Some of them are wikis, blogs, and

e-mail services. However at School of Foreign Languages (SFL) at Zirve University, the situation is a bit different. In addition to the facilities provided to the whole school, the students of SFL are provided with an online learning platform. The platform is called "Schoology". Schoology, in its website, is described as "an online learning, classroom management, and social networking platform that improves learning through better communication, collaboration, and increased access to curriculum and supplemental content." Each student has a Schoology account and they easily access to the materials provided by their teachers, and the teachers keep their grades on Schoology. At the end of each term, their grades are exported and the results are managed by the Testing Center, which is responsible for preparing the exams and announcing the results.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

As the technology develops, virtual classrooms have been used by many institutions in Turkey in order to catch up with the technology. At Zirve University, School of Foreign Languages, the teachers and students did not use any of the online learning platforms before. This year, they started using Schoology, one of the online learning platforms. The teachers use this online learning platform in Main Course, Applied Language Study, Reading & Writing, and Listening & Speaking classes. The skill coordinators observe the application of the program by teachers. Even though the teachers and the students use Schoology as an online learning platform, no feedback from the teachers and students has been received so far. In accordance with this, the effectiveness of this platform is unknown in my context.

1.3. Aim of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find whether Schoology, a learning management system functions for blended learning purposes. This study also aimed to reveal the attitudes of ELT instructors toward blended learning, a learning method that mixes technology with traditional learning methods.

1.4. Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of using Schoology for blended learning purposes?

2. What are the attitudes of ELT instructors toward blended learning at Zirve University?

1.5. Operational Definitions

During the study, several terms are used to define blended learning in order to conduct the intended research.

e-Learning: According to Naidu (2006), e-Learning commonly refers to the use of networked information and communication technology in teaching and learning.

Blended Learning: According to iNACOL, the International Association for K-12 Online Learning, blended learning is a combination of online delivery of educational content with the features of traditional classroom interaction.

Synchronous Learning: Littlefied (2013) defines synchronous learning as a learning that occurs when the teacher and his students interact in different places but at the same time. Peterson (2009) gives sitting in a classroom, talking on the telephone, chatting via instant messaging, as examples of synchronous learning.

Asynchronous Learning: According to Littlefield (2013), asynchronous learning occurs when the teachers and the students interact during different times. According to Peterson (2009), in asynchronous learning, "the teaching takes place at one time and is preserved for the learner to participate in whenever the time is most convenient for him or her."

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The rapid emergence of technological innovations, particularly digital technologies, over the last half-century has had a huge impact on the possibilities for learning in the distributed environment (Graham, 2004). The rapid growth of technology allows us to communicate with the world synchronously close to real-time environments. This growth is also apparent in educational technologies. To maximize acquisition of knowledge and skills development, effective teaching and learning have always combined of different methods, approaches, and strategies (Marsh, 2012). In order to provide learners rich learning platforms, institutions offer education in different combined ways. With the help of the growth in technology, it has become easier for the teachers to tutor their students at any time and any place. This is the same for the students. They can access online materials on the Internet easily and benefit them.

Under this chapter, you will see two different definitions: e-learning and blended learning. According to Valiathan (2002), blended learning is a "learning that mixes various event-based activities, including face-to-face classrooms, live e-learning, and self-paced learning". There is a slight connection between e-learning and blended learning so the definitions of both are covered under this chapter. You will also see the advantages and disadvantages of blended learning as well as the future of blended learning.

2.2. What is e-Learning?

"The origins of the term e-learning is not certain, although it is suggested that the term most likely originated during the 1980's, within the similar time frame of another delivery mode online learning" (Moore, Dickson-Deane, and Galyen, 2011, p. 130). According to Clark (2002), e-learning is content and instructional methods delivered on a computer (whether on CD-ROM, the Internet, or an intranet), and designed to build knowledge and skills related to individual or organizational goals (p. 2). Som Naidu (2006) defines e-learning as "commonly referred to the intentional use of networked information and

communications technology in teaching and learning" (p. 1). Khan (2005) pointed out that e-learning is an innovative approach in order to deliver well-designed, student-centered, interactive and user-friendly learning environment for anybody at any time by using the resources of different digital technologies with the other variations of learning materials.

2.3. What is Blended Learning?

Blended learning has been defined in a variety of ways. As Sharma and Barett (2007) point out, blended learning harmonizes technology and a face-to-face classroom component to teach a language. In another study, Copping and Mellett (2004) mention that blended learning includes the combination of "IT-based (Web and CD-ROM delivery) and problem-based learning [PBL] strategies with an existing paper-based programme of study" (p. 1). Accordingly, technology, together with the components of class, plays an important role in blended learning. Similarly, Xian Tang and Qun Pan (2008) state that blended learning is facilitated by combining different elements of learning such as delivery, models of teaching, and learning styles with the transparent communication of all ingredients of the course.

For Ellis and Calvo (2006), blended learning is a "systematic mix of e-learning and learning in face-to-face contexts, in which coherence across the two contexts from a student perspective is achieved by focusing on the same intended learning outcomes" (p. 60). According to John Merrow (2012), "blended learning is some mix of traditional classroom instruction (which in itself varies considerably) and instruction mediated by technology" and he continues, "the latter can be one student with a tablet or laptop, or small groups of kids working together on devices" (ibid.). Lynch and Dembo (2004) pointed out that blended education is a form of distributed education, and "distributed education represents an eclectic blend of technologies and modalities to enable both synchronous (real time) and asynchronous (anytime) teacher-learner and learner-learner interactions in a single course or program" According to Mohammad (2009), "blended learning is a powerful method of the learning and teaching process that successfully mixes the best features of both traditional and electronic learning in order to promote active independent learning and reduce class room time" (p. 299). Natasa Hoic-Bozic, Vedran Mornar, and Ivica Boticki (2009) defines blended learning as "learning based on various combinations of classical face-to-face lectures,

learning over the Internet and learning supported by other technologies, aimed at creating the most efficient learning environment" (p. 20).

2.4. Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning

Activities in e-learning and blended learning can be synchronous or asynchronous. According to Ghirardini (2011), synchronous learning takes place in real time. Synchronous communication is between two people and these two people should be online in order to maintain synchronous learning. Examples for synchronous activities can be chat conversations and audio/video conferencing. Asynchronous learning does not require a specific time. It can be any time and it doesn't require two people to be online at the same time. According to Littlefield (2013), Synchronous learning is best for students who can schedule days and times for their studies and "it is often preferred by those who like structured courses heavy on student interaction". Asynchronous distance learning is best for students who have complicated schedules. "It tends to work well for self-motivated learners who do not need direct guidance to complete their assignments" (ibid.). Hrastinski (2008) points out that "synchronous e-learning, commonly supported by media such as videoconferencing and chat, has the potential to support e-learners in the development of learning communities" (p. 52). On the other hand, "asynchronous e-learning, commonly facilitated by media such as e-mail and discussion boards, supports work relations among learners and with teachers, even when participants cannot be online at the same time (ibid.).

2.5. Blended Learning in ELT

According to Sharma (2007), "an increasing number of language schools are integrating technology into their courses. Yet implementing blended learning is not straightforward. It involves a number of critical decisions and consultation among students, teachers, directors of studies and the school management." In the same article, Sharma (2007) points out five practical examples about how to follow blended learning guidelines in a lesson level:

1. A teacher gives a presentation by discussing the topic. Then with the help of CD-ROM, he/she allows students to practice phrases that he/she previously taught.

2. In the classroom, the teacher wants students to create a text online. The revision of the text is done remotely. Then the teacher reads the text and uses the lesson to give feedback to the students.
3. A class creates an audio file. The students post the result to the website of the class and search authentic listening files on the Internet. In this way, students are motivated to download more audio files to their MP3 players.
4. A small group teachers download Moodle software and they are now able to support their next course by using the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) to communicate with their students.
5. A teacher creates a blog in order to give feedback to the students. The feedback he/she posts includes links to audio files of words that the students have difficulty in pronouncing.

To balance traditional approaches and technology, Sharma and Barrett (2007) suggest four principles. These include separating the role of the teacher and the role of the technology; teaching in a principled way; using technology to complement F2F teaching; and by quoting "it's not so much the program, more what you do with it" (Jones, 1986), indicating the different uses of a CD-ROM.

2.6. Advantages and Disadvantages of Blended Learning

Each learning environment has their distinct advantages and disadvantages. Regarding this, blended learning too has advantages and disadvantages.

2.6.1. Advantages of Blended Learning

Blended learning approach offers students to reach the educational resources at any time and anywhere they want. According to Azizan, (2013) (as cited in Tayebinik, 2012), "utilization of technology in physical classrooms offer extra resources for the students and this is expected to enhance learners' confidence and competence as well as improve the quality of learning" (p. 105). Shaw and Igneri (2006) lists the reasons blended approaches have been developed and implemented as:

-Reduce costs (reduce time spent off the job, in the classroom; reduce training overheads and direct costs; re-use or leverage existing materials and programs, rather than develop or re-develop programs completely online)
-Deliver training in a shorter period (in contrast with a 100% classroom-based strategy) by introducing self-paced, independent study components (reduce time to completion, and time to market, for associated products and services)
-Provide more flexible learning models for learners to increase rate of learning, increase satisfaction with learning, and improve motivation and increase uptake of training
-Align training with learning objectives and increase transfer to the real life and workplace
-Manage change (for example, migrate people gradually to online learning solutions)
-Increase collaboration among learners beyond the lifespan of the course or program (team building, facilitation of ongoing communities of practice, etc.)
-Accommodate different learning styles (p. 3).

According to Marsh (2012), the strengths of blended learning are as follows:

-Provides a more individualized learning experience
-Provides more personalized learning support
-Supports and encourages independent and collaborative learning
-Increases student engagement in learning
-Accommodates a variety of learning styles
-Provides a place to practice the target language beyond the classroom
-Provides a less stressful practice environment for the target language
-Provides flexible study, anytime or anywhere, to meet learners' needs
-Helps students develop valuable and necessary twenty-first century learning skills (p. 4).

Marsh, McFadden, and Price (2003) (as cited in Whittaker, 2011) mention "the use of a blended learning solution to reduce costs in higher education, as well as improving the teaching of large groups" (p. 14). Singh and Reed (2001) identified four advantages of blended learning as improved learning effectiveness; extending the reach; optimizing development cost and time; optimizing business results. Sharma and Barett (2007) identify three opportunities that technology offers as motivation, interaction, and feedback. Playing language games and making own choices is technology's motivation part. Web-based exercises, and the interaction between these exercises and the students is technology's interaction part. It offers students a chance to review the language they learn in a different way. Instant and effective feedback is technology's feedback part. Learners can see what they have scored or they can make choices to determine how many times they redo an exercise. At the era in which the use of technology is inevitable, "the promises of blended learning are extensive: increased learning, a reduction in the need for brick and mortar, engagement, collaboration, success, ownership, and higher-quality learning" (Bonk, Kim, & Zeng, 2005, p. 551). According to Armstrong (2013), in online learning, students have the chance to study whenever they want, and online learning represents a great way to study in many fields and boost the level of students' self-motivation.

