

# Ortaokul Düzeyindeki Öğrencilerin Pandemi Sürecindeki Uzaktan Eğitim ile İlgili Algılarının Metaforlar Yoluyla Belirlenmesi

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## ÖZ

Bu araştırmanın amacı ortaokul öğrencilerinin pandemi sürecindeki uzaktan eğitim kavramıyla ilgili algılarının metaforlar yoluyla belirlenmesidir. Çalışmada nitel araştırma desenlerinden durum çalışması kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 2020-2021 Eğitim Öğretim yılında Hatay ilinde beş ortaokulda 5-8. sınıflarında öğrenim gören 322 öğrenci oluşturmuştur. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu amaçlı örneklem yöntemi kullanılarak seçilmiştir. Araştırmanın verileri tek sorudan oluşan boşluk doldurma yöntemine göre hazırlanmış metaforik algı cümlesi kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Öğrencilerden pandemi sürecindeki uzaktan eğitime ilişkin bir metafor geliştirmeleri ve benzetme yönünü de "Uzaktan eğitim ... benzer, çünkü ..." cümlesini tamamlayarak yazmaları istenmiştir. Verilerin analizinde içerik analizi kullanılmıştır. Metaforlar "olumlu", "olumsuz", "nötr" olmak üzere 3 gruba ayrılmıştır. Araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin% 49.00'u olumsuz, % 44.33'ü olumlu ve % 6.67'si nötr metafor üretmiştir. En baskın metaforlar sırasıyla "Yabancı" (f = 14), "Okul" (f = 13), "En iyi arkadaş" (f = 9), "Veli toplantısı" (f = 7) olarak belirlenmiştir. Olumsuz metaforlara göre uzaktan eğitim etkili değildir ve kalıcı öğrenme sağlamaz. Olumlu metaforlara göre, uzaktan eğitim, pandemi döneminde teknolojiyi kullanarak ihtiyaçlarımızı karşılayan yeni bir öğretim sistemidir. Nötr metaforlara göre uzaktan eğitim, pandemi sürecinde zorunlu bir eğitim aşamasıdır. Sonuç olarak, öğrencilerin algıları dikkate alınarak uzaktan eğitim uygulamalarında iyileştirmeler yapılabilir. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, eğitim sisteminin geleceği için elektronik ve uzaktan eğitimi destekleyen esnek bir eğitim sistemi geliştirmeye yatırım yapabilir. Bu çalışmanın gelecekte uzaktan eğitim çalışmalarına ışık tutacağı düşünülmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Uzaktan eğitim, pandemi, metafor, ortaokul öğrencileri.



Erciyes Üniversitesi, Eğitim  
Fakültesi, Kayseri/TÜRKİYE  
*Erciyes Journal of  
Education (EJE)*  
DOI: 10.32433/eje.902102

SCREENED BY



Tür: Araştırma

Makale Geçmişi

Gönderim : 24.03.2021

Kabul : 27.08.2021

Yayınlanma : 28.10.2021

## Önerilen Atıf

Bekdaş, M. ve Karaoğulları, N. (2021). Ortaokul düzeyindeki öğrencilerin Pandemi sürecindeki uzaktan eğitim ile ilgili algılarının metaforlar yoluyla belirlenmesi. *Erciyes Journal of Education*, 5(2), 161-178. <https://doi.org/10.32433/eje.902102>

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# Determining the Perceptions of Secondary School Students about Distance Education in the Pandemic Process through Metaphors

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the perceptions of secondary school students for the concept of distance education in the pandemic process through metaphors. The case study design has been applied in this qualitative study. The study group was formed by the 322 students attending five different schools' 5th-8th graders in Hatay in the 2020-2021 academic year. The study group of the research was selected using the purposive sampling method. The data was collected using a metaphorical perception sentence prepared for the gap-filling method. Each student was asked to produce a metaphor and to complete the statement "Distance Education is like . . . because . . ." to draw an analogy. The data was analyzed using the content analysis technique. According to data analysis, it was found that 300 valid metaphors were developed. Metaphors were classified into 3 groups such as "positive", "negative", "neutral". Of the students in the study, 49.00% produced negative, 44.33% positive, and 6.67% neutral metaphors. The most dominant metaphors were given respectively "Stranger" (f=14), "School" (f=13), "Best friend" (f=9), "Parents' meeting" (f=7). According to negative metaphors, distance education is not effective and does not provide permanent learning. According to positive metaphors, distance education is a new teaching system that meets our needs using technology during the pandemic period. According to neutral metaphors, distance education is a mandatory stage of education in the pandemic process. The Ministry of National Education should invest in developing a flexible education system that supports electronic and distance learning for the future of the education system. Consequently, improvements can be made in distance education practices by considering students' perceptions. It is believed that this study will shed light on distance education studies in the future.

