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Distance Education During the Covid-19 Pandemic: Metaphorical Beliefs of Turkish Teachers

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Abstract: This is one of the first studies to look at beliefs through metaphors created by teacher working at Turkish schools about the concept of “distance education during Covid-19 pandemic”. The study sample consisted of 120 teachers who were currently working in 27 different provinces of Turkey. Participants were recruited using convenience sampling. The current study utilizes an interpretative phenomenological approach to gain insights into distance education period. The data were collected through a semi-structured form and qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the data. Teachers produced 44 different metaphors (85 in total). These metaphors were grouped under categories according to common qualities. The conceptual categories were ranked based on their frequency. The findings indicated that the categories for distance education were “Distance education as one-way activity, distance education as a simulation, distance education as temporary service, distance education bad experience, distance education as a survivor, distance education as a vain activity, distance education as transition, distance education as mutual activity.” The following suggestions are based on the results: Teachers’ metaphoric perceptions of distance education should be used to develop better policies to implement during emergency times. Possible causes of negative metaphors should be addressed to reform distance education policies. To investigate the principles of distant education, future studies should employ diverse research methodologies and recruit larger groups of participants from other places. Future studies should focus on mainly students’ perceptions or other stakeholders to attain larger audiences.

Keywords: Distance education, Covid-19 pandemic, Turkish teachers, emergency distance education, metaphors.

Highlights

What is already known about this topic:

- The Covid-19 pandemic, also known as the coronavirus pandemic, is an ongoing outbreak which has been affecting all the people and institutions worldwide throughout the unprecedented year of 2020.
- After the first Covid-19 case, based on the official statement of the Ministry of National Education of Turkey (MoNE), all schools in the country were closed from March 16, 2020, and face to face education was transformed into distance education.
- There is a significant number of studies on the views of students, parents and administrators who had been experienced emergency distance education but very limited studies on teachers’ opinions.

What this paper contributes:

- This study specifically focused on teachers’ views who had been exposed to emergency distance education.
- Earlier studies mostly focused on previous emergency distance practices and particularly some research was published at a very early stage that it should be because of some academic concerns.



- In this study, to achieve accurate data, teachers who had long conducted the distance education were interviewed.
- This study also gives some ideas and clues to the educational authorities and policy makers how to act in emergency situations about distance education.

Implications for theory, practice and/or policy:

- Teachers' metaphoric perceptions of distance education should be used to develop better policies to implement during emergency times.
- Possible causes of negative metaphors should be addressed to reform distance education policies.

Introduction

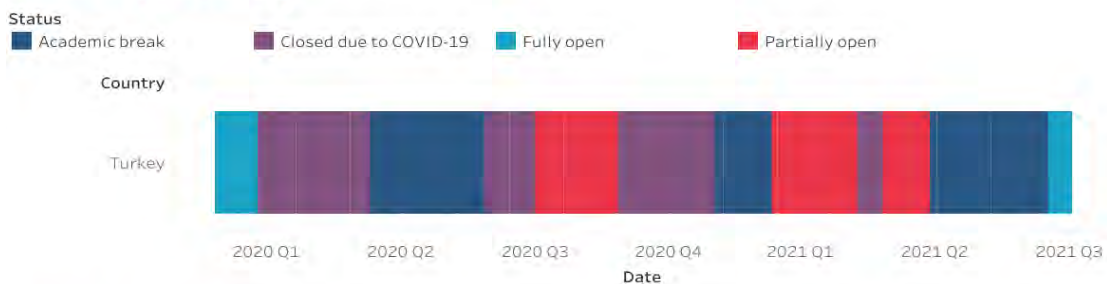
The Covid-19 pandemic, also known as the coronavirus pandemic, is an ongoing outbreak which has been affecting all the people and the institutions worldwide throughout the unprecedented year of 2020. Shortly after the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world, governments made drastic decisions affecting all aspects of social life, including travel restrictions, school closures and nationwide lockdown. Distance learning and teaching has suddenly become the new normal of the education community. Covid-19 was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organization on January 30, 2020, and virtually all educational activities at all levels of schooling have begun to be conducted remotely. According to (UNESCO, 2020), this decision has affected at least 1,268,164,088 learners or 72.4% students from 177 countries. This was not the first time that an epidemic hit the world. Similarly, school and university closures occurred in China during the 2003 epidemic of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or in short form SARS. In Hong Kong for example, 1,302 schools were closed, 1,000,000 children stayed at home, and 50,600 instructors had difficulties in using technology to educate their students (Fox, 2007).