2.6.2. Disadvantages of Blended Learning

Even though blended learning has a lot of advantages, it doesn't mean that it doesn't have any disadvantages. But the disadvantages are rather related to the environment where blended learning is applied, and they are less when compared to the advantages of blended learning. According to Shengjian Chen and Yun Lu (2013), "the negative effect of "blended learning" for teacher is overwork, hard to choose right learning mode and difficult to control the proportion of face-to-face learning and online learning" (p. 29). "To avoid the negative effect which caused by the unclear and widely of the connotation of blended learning, it is necessary for us to find the essence of blended learning, only do this, can we avoid the negative effects" (ibid.). The problem in applying blended learning will arise if blended learning is applied in a school or region, which has unstable or inadequate Internet connection (Petean, 2013). These negative effects can be removable if blended learning is applied appropriately. On the other hand, Armstrong (2013) states that online learning does

not offer human interaction, and online learning is not a platform for the thousands students who, at the same time, try to reach discussion groups or course materials.

2.7. Future of e-Learning And Blended Learning

"At the beginning of the 21st century it may be hard to imagine what language teaching and learning will be like in the next one hundred years, but some authors believe that much of our future is closely connected to blended learning" (Grgurović, 2011, p.100). On the other hand, Owen Ferguson (2013) points out that as we use existing communication channels or integrate solutions into our daily work tools, e-Learning will become a part of our working lives more in the future. In a different view, Tayebinik and Puteh (2012) conclude that "blended learning can be considered as an efficient approach of distance learning in terms of students' learning experience, student-student interaction as well as student-instructor interaction and is likely to emerge as the predominant education model in the future" (p. 103). According to Thambala (2013), in the future,

> -Learning becomes more individualized and connected through technologies that allow students to manipulate the variables of reality and that adapt to their learning needs.
> -By mid-2030s physical schools will have been replaced by studios and virtual teaching. These "Virtual/Physical Studios" rely on technology to provide a hybrid version of education that optimizes the process by, "Bridging the online-offline gap, offering a potential future where embodiment is secondary to information access"
> -By 2040, through a reliance on these hybrid models and a focus on project-based learning and portfolio-based assessment, "education becomes a continuous, interconnected effort, allowing students to cope with a perpetually changing world.
> -The future of e learning seems brighter with the concept of blended learning where e learning will be mixed with the practical or classroom based education.
> -Gesture control, voice recognition, built in Skype and retina recognition could be utilized to suit learning objectives.

Christensen, Horn, and Staker (2013) state that in the future, individualization; universal

access and equity; and productivity sides of blended learning will prevail over those of traditional classrooms, causing huge disruption.

CHAPTER 3

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This study aims to find the attitudes of ELT teachers toward blended learning at Zirve University. This chapter will give detailed information about the methodological details of the study. This chapter includes the research design, the participants, the instruments, the data collection procedure, and the data analysis.

3.2. Design of the Study

This study is a case-study. Yin (1984) defines case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (p. 23).

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative research was used. According to Patton and Cochran (2002), "a qualitative research is characterized by its aims, which relate to understanding some aspect of social life, and its methods which (in general) generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis" (p. 2). On the other hand, Aliaga and Gunderson (2000) define quantitative research as "explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods" (p. 3).

3.3. Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at Zirve University, School of Foreign Languages (SFL) Department. At School of Foreign Languages, there are 4 terms in a year, and four levels in English education: Elementary level (A), pre-intermediate level (B), intermediate level (C), and upper-intermediate level (D). Each level takes approximately two months to complete. All students and instructors are provided with MacBook computers to help their education, and there is a campus-wide wireless Internet network. The computers and the Internet play an important role in the students' learning.

The participants of this study were 35 randomly chosen ELT instructors, teaching random skills. Among these 35 participants, 63% were male, while 37% were female. Among the participants, 3% have 1-2 years experience, 43% have 2-4 years experience, 31% have 4-6 years experience, 6% have 6-8 years experience, and finally 17% have 8-10 or more years experience. This information shows that most of the participants are experienced in teaching English. Fourteen percent of the participants were 21-24 years old, while 63% were 25-29, 11% were 30-34, 6% were 35-39, 3% are 40-44, and 3% were 55 or more years old.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

In this study, the data collection instrument used is a survey adapted from a Ph. D. thesis by Khalid Hussain Moukali (2012). The name of the thesis is "Factors that Affect the Faculty Attitudes Toward Adoption of Technology-Rich Blended Learning". The survey had 6 parts. Each part had a variety of items. The first 5 parts consist of 39 Likert scale questions with a 5 point scale ranging from SD=Strongly disagree on one end to SA= Strongly agree to another end with D= Disagree, N= Neutral, and A= Agree in the middle.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Survey Used in This Study

Subscales	**Number of Items**
1- Demographic Information	7
2- Experience with Educational Technologies	7
3- Attitudes toward Blended Learning	7
4- Barriers that Affect the Adoption of Blended Learning	11
5- Incentives of Blended Learning	7
6- Open-Ended Questions.	4
Total Number of Items	**43**

3.5. Data Analysis

The researcher aimed to find the attitudes of ELT instructors toward blended learning at Zirve University. The researcher used descriptive statistics to conduct the analysis.

According to Boeree (2005), descriptive statistics "are ways of summarizing large sets of quantitative (numerical) information". The questionnaire was prepared by using Google Docs and sent via e-mail to 35 randomly chosen instructors. All questions were written in English, and the results were collected using Google Docs. The answers were processed using Microsoft Excel and presented in percentages for each question.

3.6. Data Collection Environment: Schoology

Schoology (www.schoology.com) is an online learning, classroom management, and social networking platform that improves learning through communication, collaboration, and access to curriculum and supplemental content. Schoology is a learning management system (LMS), and it includes features like attendance records, online gradebook, assignments, test and quizzes, and online dropbox for homework. When compared to the other learning management systems, Schoology has two versions: free and paid. Zirve University, School of Foreign Languages uses the paid version of Schoology. Paid version includes instructional tools, administrative tools, and course delivery tools. In the free version, administrative tools feature is unavailable. When compared to the other free and paid learning management software, Schoology is more likely to be user-friendly and it has more social features than the other systems which allow students to interact with their teachers and peers (see Figure 1).

	schoology	Blackboard	moodle	Desire2Learn	edmodo
Instructional Tools					
Course Pages	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Discussion Forums	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
File Exchange	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Internal Messaging	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Blogs/Journals	Y	N	N	N	N
Micro-Blogging	Y	N	N	N	Y
Groups/Communities	Y	N	N	N	Y
Aggregate feeds	Y	N	N	N	Y
Personal File Repositories	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Social Networking	Y	N	N	N	Y
Administrative Tools					
Authentication (SSO)	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Automated Workflows					
User Management	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Course Enrollments	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Hosted Services	Y	N	N	N	Y
Customized Look and Feel	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Application Programming Interface	Y	N	N	N	N
Custom Roles	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
System-wide Permission	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
System-wide Privacy	Y	N	N	N	N
Course Delivery Tools					
Automated Testing and Scoring	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Online Grading	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Integrated Online Gradebook	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Grade Scaling	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Student Tracking/Analytics	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Resource Sharing/Reuse	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Cross-School Networking	Y	N	N	N	Y
Mobile Access	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Parent Access	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Attendence Tracking	Y	Y	Y	Y	N

Figure 1: Comparison of the features between Schoology and other learning management systems.

There are three types of users on the login screen of Schoology: instructor, student, and parent (see Figure 2). In addition to these users, there is an administrator (available in paid version of Schoology) who can create and edit courses, groups, users, calendar, and system settings. Instructors can add students to their virtual classes, assign homework, and grade their students. They can send either bulk messages to their classrooms or individual messages to their students. They can also create their own blogs on Schoology and share status updates on their virtual classrooms. Students don't have privileges like sending messages to the other students or seeing the grades of their friends. They can communicate with their teachers whenever they want. They cannot share status updates and they don't have blogs, but they can make comments on status updates, discussion circles, or polls. Another type of user is parents. Parents can see the

grades and attendance records of their students, and they can send messages to the instructors of their children. For Zirve School of Foreign language the parent login is not used since this feature is not suitable for university level students.

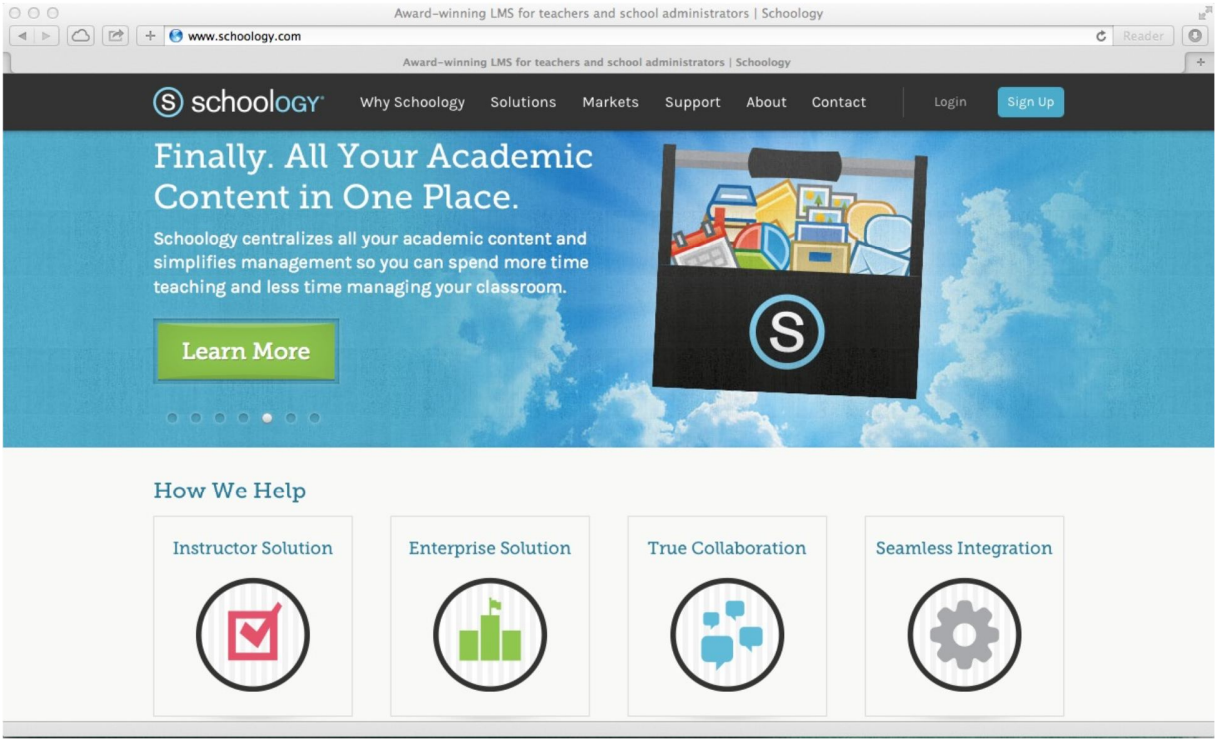

Figure 2: Login screen of Schoology

Schoology uses an access code feature to enroll students into classes or groups. If a student wants to enroll in a class, he/she needs to know the access code of that classroom. Teachers do not have to use access codes because they are assigned as admins to their classrooms by the administrator of the system. Access codes are delivered to the students by their teachers after the start of the each term.