**Keywords:** Distance education, pandemic, metaphor, secondary school students.

## Suggested Citation

Bekdaş, M. and Karaoğulları, N. (2021). Determining the perceptions of secondary school students about distance education in the pandemic process through metaphors. *Erciyes Journal of Education*, 5(2), 161-178. <https://doi.org/10.32433/eje.902102>



Erciyes University,  
Faculty of Education,  
Kayseri/TURKEY  
*Erciyes Journal of  
Education (EJE)*  
DOI: 10.32433/eje.902102

SCREENED BY



Type: Research

Article History

Received : 24.03.2021

Accepted : 27.08.2021

Published : 28.10.2021

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## INTRODUCTION

For the past two years, the whole world has been infected with a newly discovered type of virus called coronavirus (COVID-19) and is facing a major health crisis. The virus, which is rapidly affecting the whole people in the world, appeared in Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019 and was accepted as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020 (WHO, 2020).

The COVID-19 virus has ravaged all areas of life, including health, economy, and education. In order to prevent the outbreak, it was decided to suspend the training process at all levels of education and to interrupt the face-to-face training for a while in the whole world (Abaslı and Jafarova, 2020). According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2020 has been a year like no other and the COVID-19 pandemic has created the most severe disruption to global education systems in history, forcing more than 1.6 billion learners in over 190 countries out of school at the peak of the crisis (UNESCO, 2021a). For this reason, students' access to education has been limited, and Turkey, like other countries in the world, has tried to solve the existing problem and find alternatives in a short time. From the onset of the pandemic, UNESCO started monitoring global school closures and supporting countries in their efforts to mitigate the immediate impact, and to facilitate the continuity of education for all through remote learning (UNESCO, 2021b). The epidemic, which has expanded over time, has also affected other countries of the world, such as Turkey, quite badly. Following the announcement of the first case in Turkey on 11 March 2020, the universities and all schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education have suspended face to face education since 14 March 2020, taking into account the health of all educational stakeholders, especially students, teachers and parents (MEB, 2020). Initially, a few weeks of holidays were announced at educational institutions, but later adding news of deaths to the increase in the number of cases, it was decided that schools would not be able to open in the spring semester. In this regard, just like in Turkey emergency distance education solutions have become the mandatory choice of countries to ensure the continuation of educational processes during this period (Özer and Suna, 2020). In Turkey, to meet the educational needs of students in the COVID-19 process, it was stated that education would be carried out through the Education Information Network (EBA), which is the digital education platform of the Ministry, and the Turkish Radio and Television Authority (TRT) (Özer and Suna, 2020).

In addition to the opportunities provided by the Ministry of National Education, some private educational institutions in the country continued the teaching process using various platforms in order to ensure that students studying in their institutions can benefit from educational opportunities and ensure continuity of education. Thus, traditional education has been replaced by distance education (Özer and Suna, 2020).

Distance education refers to an education system model where students and lecturers in different environments carry out learning and teaching activities with communication technologies and postal services (Işman, 1998). Distance education is an interdisciplinary field that tries to eliminate the limitations between learner, teacher and learning resources, and uses existing technologies with a pragmatist approach to achieve this goal (Bozkurt, 2017). Providing people with different educational options, minimizing inequality of opportunity, facilitating mass education, providing standards in educational programs, reducing the cost of education, and not forcing a

student to study in a classroom environment are the benefits of distance education. Institutions such as primary schools, secondary schools, high schools and universities frequently benefit from distance education applications (Kırık, 2014). In this context, the COVID-19 pandemic forced countries to invest significantly in distance education.