After the first Covid-19 case, based on the official statement of Ministry of National Education of Turkey (MoNE), all schools in the country were closed from March 16, 2020, and face to face education was transformed into distance education. Because the World Bank forecasts that worldwide school closures will cost this generation at least US \$10 trillion in lifetime earnings (World Bank, 2020). With school closures, sustaining education through alternate venues has become increasingly important in Turkey. (Özer, 2020). Soon after, there has been appeared a huge conflict among educators to transform all their educational activities -no matter what they teach- into distance education platforms. Fortunately, MoNE had started years before FATİH project calling "Movement of Enhancing Opportunities and Improving Technology" which promotes equal opportunities in learning environments and improve the technological conditions in our schools. The FATİH Project, which began in 2010, intends to give equitable chances in education and the use of ICT technologies through practical courses that engage more of the senses; more precisely, the final goal is to improve school creativity (Milla et al., 2019). As a part of this project, Educational Informatics Network (EBA) platform designed to serve all k12 teachers and provides learning materials including curriculum-based videos, documents, e-books, tests, activities since 2011.

MoNE has agreed to conduct the courses via EBA and the national television channel-TRT as part of the distant education program (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation). 2020-2021 academic year started through broadcasting lessons as part of remote education to help stem the spread of the novel coronavirus from pre-school to high school. Although these efforts are defined as distance education, this period of life is described as Crisis-Prompted Temporary Distance Education by Bergdahl & Nouri (2020), because distance education is characterized as remote teaching and learning, in which the student is physically distant from the teacher (Rumble, 2019) while engaging in a scheduled learning activity (Holmberg, 2005). Additionally, the concept of emergency distance education differs from the concept of distance education. Distance education is a system that is planned, systematic and based

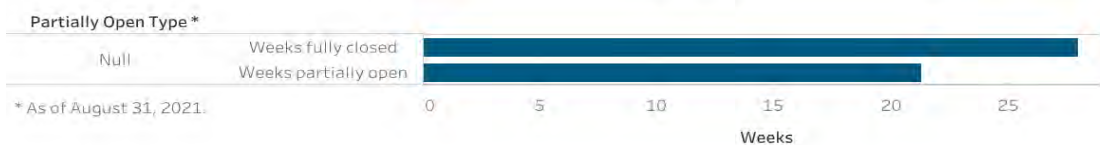
on strong theoretical foundations and can address certain learning cultures. Emergency distance education is the process of comparing distance learning activities with face-to-face education with the help of technological tools in times of crisis (Sezgin, 2021). In this respect, this is what is meant by the concept of distance education, which is emphasized throughout the research in order to use the terms correctly and the participants are asked to define it.

Status by Country



Data by Country

Country	Enrolment	School Age Population	Teachers
Turkey	17,885,248	20,423,371	1,069,252



Distance learning modalities *

* Top 3 channels by modality

TV	TV channel name(s)	TV channel link(s)
Yes	TRT EBA TV	https://www.eba.gov.tr/

Online	Online channel name(s)	Online channel link(s)
Yes	Remote Educational System	http://www.meb.gov.tr/uzaktan-egitimde-ilk-dersi-bakan-ziya-selcuk-verec..