3.6.1. Features of Schoology

There are many features of Schoology for both instructors and students. These features are accessible on the main pages of virtual classrooms on Schoology (see Figure 3). On the left bar in one virtual classroom, there are 7 menus: Materials, Updates, Badges, Attendance, Members, Analytics, and Workload Planning.

1. **Materials:** In this menu, students and teachers can access assignments, test/quizzes, files/links, discussions, albums, and pages.

2. **Updates**: The instructor of the virtual classroom can write an update, he/she can attach photos, audio files, videos, or other types of files to his/her update. Students and teachers can comment on the updates.

3. **Badges:** In this menu, teachers can give various badges to their successful students. These badges are considered an award by the students.

4. **Attendance:** In this menu, the instructor can take attendance, and the students can see their attendance records. This feature is not used by Zirve University, School of Foreign Languages since the university has its own attendance system.

5. **Members:** Instructors can see the members of their classrooms, they can add or remove members by using this menu.

6. **Analytics:** Instructors can see the reports of the visits to their classrooms, links, assignments, and discussions.

7. **Workload Planning:** Instructors can make workload planning among their students. he/she can distribute duties to his/her students by using this menu.

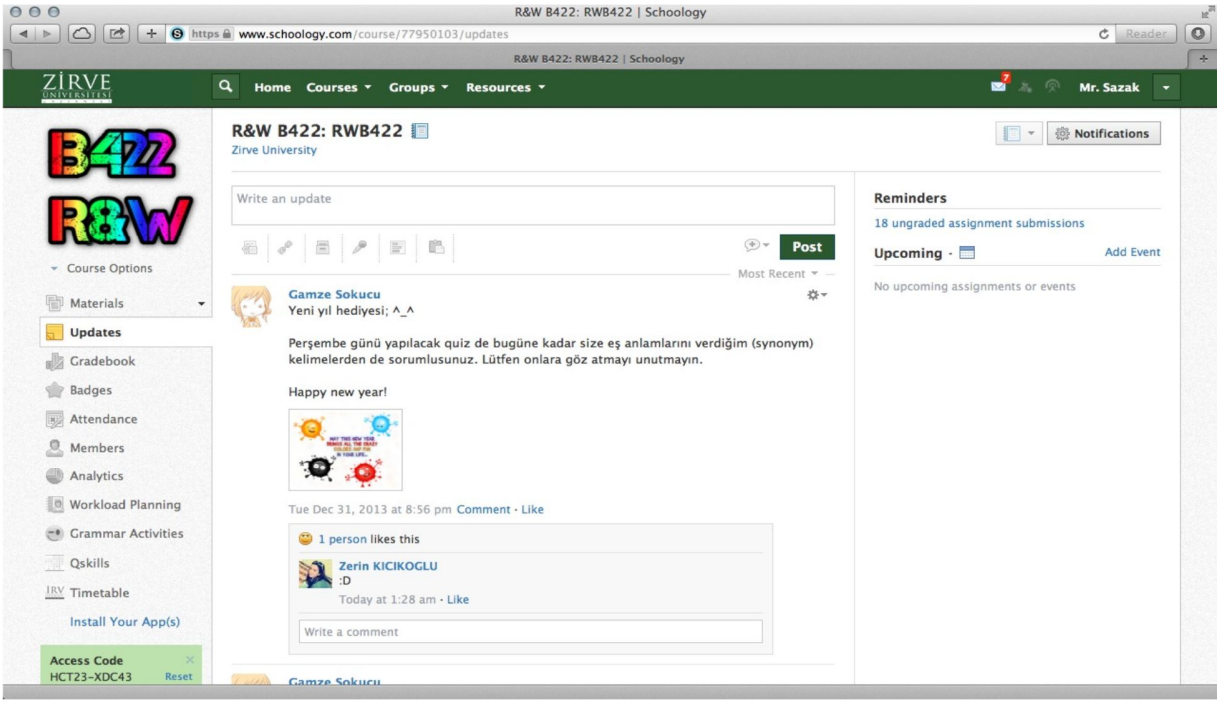

Figure 3: Main interface of a virtual classroom

3.6.2. Gradebook

In previous years, no LMS was used in Zirve University, School of Foreign Languages. The students in last three years couldn't see their grades, send messages to their instructors, interact with other users, download the materials that their teachers used in the classrooms. With the help of Schoology, students can now do all of these things. As written in the policy of Zirve University, School of Foreign Languages, use of the Schoology gradebook is obligatory for all teachers. Each virtual classroom has its own gradebook and in this gradebook, there are several items that the instructors are supposed to enter (see Figure 4). While these items may differ from skill to skill, there are mainly three grade categories that the teachers are asked to fill by the administration. These categories are: weekly homework, weekly participation, and quizzes. By using the gradebook, transparency between the grades and the students is established. Another advantage of using gradebook is that the students can see their weekly participation grades, and if they get a low grade, they may want to participate more in the classroom and work toward a higher participation grade for the next week. This makes the students more enthusiastic about the

classes. Also, administrators and skill coordinators can see the grades, activities, materials, and the updates of all the students in the school.

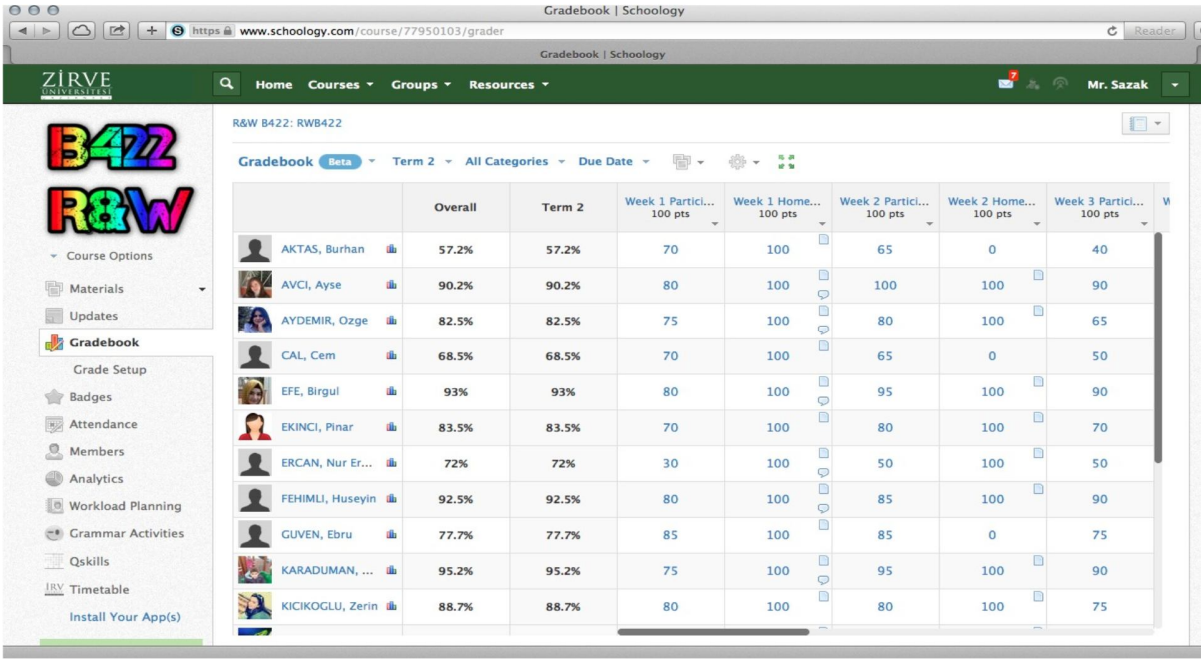

Figure 4: An example gradebook page

3.7. Data Collection Process

After the required permission was given by the official research ethics committee of Zirve University, the project started in August 20, and continued until the second term of the 2012-2013 Academic Year. The project took approximately 6 months to complete. There were several stages in conducting the project.

3.7.1. The Process of Buying and Implementing Schoology

The project started with the purchase of Schoology. Purchase was done by the university. Before the purchase, the researcher had to convince the senate to buy the software. He did it by attending a senate meeting and demonstrating the features of Schoology, and explaining the benefits that Schoology could bring to the university. After the purchase was done, the researcher took online tutorials from Schoology trainers. He explored the system, created sample classes and quizzes, and made himself knowledgeable enough to give trainings to the administrators and instructors.

3.7.2. Training Sessions

At the beginning of September, the researcher started giving training sessions to the administrators and instructors. Trainings were divided into 2 different sessions because of the large number of instructors. Before the beginning of the term, the instructors had 3 weeks to discover the features of Schoology, and ask questions to the researcher.

3.7.3. Creating Virtual Classes and Groups

After getting the list of the students enrolled in the university, the researcher imported students to the system, and he started to create virtual classes and groups. Virtual classes were created skill by skill. For each classroom, the researcher created 4 different virtual classes: reading and writing, listening and speaking, applied linguistics, and main course. This was done in the first week of the first academic term. After the classes were ready, the researcher assigned instructors as admins to their courses, and in the second week, the researcher asked the instructors to deliver their virtual classes' access codes to their classes.

3.7.4. Technical Support for the Instructors and the Students

Since the instructors and the students were new to the system, some problems arose. Some teachers experienced difficulty in creating online homework, and they got support from the researcher. The researcher also gave support to the students who were new to the system. During this period, the researcher had some meetings with skill coordinators in order to inform them about the common mistakes and problems instructors were encountering, and he demonstrated solutions to those problems. After some time, the skill coordinators started helping the researcher in solving the difficulties and problems that the instructors encountered. This reduced the workload of the researcher during the project period.

3.7.5. Collecting the Grades

At the end of the first term, the researcher asked instructors to export their gradebook to Excel and send the file to the skill coordinator of the class. Then the skill coordinators combined the individual gradebooks of classes to one Excel sheet, and sent the file to the researcher. The researcher calculated the final grades of the students in SFL and sent the calculated grades to the Testing Center, which is responsible for preparing midterms, finals, and keeping and announcing

the grades of the students.

3.7.6. The Second Term

The researcher created the new courses at the beginning of the second term, and the same process was repeated. In this term, the researchers workload was less because both the instructors and the students learned the system. When the instructors had problems, they consulted their skill coordinators, and the skill coordinators helped them. In this term, the researcher dealt with some login issues of the students because he was the administrator of Schoology.