In order to minimize inequality of opportunity in education, countries have taken an urgent solution path. Therefore, applications were quickly initiated for the transition from formal education to distance education. However, this does not mean that every country has the exact distance education requirements it should have. Although in economically stronger countries, with the closure of schools, the distance education process was easily started, it is difficult to say that the process works in the same way in countries with low level of development (Eken, Tosun and Eken 2020). After the pandemic was declared, distance education was also started in Turkey to the best of its ability. In general, internet applications and TV broadcasts have come to the fore. However, the most important problem in applications is families who do not have adequate facilities. The physical and digital resources within the household and the socioeconomic status of the family have become much more important in providing and maintaining access to education in distance education processes. Because those who do not have the necessary tools and physical facilities face the risk of not being able to access distance education, on the other hand, those coming from more advantageous families can participate in distance education processes much more successfully (Çelik and Şahin, 2020). When we look at the literature, it is stated that there is a significant difference in access to digital tools in the distance education process and this will deepen the inequalities against disadvantaged children (Aedo, at al., 020; Çelik and Şahin, 2020; Saavedra, 2020a; Özdoğan and Berkant, 2020; UNESCO, 2020; World Bank, 2020). In their studies, Özdoğan and Berkant (2020) identified the problems experienced in the distance education process as lack of measurement and evaluation, loss of motivation, lack of internet and computer, inequality of opportunity, lack of interaction, technical problems, lack of socialization and being unprepared for the process. In his study, Saavedra (2020) stated that education opportunities have been lower and, also, dramatically unequal in this pandemic process. Çelik and Şahin (2020) stated that there is a significant difference between public school teachers and private school teachers in access to distance education and revealed that public school teachers are more unprepared, cannot get support for distance education, cannot conduct classes regularly, and have constant difficulties in accessing distance education. Moreover they noticed that economically disadvantaged families have been insufficient to provide their children with the necessary digital and physical opportunities and to support their children. In this context, this situation causes the existing educational inequalities to deepen. In this process, it is very important to determine the perceptions of students on distance education and to guide future educational practices in this direction. When we look at the literature, some studies were conducted to determine the students' perceptions about distance education during the pandemic process (Abaslı and Jafarova, 2020; Khan, at al., 2021; Muthuprasad, at al., 2020; Nugroho, at al., 2020; Serçemeli and Kurnaz, 2020; Tokuç and Varol, 2020; TEGV, 2020). According to Nugroho, at al., (2020), students have many negative feelings about online lectures and that affects their competence and quality of the lectures. Muthuprasad, at al., (2020) indicated that most students have positive feelings about online education in the pandemic process because of flexible schedule and convenience in India. Thus this result will guide them for the future form of education. Khan, at al, (2021) stated that the findings of the study reveal students' positive perception towards e-learning and so this will shape future education plans in India. In their studies, Tokuç and Vural emphasized that crises produce their own solutions as well as problems and that the profound effects of COVID-19 can forever change the training style of future

physicians. In their studies, Serçemeli and Kurnaz (2020) found out that students do not adopt the distance education system much. So educators should carefully and scientifically evaluate and analyze the effects of current changes on students and distance education in order to determine new educational principles and practices.

In this regard, the aim of this research is to determine the perceptions of secondary school students about the concept of distance education in the pandemic process through metaphors. Metaphors have been used to find out individual's perceptions about distance education in this study. "Metaphors are powerful tools for trying to comprehend what cannot be comprehended totally: our feelings, aesthetic experiences, moral practices and spiritual awareness" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Metaphors are not only rhetoric that enriches our daily language, but their importance in humans' life is much more than that (Saban, 2008). So, metaphors have been a common means used to express an understanding of complex concepts (Jensen, 2006). Metaphors can be beneficial conceptual tools for, educational research. One common use of metaphor in educational research is to exemplify or clarify a concept in a manner that will communicate effectively to the target group (Midgley and Trimmer, 2013). From this aspect, metaphors lead, enlighten and guide our applications and researches (Saban, 2004). When we consider from this point of view; to analyze, understand, and explain the perceptions of secondary school students about distance education in the pandemic process through metaphors will show us important clues about how distance education should be done in this period.

Within the scope of this study, metaphors have been analyzed to understand and interpret 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th graders perceptions concerning emergency distance education in the pandemic period. Based on these perceptions, some situation determinations regarding distance education will be made. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought.

1. With which metaphors do secondary school students explain the concept of distance education in the pandemic period and how do they define them?
2. How are students' perceptions of distance education during the pandemic period in the context of these metaphors and emerging categories revealed by secondary school students?
3. What conceptual categories can these metaphors, put forward by secondary school students, be grouped in terms of their common characteristics?
4. In what themes are the metaphors created according to the positive, negative and neutral distinction?
5. How do created metaphors differ by gender according to the positive, negative and neutral distinction?
6. How do the created metaphors differ according to the class level according to the positive, negative and neutral distinction?

### **The importance of the study**

When the literature is examined, it has been seen that there are not many studies on distance education in terms of secondary school students during the pandemic. In addition, it was determined that no studies were conducted on secondary school students on this subject through metaphors. For this reason, it is thought that this study will bring a different perspective to distance education through metaphors. The problems experienced in the emergency distance education process affect students' perceptions of distance education and these perceptions provide evidence of what these problems are. So it is important to investigate the views of

students taking courses about distance education in this period. Another point that makes the study important is that the data obtained will shed light on the way of applying distance education to secondary school students in the future. Moreover, this research will shed light on the necessary arrangements and practices to ensure the continuity of education without interruption in such crisis periods, and will also help develop up-to-date strategies that will increase the quality of emergency distance education.

## METHOD

### Research Model

This is a qualitative study based on a case study model. A case study is an in-depth analysis of one or more events, settings, programmes, social groups, societies, or other constrained systems. The situation represents a holistic system. A teacher, student or a newly implemented program can create a situation. Case study is defined as an investigation of a current phenomenon in its real context. Case studies have been used extensively in the social sciences and have been found particularly valuable in practice-oriented fields (such as education, administration, public administration, and social work) (Starman, 2013). In general, this research method can also be used to answer 'what', 'how' and 'why' questions and to identify and see the details that make up a situation, to develop possible explanations and to evaluate a situation (Gall, at al., 2007). Explanatory case study was adopted in this study. Explanatory case study is used to give information about a situation, to make unfamiliar situations familiar and to explain the connections about real life situations (Yılmaz, 2014). In this direction, the focus of the research process was on how the phenomenon is conceptualized with the help of metaphor and the problems related to this distance education process were tried to be deeply examined by referring to student views through metaphor. Using metaphor is a very powerful simile method. Because one goes beyond mere analogy and equates two objects that are actually unrelated on the surface. By doing this, it often forces the reader to consider some aspects of the main object that they would not be aware of without this powerful equating process (Shank, 2008). Therefore, case study design was used in this study to reveal the meanings that secondary school students attribute to distance education during the pandemic period and the foundations that cause these meanings.

### Study Group

The study group of the research was determined using the purposeful sampling method. Because purposeful sampling methods are useful in researching, explaining and discovering events and facts in many cases (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). Criterion sampling was preferred among the purposeful sampling types. In this sampling, people, events, facts or objects with certain qualities are included in the study (Büyüköztürk, et al., 2014). In this context the study group of this research, which was carried out to determine the perceptions of secondary school students about the concept of emergency distance education in the pandemic process through metaphors, consisted of 322 students studying at five different secondary schools in Hatay in the 2020-2021 academic year. However, only 300 student forms were included in the analysis. The metaphors formed by the study group were examined and answers that did not have the feature of metaphors or metaphors that were not meaningful because their reason was not explained were not included in the study. So, the forms of the other 22 students were considered invalid.

In the selection of the study group, secondary school students receiving distance education were chosen. Because purposeful sampling increases the efficiency of the research, in order to provide data diversity, the students to participate in the application were selected from rural, district and central schools. For this reason, the number of participating students has been high. In addition, students from all levels of secondary school were selected, and thus more comprehensive data were obtained. Of the participants 68 students are 5th graders, 47 students are 6th graders, 46 students are 7th graders and 139 students are 8th graders. Of the participants 144 students are male and 156 students are female.

### Data Collection Tool

The research data were collected by the Turkish language teachers in the classes participating in the research during the Turkish courses after face-to-face training began on 2 March 2021. First of all, the teachers who would collect the data were informed about the metaphors by the researcher and a meeting was held on how to do the application. Before the research data were collected, the study group was informed about the metaphors and how the application would be carried out was explained by their Turkish language teachers during the lesson. After giving information about what metaphor was and sample metaphors, the research data were collected giving the sentence "Distance education is like...because...". In this study in order to reveal the students' metaphors on distance education, each participant was provided with the following metaphorical perception statement: "A Distance Education is like... because..." to collect the data through metaphors. Students were asked to complete this statement using only one metaphor which evoke and express distance education and to explain the reason of their metaphor. After the students filled in the sentence, the teacher collected the papers. No time limit was made during the application. However, the procedure took approximately 15 minutes in all classes. The researcher participated in this application as an observer. It was emphasized that participation in the application was voluntary and a parent approval form was received from the parents of the students before the application. It has been explained that the credentials of the participating students will not be requested and the collected data will only be used for scientific purposes.