CHAPTER 4

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This study aims to find out the nature of using Schoology for blended learning purposes, and the attitudes of Zirve University ELT instructors toward blended learning. In order to find answers to each research question, a questionnaire to 35 ELT instructors was conducted. In this chapter, the analysis of each questionnaire item is done, then findings from the qualitative data are discussed. This chapter starts with the analysis of the demographic information in the questionnaire, and ends with the findings from the open-ended questions.

4.2. Findings from the Demographic Information

In this study, 35 ELT instructors working at Zirve University took the questionnaire. Among these 35 participants, 22 were male, and 13 were female. The participants are mostly from the age group 25-29 (63%) years, and work experience group 2-4 years (46%). Since this study is related to the use of technology in ELT classes, questions related to the use of technology in language teaching were asked. According to the results of the demographic information part of the questionnaire, 46% of the participants have 2-4 years of experience using Internet-based learning. This group is followed by 0-2 years of experience (37%), 4-6 years of experience (9%), 6-8 years of experience (6%), and 8-10 and more years of experience (3%), respectively. When the item related to previous personal experience with blended learning is analyzed, 51% of the participants have previous experience as an instructor, 23% of them have no previous experience with blended learning, 14% have previous experience as a student, and 11% have experiences both as a student and instructor. The results of this item are a bit surprising because even though the description of blended learning was given clearly at the beginning of the survey, and Zirve University has been using Schoology as a learning management system (LMS) for 6 months, 23% of the respondents indicated that they did not have previous experience with blended learning. The reason for this might be that they skipped reading the explanation of blended learning. In another item, the participants were asked to indicate their level of experience in a scale from the poorest level 1 to the strongest level 10, and most of the participants (%29) marked level 8, while 26% of them marked level 6, which was

followed by the levels 7 (20%), 10 (11%), 5 (9%), 9 (3%), and 3 (3%). The final demographic item was about choosing the LMS that they would evaluate through the questionnaire, and all of the instructors chose Schoology as LMS.

4.3. Findings from the Quantitative Data

In order to analyze the items related to the different subjects, this section is grouped into 4 main categories: *Experience with Educational Technologies, Attitudes toward Blended Learning, Barriers that Affect the Adoption of Blended Learning,* and finally*, Incentives of Blended Learning*. Under each category, the participants were asked to respond to 5-point Likert scale items.

4.3.1. Findings on the Experience with Educational Technologies

The purpose of this category is to find how familiar the participants are with educational technologies which is defined by Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) Definition and Terminology Committee (2004) as "the study and ethical practice of facilitating learning and improving performance by creating, using, and managing appropriate technological processes and resources" (p. 1). Under this category, the participants were asked to respond to 7 items. In Table 2, percentages and frequencies of the participants' responses are given.

The first item, *"Learning Management Systems"* is the most important item in this category because it is the closest item to the aim of this study. When we look at the first item, we can say that most of the teachers (40%) have average experience in Learning Management Systems. In section 4.2, the researcher found that 23% of the participants indicated that they do not have a previous experience with blended learning, but in the first item, none of the participants responded "No Experience". This may be a conflict because Learning Management System is a tool for blended learning. The number of the participants responded "Somewhat Good" is 13 (37%). Only 6 participants (17%) responded "Very Good" for the first item.

Table 2. Responses to the Items Related to the Experience with Educational Technologies

	No Experience		Poor		Average		Somewhat Good		Very Good	
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
1- Learning Management Systems	0	0	2	6	14	40	13	37	6	17
2- Word Processor	0	0	1	3	6	17	15	43	13	37
3- Spreadsheet Program	4	11	5	14	6	17	16	46	4	11
4- Presentation Program	0	0	0	0	1	3	20	57	14	40
5- E-mail Programs	0	0	1	3	3	9	11	31	20	57
6- Web Search Engines	0	0	0	0	2	6	14	40	19	54
7- Smart Board	21	60	5	14	3	9	5	14	1	3

Most of the participants (43%) indicated that they are somewhat good at using a word processor (e.g. Microsoft Word, Pages etc.). Thirty-seven percent of the participants responded "Very Good" to this item, and none responded "No Experience". These responses show that the participants are good at using a word processor, which is an expected result since the instructors at Zirve University are using word processors effectively in electronic correspondence, and preparing worksheets and homework on computers.

For the third item, Spreadsheet Program (e.g. Microsoft Excel, Numbers, etc.), 46% of the participants responded "Good" while 11% of them considered themselves to be very good at using a spreadsheet programs. Unlike the items 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6, in this item, the participants responded "No Experience" in using Spreadsheet Program. This response is not surprising

because spreadsheet programs are generally used for math calculations and numeric data, and ELT instructors generally do not need to use spreadsheet programs at Zirve University.

The number of respondents responding "Somewhat Good" for the item "Presentation Program" is 20 (57%). This is followed by 40%. This also is not a surprising result because ELT instructors at Zirve University use presentation programs (e.g. Microsoft PowerPoint, Keynote, etc.) while preparing visual activities and slideshows for their classes.

For the fifth item, 57% of the participants marked "Very Good" and 31% of them responded "Somewhat Good". This was an expected result because at Zirve University, instructors are provided with MacBook computers, and they use an application called Mail.app for their correspondence purposes.

Nineteen percent of the participants responded "Very Good" to item 6, Web Search Engines (e.g. Google, Yahoo, etc.), while 40% of them responded "Good". This result was also expected because most of the people use a web search engine as a default homepage for their browsers.

Most of the participants (60%) responded "No Experience" to the item 7, Smart Board. However 3% of them responded "Very Good". The researcher assumes this result is because the definition of Smart Board was not given at the questionnaire. Another reason might be that there is no Smart Board at Zirve University, and Smart Boards have become popular in Turkey in the recent couple of years.

4.3.2. Findings on the Attitudes toward Blended Learning

This category is the most helpful category to answer the research question "What are the attitudes of ELT instructors toward blended learning at Zirve University". The researcher aimed to find out the beliefs, attitudes, and thoughts of the participants about blended learning. There are 7 items under this category, and the responses are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Responses to the Items Related to the Attitudes toward Blended Learning

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
1- Blended Learning Approach Supports Collaborative Learning.	1	3	5	14	4	11	21	60	4	11
2- Administrators Believe That Blended Learning is Important.	0	0	4	11	7	20	13	37	11	31
3- Blended Learning Helps Students to Learn in a Convenient Part.	2	6	1	3	6	17	20	57	6	17
4- I am Interested in Implementing Blended Learning for my Courses.	3	9	2	6	7	20	15	43	8	23
5- Blended Learning enables Administrators to Manage the Education on my Campus.	2	6	7	20	5	14	19	54	2	6
6- Technological Infrastructure on my Campus is Ready to Implement Blended Learning.	8	23	11	31	7	20	6	17	3	9
7- Blended Learning Considers the Differences in Learning Styles of Students.	3	9	11	31	3	9	16	46	2	6

The first item of this category is about the support of blended learning in collaborative learning. Most of the participants (60%) agree that blended learning approach supports collaborative learning while 11% of them strongly agree this item. While answering this item, most of the respondents might have thought that the assignments and homework given through Schoology are solved in groups by the students. However, 3% of the participants responded "Strongly Disagree", and 14% of them responded "Disagree". The reason for the negative responses to this item might be that on Schoology, none of the teachers have assigned group work to the students so far. This fact might be considered while answering this item.

The second item was unclear for the respondents to respond because in the process of blended learning experience**s** at Zirve University, the instructors didn't hear any positive or negative comments from the administrators about the use of Schoology. In addition to this, the researcher didn't need to ask specific questions to the administrators about the implementation of blended learning because this study covers the overall attitudes of ELT teachers toward blended learning at Zirve University. There is no specific group of instructors (e.g. administrators, skill coordinators) targeted in this study. When we look at the results of this item, we see that most of the participants (37%) responded "Agree". While responding to this item, the help of administrators in maintaining blended learning experience at Zirve University might be seen as a factor that makes blended learning considered to be important for the administrators.

For the item 3, *Blended Learning Helps Students to Learn in a Convenient Way,* most of the participants (57%) responded "Agree". 17% of the participants responded "Strongly Agree". For the positive responses, the features of Schoology (e.g. online homework, gradebook, materials, etc.) might have been reasons.

Forty-three percent of the participants responded "Agree" to the item 4. 23% of them marked "Strongly Agree" while 20% of them were neutral. However, 15% of the participants responded negatively to this item. The instructors who are interested in implementing blended learning for their courses should have seen the benefits of blended learning in teaching (e.g. material sharing, communication with students, grading through Schoology, etc.)

Most of the participants (54%) responded "Agree" to the item 5, *Blended Learning Enables Administrators to Manage the Education on my Campus.* The reason for this might be

that both the administrators and the skill coordinators were periodically checking the gradebook and the online materials of the online classes. When a category is missing on one of the online classrooms gradebook, skill coordinators warn the instructor responsible for maintaining the mentioned online classroom. Another reason for the positive responses for this item can be that skill coordinators are responsible for the delivery of online homework for the online classrooms, and this might be regarded as a management by the administrators.

When the item *Technological Infrastructure on my Campus is Ready to Implement Blended Learning* was asked, 31% of the respondents responded "Disagree", which is followed 23% who chose "Strongly Disagree". The slow Internet at Zirve University is the primary reason for the negative responses. For the instructors who responded "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" (9 in total, 26%) the reason might be the computers delivered to the students and the instructors.

Forty-six percent of the participants responded "Agree" to the item 7, which is the last item of this category. Thirty-one percent of the instructors responded "Disagree" to this item. These two results are close to each other. Some participants might have regarded the ability of using technology while answering "Disagree" to this item, while the others might have supposed that blended learning offers different styles of learning (e.g. visual learning, auditory learning, etc.).

4.3.3. Findings on the Barriers That Affect the Adoption of Blended Learning

This category tries to find answers to the factors that affect the implementation of blended learning. There are 11 items under this category, and the items were prepared considering the factors resulting from the students, the teachers, and the campus. The results of this category are shown in Table 4.

The first item is about the instructors. Fifty-seven percent of the instructors strongly disagree to this item. Twenty-nine percent agree while 9% of them strongly agree, and 6% of them are neutral about this item. For the instructors in the midst of their first year of teaching, not having technology experience can be understandable. But for the others, it is normal that they responded negative to this item because using technology in ELT classes is nearly inevitable.