### Data Analysis

Data were evaluated using content analysis technique. The main purpose of content analysis is to reach concepts and relationships that can explain the data obtained (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013).

The analysis and interpretation of the metaphors developed by the students were carried out in five stages. These stages are determined as naming, classification, category development, providing validity and reliability, and computerizing the data. These stages were determined by adapting the order to be followed in Yıldırım and Şimşek's (2013) content analysis.

### Naming stage

The obtained data were examined separately by two researchers. Firstly, the metaphors put forward by the students were numbered according to their grade, gender and order in the data list. If a student is female (F) and 5 grader (5), it is encoded as 5F1 according to its order in the data list. At this stage, the metaphors formed by the study group were examined and metaphors that did not have the feature of metaphors or whose reasons were not explained were not included in the analysis. In this context, a total of 322 students participated in the application. But 300 metaphors were analyzed. 22 metaphors have been excluded.

### Classification stage

At this stage, the metaphors were examined one by one by two researchers and the metaphors were analyzed in terms of the relationship between the subject of the metaphor, the source of the metaphor, and the subject and source of the metaphor. Within this framework, metaphors held by students and their analogy were classified. While classifying the metaphors, common themes were considered and they were given in a table with their frequencies.

### Category development stage

Metaphors were examined by two experts in terms of common features that students have regarding the concept of "distance education in the pandemic period". During this process, a list of 300 metaphors was created. How each metaphor is conceptualized the phenomenon of distance education was examined and a total of three different conceptual categories were created by associating the analogy of each metaphor with a specific theme. These metaphors were classified in to three categories as positive metaphor, negative metaphor and neutral metaphor. Some of the same metaphors are grouped under different categories. This is because the description of the metaphor is appropriate for the relevant category. For example, "water" metaphor was included in the positive category in one example, while in another example it was included in the negative category due to the reason presented by the student. The sentences related to this example are presented below as negative and positive, respectively:

*"Distance education is like water because it flows like water and nothing is memorable." (8F87)*

*"Distance education is like water because it is vital in this process." (8M238)*

Example positive, negative and neutral metaphors are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample table for positive, negative, neutral categories, metaphors, codes and their frequencies

Category	Metaphor	Code	Frequency
Positive	Medicine	Making us healthy	7
Negative	Balloon	beautiful outside but empty inside	6
Neutral	Umbrella	used only when necessary	1

### Providing validity and reliability stage

The detailed explanation of how the results are achieved in the analysis of the created metaphors increases the reliability and validity of the research results. In addition, in the results of the study, it is very important for the validity and reliability of the research to give the content related to the metaphors produced by the participants with their own expressions, and to give the participants' gender and grade when stating quotes (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). In order to ensure the reliability of the study, the internal consistency coefficient was calculated. For this, all metaphors were analyzed and categorized independently by the researchers, and the reliability formula of Miles and Huberman (1994) [reliability = number of agreements/ (total number of agreements + disagreements)] was used to determine the consensus between the researchers. Agreement among researchers was calculated as 96% for distance education in the pandemic process. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), over 90% agreement is considered sufficient in terms of the reliability of the research.



### Transferring the data to the computer environment stage

After all, data were computerized, the number (*f*) and percentage (%) of the participants were calculated.

### Compliance with Ethical Rules

The necessary permissions were obtained from the institutions where the application was done. The necessary parent approval was obtained from the parents of the students to participate. Also, Ethics Committee Approval was received.

## FINDINGS

The metaphorical perceptions of students for the concept of distance education were classified and given in the Table 2, Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 2. *The classification of the metaphorical perceptions of students for the concept of distance education*

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Positive Metaphors	133	44.33
Negative Metaphors	147	49.00
Neutral Metaphors	20	6.67
Total	300	100.00

When we analyze Table 1, it shows that 49.00 % students produced negative metaphors, 44.33 % students produced positive metaphors and 6.67% students produced neutral metaphors.