Table 4. Responses to the Items Related to the Barriers That Affect the Adoption of Blended Learning

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
1- I don't have technology experience.	20	57	10	29	2	6	0	0	3	9
2- I don't have technological support.	10	29	15	43	4	11	4	11	2	6
3- I don't have enough technological training.	8	23	9	26	3	9	13	37	2	6
4- Internet is not available on my campus.	9	26	3	9	8	23	11	31	4	11
5- Computers are not available on my campus.	29	83	2	6	0	0	3	9	1	3
6- Blended learning increases my workload.	2	6	2	6	7	20	14	40	10	29
7- My colleagues don't like blended learning.	1	3	5	14	10	29	13	37	6	17
8- Blended learning reduces my contact with students.	15	43	11	31	5	14	3	9	1	3
9- My campus uses a poor learning management system.	12	34	12	34	6	17	5	14	0	0

10- My students don't have enough technology experience.	1	3	4	11	4	11	15	43	11	31
11- My students don't have Internet at home.	3	9	2	6	10	29	15	43	5	14

For the second item *I don't have enough technological support,* 43% of the participants responded "Disagree" and 29% of them responded "Strongly Disagree". Eleven percent of the participants agree to this item. The percentage of participants who chose the answer "Strongly Agree" is 6%. The researcher provided all the technical support during the blended learning experience. Those who selected "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses might be the ones who didn't ask for technical help during the blended learning process.

The third item is similar to the second item. It is about technological training. Most of the participants (37%) responded "Agree" to this item. Before the implementation of blended learning, the researcher gave workshops and seminars about the use of Schoology. The respondents might have thought technological training in general, not only Schoology because the researcher didn't give any technological training about any subject other than Schoology. Another reason for this may be that some instructors didn't attend the workshops at the beginning of blended learning process.

Thirty-one percent of the participants agreed that Internet is not available on the campus while 26% of them strongly disagreed to this item. While answering this item, some participants may have though this item applied only to instructors, while others may have thought that this item is related to both the instructors and the students. While connecting to the Internet, the students are dependent only on Wi-Fi, but the instructors have a chance to connect to the Internet by using an Ethernet cable when Wi-Fi is not available, or the wireless Internet signal is poor.

Most of the participants responded "Strongly Agree" to the item 5. Six percent of them chose "Agree", and 2% answered negative. As all the instructors and students have MacBook

computers delivered to them by Zirve University, it is hard to understand the responses of respondents who disagree with this item.

Most of the participants (69%) think that blended learning increases their workload while 12% of them think the opposite. During the blended learning process, this item was the highest complaint from the instructors. Entering weekly grades to gradebook, delivering online homework and assignments, and uploading in-class materials to Schoology might have been considered an extra workload by the instructors.

Most of the respondents (37%) responded "Agree" to the item 7, *My Colleagues don't Like Blended Learning*. Twenty-nine percent of them were neutral to this item, while 17% responded "Strongly Agree". The reason for these answers might be because of the conversations among the instructors about extra workload brought on by Schoology.

The communication feature available through Schoology is another unique feature that instructors like. When an instructor wants, he/she can send an e-mail to the whole class, or a specific student. Forty-three percent of the participants responded "Strongly Agree" to the item 8, *Blended Learning Reduces my Contact with Students* and 31% of them responded "Agree". 12% of the participants who disagreed to this item may not have known how to communicate with their students through Schoology.

The item 9 is about the quality of the LMS used at Zirve University. As it is stated in this study, the LMS for blended learning purpose at Zirve University is Schoology. Thirty-four percent of the instructors responded "Strongly Disagree", and 34% of them responded "Disagree". The benefits offered by Schoology are more than any other current LMS (see Figure 1).

Most of the participants (43%) agreed that their students do not have enough technological experience. During the blended learning process, no workshop or training was given to the students by the researcher. The students learned the use of Schoology from their instructors. Any workshop about the use of technology was not given either.

The students who don't have Internet at home suffered a lot from online homework and assignments. They complained to their teachers and the researcher. They were asked to do their

homework at school, by connecting to the Wi-Fi at the campus, or advised to buy a mobile Internet modem. By looking at these complaints, most of the participants (43%) responded "Agree" to the item 11. Twenty-nine percent were neutral to this item while 14% strongly agreed and 15% didn't agree.

4.3.4. Findings on the Incentives of Blended Learning

This category aims to find the results of the positive aspects brought by blended learning. There are 7 items under this category and the items are related to both the students and the instructors. The results of this category are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Responses to the Items Related to the Incentives of Blended Learning

	Strongly Disagree		**Disagree**		**Neutral**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agree**	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1- Blended learning facilitates the tracking of student performance.	3	9	2	6	5	14	13	37	12	34
2- Blended learning makes better use of class time.	1	3	9	26	3	9	14	40	8	23
3- Blended learning gives students access to class materials at any time.	3	9	0	0	1	3	14	40	17	49
4- Blended learning gives students more media resources.	1	3	2	6	0	0	14	40	18	51
5- Blended learning accommodates different types of students and instructors.	1	3	2	6	5	14	15	43	12	34

6- Blended learning provides better communication for students and instructors	2	6	4	11	5	14	10	29	14	40
7- Blended learning improves students and instructors technological skills.	1	3	0	0	7	20	15	43	12	34

Through Schoology, instructors can track their students' progress. They can enter their students' grades on the online gradebook, they can make comments on the grades of the students, and they can give effective feedback to their students. Most of the participants (37%) responded "Agree" to the item 1 in this category. 34% of them responded "Strongly Agree". These results indicate that the teachers found Schoology's gradebook feature effective.

For the item 2, *Blended Learning Makes Better Use of Time,* 40% of the instructors responded "Agree" while 26% of them responded "Disagree". For some teachers, using Schoology for blended learning purposes was an effective way to give online assignments, and review the results easily. For some other teachers, online quizzes and assignments feature in Schoology was an extra burden, and teachers thought they could make better use of his/her time evaluating the papers of his/her students.

Item 3 is about accessing class materials at any time. Forty-nine percent of the participants responded "Strongly Disagree". 40% of them responded "Agree" to this item. Only 9% of the participants responded "Strongly Disagree". A teacher can upload in-class materials to Schoology, and share them with his/her students. The students can access these materials at any time, without effort. Even though a workshop was given about how to share materials with the students, it is interesting to see 3 participants responding "Strongly Disagree" to this item.

Item 4 is similar to item 3 in the way of sharing media with the students. Schoology supports rich media types to be uploaded to its servers. For this item, Most of the participants (14%) responded "Strongly Agree", while 3% of the participants disagree with this item.

Most of the participants (77%) agreed to the item 5, *Blended Learning Accommodates Different Types of Students and Instructors*. Only 9% of the participants disagreed with this item. There are different types of learners on Schoology, as well as different types of instructors in terms of age, sex, learning/teaching style, and experience.

Forty percent of the participants responded "Strongly Agree" to item 6, while 11% of them responded "Disagree", and 6% of them strongly disagree. For some teachers at Zirve University, technology makes people asocial. For others, technology is a good means of reaching people easily. People who responded to this item positively are in the latter group.

Item 7 is about blended learning's contribution to the technological development of its implementers. Only 3% of the participants responded "Strongly Disagree" to this item while most of the participants (43%) responded "Agree", and 34% of them responded "Strongly Agree".

4.4. Findings from the Qualitative Data

In this part of the questionnaire, participants were asked four open-ended questions. These are:

1. What are the positive aspects of blended learning?

2. What are the negative aspects of blended learning?

3. What are the some challenges that you encountered before and during your blended teaching experience?

4. Do you think blended learning should be used in language teaching and learning environment? Why or why not?

The first question aims to find the benefits of blended learning for the participants. On the contrary, the second question aims to find the negative effects of the implementation of blended learning. The third question asks for the hardships that the teachers encountered before and in the stage of implementing blended learning. The fourth question tries to search the thoughts of the teachers with regard to implementing blended learning in language teaching by asking the

participants to provide their reasons. The questions are related to both teaching and learning through blended learning.

4.4.1. Findings Regarding the Positive Aspects of Blended Learning.

The first open-ended question reveals the positive thoughts of the participants about blended learning. The answers can be categorized into five main groups. These are: use of materials, teacher workload, interaction, independent learning, and assessment.

4.4.1.1. Use of Materials

For the first open-ended question, 9 of the participants mentioned the unique faculties that blended learning delivers in terms of using and disseminating materials. By implementing blended learning, students and teachers can access the materials at any time they want; students and teachers can save paper; teachers can create an authentic and wide variety of materials; and the materials used are appealing to both visual and auditory learners. These reasons are categorized in Table 6 below.

Table 6. The Reasons Why the Teachers Like Blended Learning in Terms of Using Materials

Blended learning is good because	Number of Teachers
1. Students and teachers can access to whatever they want at any time.	3
2. Students and teachers can save paper.	2
3. Teachers can create authentic and wide variety materials.	2
4. Materials used are appealing to both visual and auditory learners.	2

Ease of Access: The following are examples indicating participant's positive thoughts about blended learning's ease of access:

Participant 1: *You can have access to all materials at any time.*

Participant 25: *It helps the teacher to reach all the students with a click.*

Participant 28: *I think that the biggest positive aspect of blended learning is that it gives the teachers and students an easy way to access the materials.*

Schoology is a system that allows the teachers to upload the materials whenever they want. On the other hand, the students can view and/or download the materials when they need. By looking at these responses, we can conclude that the instructors, as well as the students liked this feature of Schoology.

Saving Paper: Since everything is digital in the implementation of blended learning, blended learning can contribute to reduced paper consumption. These example quotations show that both the teachers and the students don't have to use papers while delivering/receiving homework and materials:

Participant 10: *Blended learning sometimes saves time, lessens the usage of paper.*

Participant 14: *I love blended learning because it has many advantages for me such as texting my students anytime I want or putting the material on the website which means less printing.*

While assigning homework, or delivering online worksheets, the teachers don't need a photocopy machine thus, they save a great deal of paper by not printing the class materials.

Authentic and Wide Variety of Materials: For some of the participants, blended learning helps to create a wide variety of materials. You can upload any type of media to the platform, and you can create quizzes by using multiple-choice question forms, open-ended question forms, and a variety of other types of question forms. Here are some responses from the participants regarding the help of blended learning in creating authentic and wide variety of materials:

Participant 2: *As the combination of both traditional and e-learning, blended learning provides any kind of material for students with any kind of intelligence.*

Participant 31: *Via blended learning, you can create more authentic homework and environment.*

Schoology allows teachers to create online documents, quizzes and homework by using its build-in document-creation engine. This is a handy feature for teachers because they don't need to spend time by editing and organizing their written materials. By using Schoology's advanced document creation feature, the teachers can create any sort of document, online quiz, or homework with less effort.

Visual and Auditory Materials: Through blended learning, teachers can create materials appealing to both visual and auditory learners. Some examples from the responses of teachers about visual and auditory materials:

> Participant 20: *Blended learning helps teachers to create more visual and auditory materials.*

> Participant 21*: Blended learning makes classes more effective by appealing visual and audio learners.*

Teachers can create their documents by attaching pictures or audio files in order to appeal to the students' desire for learning. This feature satisfies the students' various learning styles or need for interaction.

4.4.1.2. Teacher Workload

For the first question, 4 teachers wrote about the positive aspects of blended learning in reducing teachers' workload. There are mainly two themes with regard to reducing the teacher workload:

1. Blended learning saves time to teach in classroom

2. Blended learning helps teachers to have more time for students.

Here are some example responses regarding workload theme:

> Participant 19: *Blended learning helps me to make use of my teaching time.*

> Participant 34*: Blended learning saves my time because I can easily share whatever I want with my students.*

Participant 31: *Via blended learning, you can save more spent time on homework or tasks.*

Participant 32: *Blended learning enables more time for students to focus on their studies from various aspects without losing time.*

Because Schoology is a system that is reachable whenever it is needed, materials shared on Schoology saves time of both the teachers and the students. Before Schoology, the teachers had to deliver the materials during the class hours. It used to limit both the students' and teachers' time. But with the help of Schoology, the teachers can share the materials whenever they want without any time restriction, and the students can spend their free time by studying the materials delivered via Schoology.

4.4.1.3. Interaction

Blended learning creates two ways to interact with students. These are:

1. Communication between teachers and students.

2. Sharing resources with students.

Some example answers regarding interaction are as follows:

Participant 12: *There is an interaction between students and teachers.*

Participant 14*: I love blended learning because it has many advantages for me such as texting to my students at anytime...*

Participant 18: *Blended learning provides communication between student and instructor. We can share more resources with students.*

Participant 25: *It helps the teacher to reach all the students with a click.*

Participant 30: *Blended learning helps better communication between teachers and learners.*

Participant 34*: Blended learning saves my time because I can easily share whatever I want with my students.*

Participant 35: *I can communicate to my students. I can remind them things.*

Participant 22: *Blended learning helps teachers to share materials at any time.*

By using Schoology, the teachers can send messages to their students, share status updates on the wall of their virtual classrooms, share any kind of materials, and give feedback to their students regarding the grades of the students. These are all regarded as interaction between the students and the teachers.

4.4.1.4. Independent Learning

This category summarizes the answers of teachers that point out the independent learning aspect of blended learning. Table 7 shows the summary of themes regarding blended learning's help in independent learning.

Table 7. The Reasons Why Teachers Like Blended Learning in Terms of Independent Learning

Blended learning is good because	Number of Teachers
1. Students can practice language out of class.	2
2. Students can socialize and study together.	2
3. Students can broaden horizon	1

Practicing Language out of Class: According to some participants, blended learning helps students to practice language out of class. Here are some examples that the respondents gave

Participant 17: *Out of class studies may also be seen as another advantage.*

Participant 30: *Blended learning gives students to practice the language opportunities, which is really important especially in EFL contexts like ours.*

Students can socialize and study together: For some teachers, blended learning helps students to socialize and study together as reflected in these following quotations:

Participant 5: *Students can study together and share most of the things.*

Participant 15: *Students become more social and active.*

Students can broaden horizon: According to some participants, blended learning helps students to broaden their horizon. Here is an example quotation from one of the participants:

Participant 16: *Blended Learning broadens not only the students' horizons but also the teachers' by supporting the education with visually rich materials.*

The educational features of Schoology like visually and auditory aided homework and quizzes and their being accessible when needed help students to practice language out of classroom, and study collaboratively. Being able to send messages to the teachers makes the students social on Schoology platform.

4.4.1.5. Assessment

Another facility that is brought by blended learning is that it helps teachers to assess their students online, and keep their grades and provide feedback instantly to their students. These following quotations are from the responses related to the assessment:

Participant 33: *Blended learning enables us to follow the students' progress by grading them.*

Participant 17: *Blended learning enables material assessing more possible than before without the limits.*

Participant 9: *Blended learning gives you a perfect platform of keeping track of what students have done.*

Participant 35: *With the help of blended learning, I can keep tracking of my students.*

Participant 21: *With the help of Schoology, I can evaluate my students easily every week.*

Gradebook feature of Schoology is one of the features that is liked by the instructors. By using gradebook, the teachers can easily track their students, give feedback, and encourage their students.

4.4.2. Findings Regarding the Negative Aspects of Blended Learning.

The second open-ended question aimed to find out the negative thoughts of the participants about blended learning. There are mainly 5 categories that the answers can be put into. These are: technological background, infrastructural problems, time consumption, extra workload, and individualism. Table 8 summarizes the main themes of the responses of teachers.

Table 8. The Negative Aspects of Blended Learning According to the Responses of the Participants.

Blended learning is bad because	Number of Teachers
1. There is no technological background.	4
2. There are infrastructural problems.	3
3. It consumes a lot of time.	1
4. It brings extra workload for teachers.	3
5. It encourages individualism among students.	3

4.4.2.1. Technological Background

In the second open-ended question, some of the participants complained that they don't have technological background while implementing blended learning at Zirve University. Here are some responses regarding this issue:

> Participant 1: If the students and the instructors are not equipped with enough and don't have enough training and/or experience, unfortunately blended learning will backfire.

Participant 16: *Blended learning requires necessary technological background to make use of.*

Participant 21: *When I can't solve technological problems because of my lack of experience, it wastes my time.*

Participant 31: *If you don't know how to use the technology, it might be fatal to use blended learning.*

Lack of technological background in some of the teachers and students is one of the problems that makes blended learning to be implemented smoothly. A solution to his problem can be achieved by giving technological support during the implementation of blended learning.

4.4.2.2. Infrastructural Problems

According to some teachers, during the implementation of blended learning, there are some environmental problems that prevent blended learning to be applied perfectly. Some examples about infrastructural problems are as follows:

Participant 7: *Slow Internet access on the campus is a problem while implementing blended learning.*

Participant 17: *Poor Internet access is a big problem.*

Participant 30: *It needs specific technological infrastructure, tine and being technology friendly users.*

Unfortunately, at Zirve University, the wireless Internet access is poor. For this reason, the teachers and the students may not be able to connect to the Internet whenever they want. On the other hand, the Ethernet connection is provided only to the instructors, which enables them to connect as they want.

4.4.2.3. Time Consumption

For some respondents, one of the problems that blended learning brings is that it is time consuming. Here are some responses from the participants about blendes learning's being time consuming:

Participant 15: *Blended learning can sometimes be time-consuming.*

Participant 17: *Using blended learning should not be mandatory and it is time-consuming.*

Participant 27: *When you don't know how to use Schoology, it is quite time-consuming.*

Participant 28: *The biggest negative aspect of blended learning is that it is time-consuming.*

Participant 36: *It takes too much time to prepare online quizzes.*

When used effectively, Schoology saves time of the teachers and the students. When the users have some technical background issues while using Schoology, it may be a burden for them.

4.4.2.4. Extra Workload

Some participants consider blended learning to create an extra workload for them. Here are some examples picked up from the answers:

Participant 24: *It increases the workload of the students and the teachers.*

Participant 33: *The most negative aspect is of course for the teachers. It loads us extra work like always checking the assigned homework after 24 hours in a week.*

Participant 37: *Blended learning increases the burden on teachers if they need to use it at the weekends.*

During the implementation of blended learning, the most received complaint about Schoology was about using the gradebook. Filling the required grade categories like participation, homework, and quizzes on gradebook took some time of the teachers and this was regarded to be an extra workload.

4.4.2.5. Individualism

Some participants think that blended learning keeps students away from the physical classroom environment. They provide following example answers:

Participant 11: *Blended learning reduces face-to-face communication.*

Participant 19: *Blended learning reduces the amount of student-teacher interaction during class time.*

Participant 32: *Blended learning may lead to individualism and the soul of learning environment socially may disappear.*

As its name suggests, blended learning is a mixture of both traditional classroom and technology. Thus, there is no need to fear about its leading to individualism. When the necessary training about balancing the technology and traditional classroom while teaching is given to the teachers, this complaint about individualism may disappear.

4.4.3. Findings Regarding the Challenges That the Instructors Encountered Before and During Their Blended Learning Experience

The answers given to this third open-ended question are similar to the second open-ended question. There are mainly 4 categories when the answers are analyzed. These are: lack of training, infrastructural problems, lack of enough technological skills, and cheating. Table 9 shows the summary of the answers that the teachers gave about the challenges they lived before and during their blended learning experience.

Table 9. Challenges that the teachers encountered before and during their blended learning experience.

Blended learning is challenging because	Number of Teachers
1. There is a lack of training.	3
2. There are infrastructural problems.	7
3. The students and the teachers lack of enough technological skills.	3
4. It allows cheating among the students.	2

4.4.3.1. Lack of Training

Some respondents mentioned that lack of sufficient training for both the teachers and students is a huge hindrance to implementing blended learning effectively. Some answers related to this problem are:

Participant 19: *"I haven't been educated on how to use LMS programs."*

Participant 15: *I thought implementing blended learning would be easier, but later on I understood that I really need some more education about it.*

Participant 32: *Training and infrastructure is inadequate.*

Even though the teachers were trained at the beginning of using Schoology, and necessary help was given during the implementation of blended learning, the answers show that some teachers still need further training. If the adequate training is given, this complaint may be removed.

4.4.3.2. Infrastructural Problems

Like in the answers of the second open-ended question, there are similar answers given to the third open-ended question about some infrastructural problems. According to some teachers, these problems are as follows:

Participant 2: *Due to the lack of Internet connection across the campus, even though it is somehow possible for teachers to use LMS in their offices, it is nearly impossible to implement it in the classrooms, and the students experience the same hardship as well.*

Participant 4: *Lack of Internet and incapability of students in terms of using blended learning.*

Participant 8: *Electricity cut and slow Internet access is a big problem.*

Participant 17: *Students do not complete the assignments on time. Internet access and technical problems may intervene the students negatively.*

Participant 21: *Because of some insufficiencies of technology and Internet on the campus, sometimes my lessons do not go as I have planned.*

Participant 32: *Training and infrastructure is inadequate.*

Participant 36: *There are problems about connecting to the Internet, and sometimes we don't have enough equipment.*

Infrastructural problems are one of the most obvious problems in both the quantitative and the qualitative part of this study. The main reason for these complaints is poor Internet coverage on the campus. This problem may be removed by enhancing the Wi-Fi Internet coverage through the campus.

4.4.3.3. Lack of Enough Technological Skills

For some of the respondents, not having enough technological skills is another problem while implementing blended learning. Some example answers given under this category are:

Participant 21: *Students' lack of experience with Internet and technology is another problem.*

Participant 16: *Not only the students but also the teachers who lack in technological knowledge get trouble in blended learning.*

Participant 34: *Students' lack of technological skills is a challenge that I encountered during blended learning experience.*

No training regarding the use of technology in any particular area was given to the students and the teachers. The only training given was about using Schoology, and this was given only to the instructors. If there are qualified trainers that can give trainings to the students and the teachers about the subjects that are needed, this problem may be solved.

4.4.3.4. Cheating

Cheating is considered to be another problem, and for some teachers, it affects blended learning experience negatively. Here are some example responses about cheating:

Participant 24: *Cheating is the biggest problem.*

Participant 22: *Students cheat and there is no way to prevent this. Since students usually cheat, I don't think that assignments are helpful for their learning.*

While giving traditional paper-based homework, the students who want to cheat can cheat whenever they want. This problem cannot be solved by using even technology.