Table 3. *The classification of the most dominant positive metaphors of the students for the concept of distance education in the pandemic process.*

Category	Metaphor	Code	Frequency
Positive	school	instructive	13
	godsend	solving problems like deus ex machina	9
		friend	being with them in hard times
	medicine	making us healthy	7
	light	lighting up the darkness	6
	book	conveying information	5
	life saver	saving our lives	5
	spare key	better than nothing	5
	exam	making you pass the class	4
	invention	making your lives easier	4
	vitamin	strengthening our immunity	4
	future	hoping	4
	first aid	with us when we need	4
	crutch	overcoming obstacles	4

mother	the ability to always help us	3
brain	useful if used correctly	2
remedy	heal us	2
successful student	working non-stop	2
holiday	both resting and learning	2
human	communication	2
sun	enlightenment	2
bread	vital nutrient	2
water	vital drink	2
air	being usefull	2
telephone	making you meet my loved ones	2
teacher	informative	2
candle	allows you to see ahead	2
fairy tale	both entertaining and instructive	2
assistant	life planning	2
love	what everybody needs	2
plane	quickly access the information	2
figurant	same as the original	2
chocolate	making you happy	2
oasis in desert	valuable	2
video talk	fulfilling our longing	2
brother	making me do my homework	2
sausage	very nice	1
computer game	making me amused	1
easy language	easy to learn	1
enjoyable chat	making me relax	1

When we analyze Table 3, it shows that the most dominant positive metaphor is school ( $f=13$ ). Others are given respectively; godsend (9), friend ( $f=8$ ), medicine ( $f=7$ ), light ( $f=6$ ), life saver ( $f=5$ ), and book ( $f=5$ ). Some statements including positive metaphors are given as an example below and each statement belongs to a different class level.

*"Distance education is like a light because it illuminates our darkness."*(5M176).

*"Distance education is like medicine, we both learn and stay healthy."*(6F153).

*"Distance education is like a friend because it's with us on bad days."*(7M167).

*"Distance education is like a brain because it is useful if used correctly."*(8F227).

*"Distance education is like a godsend because it solves our problems like deus ex machine immediately."* (8M9).

Table 4. *The classification of the most dominant negative metaphors of the students for the concept of distance education in the pandemic process.*

Category	Metaphor	Code	Frequency
Negative	stranger	understanding nothing	14
	parents' meeting	not being efficient at all	7
	balloon	beautiful outside but empty	6
		inside	
	boring lesson	drowsy	5
	toy	unnecessary	5

mind like a sieve	slippery	5
whatsapp	just used for texting	5
nostalgia	longing for the past	5
sad music	a reminder that you love	5
distance villages	no matter what you do, you can't reach	4
difficult lesson	incomprehension	4
impractical method	Consisting of impossibilities as internet, tablet and computer.	4
maths	containing unsolvable problems	4
unsalted meal	no taste	4
irrational thing	the closure of the schools is ridiculous	4
listening to radio	ineffective	4
deaf-mute	nothing is heard	3
broken phone	incomprehensible talks	3
writing on water	not permanent	3
cheetah	passing quickly without understanding	3
red light	not allowing to go to school	3
coach-potato	always sitting and eating	3
occupation	looking for but not finding	3
ticket for an aqua park	expensive	3
fairy tale	having nothing to do with reality	2
thief	stealing the future	2
electricity	its cutting off, end of everything	2
maze	inextricable	2
fast food	never satisfying	2
empty box	there is nothing in it	2
hill	difficult to climb and understand	2
rubbish	no use	2
wall	you do lessons by yourself	2
sea water	looking nice but salty	2
boring film	keep looking at the clock to finish	2
opera	boring	2
empty talk	forgotten in time	2
water	flowing like water and nothing is memorable	2
flower	hard to maintain	2
mummy	keeping us still	2
idle class	messy and noisy	2
unfavourable food	eating by force	2
tourist	not speaking the same language	1
difficult exam	annoying	1

The most dominant negative metaphor produced by the students is stranger ( $f=14$ ). Others are given respectively; parents' meeting ( $f=7$ ), balloon ( $f=6$ ), boring lesson ( $f=5$ ), toy ( $f=5$ ), mind like a sieve ( $f=5$ ). Some statements including negative metaphors are given as an example below and each statement belongs to a different class level.

*"Distance education is like fast food because it's never satisfying." (5M79).*

*"Distance education is like a balloon because it looks beautiful outside, but it's empty inside." (6M19).*

*"Distance education is like a stranger because you don't understand what you're talking about, what you're reading, so you don't understand anything."(7F3).*

*"Distance education is like a parents' meeting because it's not efficient at all."(8F139).*

*"Distance education is like an impractical method because it consists of impossibilities because most of us have no internet, tablet and computer." (7F41).*

*"Distance education is like an electricity because when it cuts off everything ends like internet." (5M72)*

*"Distance education is like a coach potato because we just sit and eat in front of the computer". (7F64).*

Table 5. *The classification of the most dominant neutral metaphors of the students for the concept of distance education in the pandemic process.*

Category	Metaphor	Code	Frequency
Neutral	human	having both good and bad sides	4
	obligation	necessary for the reopening of schools	4
	exam	a mandatory stage of education	3
	walnut	hard to break but nice to eat	1
	umbrella	used only when necessary	1
	television	just watching	1
	teenager	do your own way	1
	painting	meaning depends on the person	1
	both punishment and reward	changes person to person	1
	unknown device	takes time to get used to	1

The most dominant neutral metaphors are given respectively; human ( $f=4$ ), obligation ( $f=4$ ), and exam ( $f=3$ ). Some statements including neutral metaphors are given as an example below and each statement belongs to a different class level.