4.4.4. Blended Learning and Language Teaching and Learning Environment

The last open-ended question asks participants whether blended learning should be used in language teaching and learning environment or not. This question also asks for further details with "why". None of the participants answered this question negatively. Instead, they all think that blended learning should be used only if some certain conditions are provided. Training is the main condition that the participants wrote. On the other hand, some teachers praised blended learning because it enables material sharing, interaction with the students, and tracking the students.

4.4.4.1. Training

Some participants think that without training, blended learning will not work in language teaching and learning environment. According to them, training should be given to both the students and the teachers. Here are some answers about the importance of giving training:

Participant 1: *Blended learning should be implemented only after providing all the support (technical, administrative) with a reasonably planned curriculum to the instructors, and keeping them up-to-date with much comprehensive training.*

Participant 7: *Blended learning should be used in language teaching and learning environment because it is awesome (But with the appropriate foresight and training -like a full day of training).*

Participant 10: *Blended learning should be used with sufficient qualified teachers, and every student should be taught about the system.*

Participant 33: *If the perfect training is given to the instructors and the students, and an extra hour for Schoology is given, it will be more convenient to use it effectively.*

Before and during the implementation of blended learning, if the trainings related to both using the LMS program that is going to be used and the technology in general are given to both the students and the teachers, the problems encountered during blended learning can be reduced remarkably.

4.4.4.2. Material Sharing

One of the advantages that blended learning brings is that students and teachers can share in-class materials with their students. Some participants consider ease of access as an advantage brought by blended learning.

> Participant 14: *I love blended learning because it has many advantages for me such as texting to my students anytime I want or putting the materials on the website which means less printing. For students, it has more advantages such as reaching the class materials anytime they want.*
>
> Participant 17: *Blended learning is very helpful in terms of material sharing.*
>
> Participant 22: *Blended learning should be used in language learning for an easier communication with students, sharing materials, and checking student success.*
>
> Participant 36: *In my point of view, we should totally use blended learning because of accessing many resources, having enjoyable class time for teachers and students*.

Sharing materials is one of the essential features of any LMS program. The teachers can interact with their students by sharing in-class materials at the end of their classes, and these materials can be reached from anywhere at any time by the students. This material sharing feature is considered to be a good feature by the participants during the study.

4.4.4.3. Tracking the Students

> For some participants, blended learning is helpful because you can easily track your students' performance. Some example answers are as follows:
>
> Participant 14: *Teachers can track of their students' progress by checking the gradebook.*

Participant 23: *Perhaps. Students are tracked easily and more materials are given to the students which won't be presented during the class.*

Keeping the grades of the students online, tracking the changes on their gradebook, and giving feedback about their grades are one of the most liked features of Schoology. Even though some teachers can think that using the gradebook feature of Schoology takes too much time, a great deal of the participants think that tracking their students' grades is very helpful in language teaching.

CHAPTER 5

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out the nature of using Schoology for blended learning purposes, and reveal the attitudes of ELT teachers toward blended learning at the School of Foreign Languages, Zirve University. Blended learning is a new model combining the traditional classroom environment with the use of technology; hence this study gains importance because there was not any prior research done regarding this subject at Zirve University. This study addressed two research questions:

1. What is the nature of using Schoology for blended learning purposes?

2. What are the attitudes of ELT teachers toward blended learning at Zirve University?

This study was carried out with the participation of 35 randomly selected ELT instructors from School of Foreign Languages at Zirve University. In order to find answers to the mentioned research questions, a survey adapted from a Ph. D. thesis by Khalid Hussain Moukali (2012) was used. The survey mainly consisted of two parts. The first part included 39 items with 5-point Likert scale type. There were 5 subcategories under the first part. The second part consisted of 4 open-ended questions. The research was conducted through a case-study research design. For the first part of the analysis, descriptive statistics was used. For the open-ended questions, content analysis was used to identify the themes of the answers. The study included both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

5.2. Review of the Results

The data obtained from both quantitative and qualitative questions will be discussed below in accordance with the two research questions.

5.2.1. Research Question 1

The first research question was issued in order to investigate the nature of using an LMS software for blended learning purposes. The researcher aimed to find out whether the

characteristic features of the chosen LMS software are in accordance with blended learning purposes. Thus, Schoology, an LMS software, was chosen to conduct this study, and the following research question was asked:

1. What is the nature of using Schoology for blended learning purposes?

In order to find out an answer for this question, Schoology was used at School of Foreign Languages at Zirve University for approximately 6 months. While following the steps mentioned in Chapter 3 in detail, the researcher had a total control in the process of implementing Schoology. The researcher observed whether the characteristics of blended learning were used properly in Schoology environment or not. According to Dziuban, Hartman and Moskal (2004), one of the characteristic features of blended learning is to increase interaction between student-instructor, student-student, student-content, and student-outside materials (p. 9). The process illustrated that both the teachers and the instructors used blended learning for interaction purposes. During the implementation process, Schoology provided teachers with an opportunity to interact with their students in every aspect which was indicated as a positive advantage of Schoology in the survey conducted at the end of the implementation. According Bath and Bourke (2010), another feature of blended learning is that the teachers can create online practice quizzes with an automatic marking functionality, which produces immediate and automatic results to the students (p. 2). During the implementation, the instructors created weekly quizzes by using a built-in quiz creation feature of Schoology which includes different types of questions. As soon as the students solved these quizzes, both the teachers and the students could see the results of the quizzes in the gradebook of Schoology. In this way, the teachers could track their students' success. Additionally, while using Schoology, the teachers created a wide range their own materials. As Gould (2003) states, classes offered in a blended learning format offer instructional materials in a wide range of formats, and this helps students who have different learning styles to benefit from different types of materials such as audio files, images, and videos. Looking at this feature of blended classes, it could be seen that during the implementation of blended learning the instructors were able to upload any kind of material related to the class onto Schoology, and the students benefited from these materials. Materials included PDF files, text files, presentation files, audio files, videos, images, and links related to the class.

Schoology provided all of the opportunities that an LMS program should have, and the teachers and the students at Zirve University used all these features with a combination of a traditional classroom environment, leading to a blended learning format.

5.2.2. Research Question 2

The second research question aimed to find out the thoughts of the instructors working at the School of Foreign Languages at Zirve University. The second research question was:

2. What are the attitudes of ELT teachers toward blended learning at Zirve University?

In order to find an answer to this second research question, after the implementation of Schoology for 6 months, a survey was delivered to 35 randomly chosen instructors. Even though the aim of the survey was to find the attitudes of instructors toward blended learning, it also gave information about the technological background of the instructors, as well as their experience in computer usage. The survey consisted of 6 parts: demographic information; experience with educational technologies; attitudes toward blended learning; barriers that affect the adoption of blended learning; incentives of blended learning, and four open-ended questions to find out the thoughts of the participants about the positive and negative aspects of blended learning, to point out the challenges that the participants encountered before and during their blended learning experience, and to explore their ideas about whether blended learning should be used in language teaching and learning environment. The results of the survey showed that most of the participants liked the features of Schoology for blended learning purposes, but they pointed out the drawbacks of implementing blended learning at Zirve University. The negative responses of the participants resulted from mainly three themes: lack of teacher and student training, infrastructural problems, and lack of technological background.

In the quantitative part of the survey, the results showed that most of the participants did not have enough technological training on blended learning, and they clearly indicated this in the qualitative part of the survey that the main reason they experienced difficulty in using Schoology was that there were not enough training for both the instructors and the students. Werth and Kellerer (2013) point out in the findings part of a study regarding the barriers affecting blended learning that "the training must not cease in the time prior to implementation, but should continue through the initial phases of implementation when struggles are likely greatest" (p. 19).

The finding of the study conducted by Werth and Kellerer is in line with the results of the study regarding the lack of training issue. If trainings for both the teachers and the students regarding the use of Schoology had been provided before and during the implementation of blended learning, the teachers and the students would not have experienced difficulty in using the LMS program.

Another major problem that was experienced by the instructors was reflected in both the quantitative and qualitative part of the survey. It was that the Internet coverage across the campus was poor, and this affected the implementation of blended learning in a negative way. Karunanayaka (2006) points out that limitations in IT infrastructure facilities, expensive bandwidths for the Internet connectivity, and high costs of developing infrastructure are some key elements that affect the implementation of computer-assisted learning (p. 108). Since blended learning is a learning model delivered via the Internet, the instructors and teachers should be able to connect to the LMS program whenever they want, and it is possible with a strong Internet connection across the campus.

Most of the participants indicated that in order to achieve a perfect blend, the teachers and the students should have a technological background which prepares them for the use of computer and the Internet. This finding in this study is consistent with the findings of a study in the area of computer technology conducted by Mukti (2000), who found out that "teachers who were less knowledgeable perceived that they needed more skills and adequate knowledge to implement computer technology in the classroom" (p. 10).

5.3. Limitations of the Study

Only 35 out of 110 instructors participated in the study, even though 110 of them used Schoology for blended learning purposes. This shows that the study does not reflect the ideas of all the instructors. More than half of the participants were between the young age group 25-29, and they tended toward the use of technology more frequently in general when compared to the older age groups. Another limitation of the study was that the training about blended learning was done once, and that was at the beginning of the term. Not all of the instructors attended the training, thus minority of the respondents were among those who did not attend the training. No training to the students about using Schoology was given and this issue was clear from the

responses of the participants who indicated that there had to be training for the students in order to implement the blended learning better. Another limitation of the study was that the Internet connection at Zirve University was poor, and since this study is related to the use of blended learning, which requires a strong Internet connection to connect to the server of the used LMS program, some students and teachers experienced difficulty in connecting to the Internet when necessary.

5.4. Implications for Further Studies

In order to obtain more reliable results, trainings for both the instructors and the students should be given about blended learning before conducting a study. To strengthen the validity and the reliability of the results, the number of the participants should be kept as high as possible, and every age group should be included in the study. Before conducting a research regarding the use of technology in education, infrastructural problems like slow Internet connection should be eliminated. In order to obtain more clear data, the researcher can conduct a study with the participation of other faculty departments, if possible, and other educational institutions using an LMS program for blended learning purposes.

6. REFERENCES

AECT Definition and Technology Committee (2004). *The meanings of educational technology.* Retrieved from http://www.indiana.edu/~molpage/Meanings%20of%20ET_4.0.pdf#search=%22aect%20committee%20educational%20technology%22

Aliaga M, & Gunderson, B. (2000). *Interactive Statistics*. Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall

Armstrong, S. (2013). *Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Learning*. Retrieved from http://elearningindustry.com/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-online-learning

Bath, D. & Bourke, J. (2010). *Getting Started With Blended Learning*. Griffith Institution of Higher Education. GriffithUniversity Press.