*"Distance education is like an umbrella because it is used when it is necessary." (5M136)*

*"Distance education is an obligation because it is necessary for schools to reopen" (6F131)*

*"Distance education is like an exam because it is a mandatory stage of education."(7F134).*

*"Distance education is like a teenager because he does his own way."(8F286).*

Table 6. *Frequency distribution of students' metaphors in respect to gender factor.*

Gender	Metaphor		Total
	Neutral Metaphors	Positive Metaphors	
Male	8	62	74

Female	12	71	73	156
<b>Total</b>	20	133	147	300

When we analyze Table 6, it shows that of the participants 73 female students have developed negative metaphors and 71 of which have produced positive metaphors. Among the male students, 74 students have developed negative metaphors and 62 students have developed positive metaphors. In this regard, male students (51.39%) have produced more negative metaphors than the female students (46.79%). In other words, female students developed more positive metaphors than male students.

Table 7. *Frequency distribution of students' metaphors in respect to class variables.*

Class level	Metaphor			Total
	Neutral Metaphors	Positive Metaphors	Negative Metaphors	
5th grade	4	34	30	68
6th grade	3	19	25	47
7th grade	4	20	22	46
8th grade	9	60	70	139
<b>Total</b>	20	133	147	300

Table 7 shows that while 34 students developed positive metaphors, 30 students developed negative metaphors among 5th grade students. Regarding to 6th graders 19 students developed positive metaphors, 25 students developed negative metaphors. When we look at the 7th grade students, 20 students developed positive metaphors, 22 students developed negative metaphors. And finally, 60 students developed positive metaphors while 70 students developed negative metaphors among 8th grade students. In this context, the highest rate of positive metaphors for the concept of distance education (50%) were developed by the 5th grade students but other grades developed positive metaphors at the similar rates (40-44%). If we look at it from another viewpoint, the highest rate of negative metaphors for the concept of distance education (53.19%) were developed by the 6th grade students but other grades developed negative metaphors at the similar rates (44-50%).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in this study it was seen that the participants developed 300 valid metaphors. As a result of the content analysis which was applied in this study, it was concluded that students reflect 133 positive perceptions, 147 negative perceptions and 20 neutral perceptions. In the direction of these results, it may be said that the greater part of the students have negative points of view to distance education in the pandemic period. According to negative metaphors, distance education is not effective and does not provide permanent learning. According to positive metaphors, distance education is a new teaching system that meets our needs using technology during the pandemic period. According to neutral metaphors, distance education is a mandatory stage of education in the pandemic process.