Boeree, C. G. (2005). *Descriptive Statistics*. Retrieved from http://webspace.ship.edu/cgboer/descstats.html

Bonk, C. J., Kim, K. & Zeng, T. (2005). Future directions of blended learning in higher education and workplace learning settings. In C. J. Bonk and C. R. Graham (Eds.), *Handbook of blended learning: Global perspectives, local designs* (pp. 550-567). San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer Publishing.

Chelimsky, E. (1989). Methodology Transfer Paper, 10.1. 3, *Content Analysis: A Methodology for Structuring and Analyzing Written Material*. Retrieved from http://archive.gao.gov/d48t13/138426.pdf

Chen, S., & Lu, Y. (2013, June). The Negative Effects and Control of Blended Learning in University. In *2013 the International Conference on Education Technology and Information System (ICETIS 2013)*. Atlantis Press. Retrieved from http://www.atlantis-press.com/php/download_paper.php?id=7856

Clark, R. (2002). Six principles of effective e-learning: What works and why. *The E-Learning Developer's Journal*, 1-10.

Christensen, C., Horn, M. B., & Staker, H. (2013). *Is K-12 blended learning disruptive: An introduction of the theory of hybrids*. The Clayton Christensen Institute for Disruptive Innovation. Retrieved from http://www.christenseninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Is-K-12-Blended-Learning-Disruptive.pdf

Copping, A. and Mellett, P., (2004). *Blended Learning: An Appropriate Strategy for the Future Development of an Established International Distance Learning Course*. In: International Forum on Open Learning, 2004-07-03 - 2004-07-07, Dunedin.

Dziuban, C. D., Hartman, J. L., & Moskal, P. D. (2004). Blended learning. *EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research Bulletin*, *7*(1), 12. Retrieved from http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ERB0407.pdf.

Ellis, R. A., and Calvo, R. A. (2007). Minimum Indicators to Assure Quality of LMS-supported Blended Learning. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, *10*(2), 60-70. Retrieved from http://www.editlib.org/p/75305

Ghirardini, B. (2011). *E-learning methodologies*. Rome, Italy: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Gould, T. (2003, June). Hybrid classes: Maximizing institutional resources and student learning. In *Proceedings of the 2003 ASCUE Conference*, 54-59.

Grgurović, M. (2011). Blended learning in an ESL class: a case study. *Calico Journal*, *29*(1), 100-117.

Hoic-Bozic, N., Mornar, V., & Boticki, I. (2009). A blended learning approach to course design and implementation. *Education, IEEE Transactions on*, *52*(1), 19-30.

Hrastinski, S. (2008). Asynchronous and synchronous e-learning. *Educause quarterly*, *31*(4), 51-55.

Karunanayaka, S. (2006). Computer assisted learning: a challenge for teachers and learners. *Journal of the National Science Foundation of Sri Lanka*, *34*(2), 107-108.

Khan, B. (2005). *Managing e-Learning Strategies: Design, delivery, implementation and evolution*. Hershey, PA: Information Science Publishing.

Littlefield, J. (2013). *Synchronous Distance Learning vs. Asynchronous Distance Learning*. Retrieved from http://distancelearn.about.com/od/choosingaschool/p/LearningTypes.htm

Lynch, R., & Dembo, M. (2004). *The Relationship Between Self-Regulation and Online Learning in a Blended Learning Context*. Retrieved from http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/189/271

Marsh, D. (2012) *Blended Learning: Creating Language opportunity for Language Learners*. Cambridge University Press. New York. USA. Retrieved from http://www.cambridge.org/other_files/downloads/esl/booklets/Blended-Learning-Combined.pdf

Marsh, D. (2013). *An Introduction to Touchstone Blended Learning*. Retrieved from http://www.cambridge.org/touchstoneblended/category/professional-development/page/2/

Merrow, J. (2012). *Blended Learning, But To What End? | Taking Note*. Retrieved from http://takingnote.learningmatters.tv/?p=5908

Mohammad, F. (2009). *Blended Learning and the Virtual Learning Environment of Nottingham Trent University*. DESE '09 Proceedings of the 2009 Second International Conference on Developments in eSystems Engineering, 295-299.

Moore, J. L., Dickson-Deane, C.,Galyen, K. (2011). *E-learning, online learning and distance learning environments: Are they the same?* Elsevier: Internet and Higher Education, 14, 129-135. Retrieved from https://scholar.vt.edu/access/content/group/5deb92b5-10f3-49db-adeb-7294847f1ebc/e-Learning%20Scott%20Midkiff.pdf

Naidu, S. (2006). *E-learning: A guidebook of principles, procedures and practices.* 2nd Revised Edition. New Delhi, India: Commonwealth Educational Media Center for Asia (CEMCA), and the Commonwealth of Learning.

Mukti, N. A. (2000). Computer technology in Malaysia: Teachers' background characteristics, attitudes and concerns. *The Electronic Journal on Information Systems in Developing Countries*, *3*(8), 1-13.

Patton M, Q., & Cochran M. (2002). *A guide to using Qualitative Research Methodology.* Medecins Sans Frontiers, 2-34.

Petean, V. (2013). Blended Learning. Retrieved from http://networkedsts.blogspot.com.tr/2013/11/blended-learning.html

Peterson, D. (2009). *Synchronous vs. Asynchronous Learning - Which do you prefer?* about.com Guide. Retrieved from http://adulted.about.com/b/2009/01/25/synchronous-vs-asynchronouslearning-which-do-you-prefer.html

Sharma, P. (2007). *Try a blend that creates a new class of learning*. Retrieved from http://www.theguardian.com/education/2007/feb/16/tefl1

Sharma, P., & Barett, B. (2007). *Blended Learning: Using technology in and beyond the language classroom.* Oxford: Macmillan.

Shaw, S., & Igneri, N. (2006). Effectively implementing a blended learning approach (Eedo Knowledgeware White Paper). *New York: American Management Association*.

Singh, H., & Reed, C. (2001). *A white paper: Achieving success with blended learning.* Centra Software.

Tang, X., & Pan, Q. (2008, November). Study on the Application of Blended Learning in the College English Course. In *Future Information Technology and Management Engineering, 2008. FITME'08. International Seminar on* (pp. 133-136). IEEE.

Tayebinik, M., & Puteh, M. (2012). *Blended Learning or E-learning?* International Magazine on Advances in Computer Science and Telecommunications (IMACST), *3*(1), 103-110.

Thambala, R. (2013). *The future of e-Learning*. Retrieved from http://rajeshthambala.blogspot.com/2013/04/the-future-of-e-learning.html

Valiathan, P. (2002). *Blended Learning Models*. Retrieved from http://www.purnima-valiathan.com/readings/Blended-Learning-Models-2002-ASTD.pdf

Werth, E., Werth, L., & Kellerer, E. (2013). *Transforming K-12 Rural Education through Blended Learning: Barriers and Promising Practices*. iNACOL. Retrieved from http://www.inacol.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/iNACOL-Transforming-K-12-Rural-Education-through-Blended-Learning.pdf

Whittaker, C. (2011). *Blended Learning in English Language Teaching: Course Design and Implementation*. British Council.

Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (1st ed.). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

7. APPENDIX

7.1. Appendix 1: Questionnaire

BLENDED LEARNING SURVEY

The term blended learning is the key element of this research. For the purpose of the study, blended learning is defined as a learning system combining face-to-face instruction with technology-mediated instruction.

Part 1. Demographic Information

Please fill or place a check mark beside the appropriate entry of each of the following items:

1. What is your gender? ☐Male ☐Female

2. What is your age? _____ Years

3. How many years have you been in teaching? _____ Years

4. For how many years have you used the Internet-based learning? _____ Years

5. What is your previous personal experience with blended learning?

☐No previous experience with blended learning.

☐Previous experience as a student.

☐Previous experience as an instructor

☐Indicated both experiences as a student and instructor

6. In a scale from 1 to 10, please rate your level of experience in computer usage

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Excellent

Part 2. Experience with Educational Technologies

How good are you using these educational technologies? Rate these statements with the following scale:

1= No Experience; 2= Poor; 3= Average; 4= Somewhat Good; 5= Very Good

ITEM	1	2	3	4	5
1. Learning Management Systems (e.g. Blackboard, Moodle, etc).					
2. Word Processor (e.g. Microsoft Word, Pages, etc.)					
3. Spreadsheet Program (e.g. Microsoft Excel, Numbers, etc.)					
4. Presentation Program (e.g. Microsoft PowerPoint, Keynote etc.).					
5. E-mail Programs (e.g. Microsoft Office, Outlook etc.).					
6. Web Search Engines (e.g. Google, Yahoo, etc.).					
7. Smart Board					

Part 3. Attitudes toward Blended Learning

For each statement, please place a check mark that indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement using the following rating scale

SD= Strongly Disagree; D= Disagree= N: Neutral= A= Agree= SA= Strongly Agree

ITEM	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. Blended learning approach supports collaborative learning.					
2. Administrators believe that blended learning is important.					
3. Blended learning helps students to learn in a convenient way.					
4. I am interested in implementing blended learning for my courses.					
5. Blended learning enables administrators to manage the					

education on my campus.					
6. Technological infrastructure on my campus is ready to implement blended learning.					
7. Blended learning considers the differences in learning styles of students.					

Part 4. Barriers that Affect the Adoption of Blended Learning

For each statement, please place a check mark that indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement using the following rating scale

SD= Strongly Disagree; D= Disagree= N: Neutral= A= Agree= SA= Strongly Agree

ITEM	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. I don't have technology experience.					
2. I don't have enough technological support.					
3. I don't have enough technological training.					
4. Internet is not available on my campus.					
5. Computers are not available on my campus.					
6. Blended learning increases my workload.					
7. My colleagues don't like blended learning.					
8. Blended learning reduces my contact with students.					
9. My campus uses a poor learning management system (LMS).					
10. My students don't have enough technology experience.					
11. My students don't have Internet at home.					

Part 5. Incentives of Blended Learning

For each statement, please place a check mark that indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement using the following rating scale

SD= Strongly Disagree; D= Disagree= N: Neutral= A= Agree= SA= Strongly Agree

ITEM	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. Blended learning facilitates the tracking of student performance.					
2. Blended learning makes better use of class time					
3. Blended learning gives students access to class materials at any time					
4. Blended learning gives students more media resources (e.g. audios, videos, etc.).					
5. Blended learning accommodates different types of students and instructors.					
6. Blended learning provides better communication for students and instructors.					
7. Blended learning improves students and instructors technological skills.					

Part 6. Open-Ended Questions

1. What are the positive aspects of blended learning?
   ……
   ……
   ……
   …….....
2. What are the negative aspects of blended learning?
   ……
   ……
   ……
   ……

3. What are the some challenges that you encountered before and during your blended teaching experience?

   ……
   ……
   ……
   ……

4. Do you think should blended learning be used in language teaching and learning environment? Why or why not?

   ……
   ……
   ……
   ……