In terms of the negative perceptions obtained, it was concluded that distance education is not desired by the student due to reasons such as lack of internet, lack of technological tools, and high cost. In addition, it was determined that the majority of the students had difficulty in using distance education and found it boring due to the fact that distance education is a system that they are not used to. In addition, it was determined that their longing for their friends, teachers and schools negatively affected their perspective on distance education. This finding overlaps the previous studies' findings on the perceptions of secondary school students for the concept of distance education done by Kaynar, at al. (2020). Kaynar, at al. (2020) in their studies on the views of secondary school students on distance education, they stated that student perception is negatively affected by problems such as the type of school the students are enrolled in, their love for school, the channel with which they follow distance education, having problems connecting to the internet, and having problems entering the EBA system. They also stated that face-to-face training is more useful than distance learning. At the same time, they also emphasized that students believe that distance education is useful due to the process, and that they regularly follow the lessons. Pinar and Dönel Akgül (2020), as a result of their study on students' views on providing science lessons with distance education during the Covid-19 process, stated that students found distance education useful due to the process and enabled distance education lessons to repeat and reinforce science subjects. However, they stated that not being able to experiment was also a major deficiency and they preferred education in school in terms of one-to-one trainings and experimenting in the school. As a result of the study conducted by Karalı, at al. (2020) on the opinions of parents and students regarding the problems in distance education in primary schools during the pandemic period, it was observed that parents expressed more distance education problems than students. They stated that there are problems arising from the Education Information Network (EBA), lack of internet package, lack of technological tools and lack of information. Abasli and Jafarova (2020) worked with teachers and students on their perceptions of distance education through metaphors and found the results that the concept of distance education is a symbol of despair for both teachers and students. In her study, Üçel (2020) emphasized that the majority of university students are dissatisfied with the distance education process and prefer face-to-face education. They also noted that students experienced various technical problems in this process, and therefore the efficiency of education decreased. Can and Köroğlu (2020) stated in their study that inequalities in society have deepened through children, and for disadvantaged groups, the consequences of this inequality risk are exacerbating, such as school dropouts and violence. Başaran, at al. (2020) stated that there are deficiencies in distance education in the pandemic process, such as limited interaction, inability of students to participate actively in the course, lack of compliance with individual differences and technical failures. Alsoud and Harasis (2021) emphasized that students from remote and disadvantaged areas primarily faced enormous challenges such as technological accessibility, poor internet connectivity, and harsh study environments in their study on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on student's e-learning experience in Jordan. Kaya and Işık (2021) stated that the majority of the students were not satisfied with the distance education system and they expected to return to the formal education system as soon as possible.

In terms of the positive perceptions obtained, it was determined that students think that distance education is a savior during this pandemic process, it is a very important tool that enables them to continue their unfinished education, and enables them to communicate with their teachers and friends. Another result of the positive perceptions is female students developed a bit more positive metaphors than male students. This finding overlaps the previous studies' findings on the perceptions of primary school students for the concept of distance education done by Şentürk,

at al. (2020). Şentürk, at al. (2020), in their study on the views of primary school students on distance education, determined that the distance education perceptions of the majority of the students are positive and especially female students have positive views on distance education compared to male students. Altun Ekiz (2020) examined student views on distance education applied during the pandemic process and noted that most of the participants stated that distance education is a system that provides convenience and they are satisfied with the fact that distance education can be viewed again regardless of time and place. In their study, Sarıtaş and Barutçu (2020) stated that students took a positive attitude towards the transfer of teaching activities to online environments due to the pandemic. Again in her study, Şendoğan (2020) stated that the findings of the study showed that a large majority of learners were pleased with the distance English education and added the strongest aspect of distance learning was that it was flexible because it allows students to observe the lessons separately from time to time. Buluk and Eşitti (2020) emphasized that especially male students find distance education courses more effective and more satisfied in their study on evaluation of distance learning by tourism undergraduate students in the process of coronavirus.

Moreover, in terms of class variables, 5th grade students developed more positive metaphors than the other graders. But when we look at the other class levels, the rate of developing positive metaphor (40,43 & 43%) approximates each other.

As long as the pandemic continues, distance education applications will continue. The Covid-19 pandemic has not yet ended and the World Health Organization (2021) is now talking about the delta variant scenarios of the epidemic. In this context, the problems experienced by students and their perceptions should be evaluated and taken into account in solving the problems experienced in this process. Issues that negatively affect student perceptions such as technical deficiencies, lack of tablet, phone or computer, internet and power outages should be eliminated. In addition, it is recommended that the books and materials used in the lessons be adapted to the enriched content and digital environment in order to avoid the problem that students find distance education lessons boring. Therefore, the Ministry of National Education should invest in developing a flexible education system that supports electronic and distance learning for the future of the education system.

Moreover, it has been revealed that distance education during the pandemic process negatively affects the psychology of students, and to solve this, psychological support units that students can easily reach should be established. Consequently, improvements can be made in distance education practices by considering students' perceptions. It is believed that this study will shed light on distance education studies in the future.

This study is limited to the opinions of secondary school students. Research can be repeated with the participation of students at other levels.

**Credit Authorship Contribution Statement:**

**Müjgan Bekdaş:** Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Methodology, Software, Writing- Original draft preparation, Validation, Writing- Reviewing and Editing, Supervision.

**Nurullah Karaoğulları:** Investigation, Validation, Observation, Formal analysis, Methodology.

**Ethics Committee Report:** This study was approved by the ethics committee with the decision numbered 13 at the meeting numbered 08, dated 08.02.2021, of Malatya Turgut Özal University Non-Interventional Research Ethics Committee Presidency.

**Conflict of Interest Statement:** The authors have not declared any conflict of interest.

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