Figure 1. Global monitoring of school closures caused by Covid-19

In Figure 1, World Bank Education Covid-19 School Closures Map indicates how long the schools remained closed in details, and the status of distance learning modalities in Turkey. As in many countries, it seems that schools are partially open or closed and this period was not less than 25 weeks in the country. Moreover, TRT EBA TV and Remote Educational System were top 3 channels by modality. Remote education modalities differ by countries, and it brings vital necessities with itself like internet connectivity, teacher preparedness, prior experience with the delivery system or quality of contents. Some reports provide rapid evidence about success and challenges of remote learning process from different countries (Ndaruhetsu et al., 2020; Rodriguez et. al, 2021).

Since the very beginning of the pandemic, various studies have been conducted to explain its effects on education. These studies were generally conducted on educational institutions (Kummitha et al., 2021), teachers (Ballova Mikušková & Verešová, 2020; Bergdahl & Nouri, 2020; Hebebcı et al., 2020; Karataş & Tuncer, 2020; Kirmizi & Altuğ, 2021; Moser et al., 2021; Ozkaral & Bozyigit, 2020; Sarier & Uysal, 2021; Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020), school principals (Constantia et al., 2021; Han et al., 2021), parents (Kaya & Dilekçi, 2021) and students (Adnan, 2020; Bozkurt, 2020b; El et al., 2021; Hebebcı et al., 2020; Suleyman, 2016.). The major findings of all these studies show us emergency distance education applications have various effects on all stakeholders of education. Teachers,

administrators and families were undoubtedly affected by this process as much as the students and stated that they were caught unprepared it. Some researchers focused on the changes and transformations of education policies and paradigms (Bozkurt, 2020a; Parlakkiliç, 2021; UNESCO, 2020; World Bank Education Covid-19 School Closures Map, 2020). Rodriguez et al. (2021) conducted a report about remote learning during the global school lockdown to synthesize the main national education actions deployed by a group of selected countries to mitigate learning losses. Alan (2021) used metaphors to find positive, negative, and neutral metaphors in academics' perceptions toward distant education. Positive metaphors were categorized into three groups, negative metaphors into six, and neutral metaphors into two groups.

Live classrooms allow teachers and students to communicate in meaningful ways, such as through asking, provoking, and reflective debate. These intricate classroom teaching abilities are not always possible to recreate in a distant setting. The review of the latest studies showed that a number of research conducted on the status of distance education (Ballová Mikušková & Verešová, 2020; Bergdahl & Nouri, 2020; El et al., 2021; Kirmizi & Altuğ, 2021; Kummitha et al., 2021). Unfortunately, none of the previous studies reported how teachers being affected and managed this process in Turkey. The very first attempt study which was published during the writing process of this article, Koçoğlu et al., (2021) focused on teachers' metaphorical perceptions and according to the findings of the study, 236 feasible metaphors were found and grouped into 10 categories. Another research was conducted by Yildiz, (2021) in which 278 metaphors were generated related to the concept of "being a teacher in Turkey during the pandemic period" and grouped into 12 categories.

Significance of the Study

Language serves as both a subject and a medium in practically all qualitative research approaches. It is mostly used as a material for referring to content outside of language, such as patterns of relationships, hidden meaning structures, communicative techniques, and so on. In this sense, metaphors appear as a convenient instrument in much research, especially in social sciences to explain the facts (Aspin, 1984; Cameron, 2003; Jensen, 2006). Therefore, this study traced the same path to examine the hidden thoughts and to uncover the meanings that teachers had faced during emergency distance education period.

The Covid-19 pandemic outbreak has flipped the world on its head. Therefore, educational facilities have undergone significant change, with the prominent advent of e-learning, in which teaching is delivered remotely and via digital platforms (Goswami, 2020). Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, the nations have been facing a learning crisis, now threatens to make education outcomes worse than ever. As of late April, schools have closed in 180 countries, and 85% of students worldwide were out of school (World Bank, 2020). Countries with ready infrastructure have tried to minimize learning losses by rapidly transitioning to distance education. As in many other countries, curiosity upon this situation in Turkey constitutes the main motivation of this research.

Right after the first cases appeared in Turkey, The Ministry of National Education has promptly closed the schools and introduced anti-coronavirus measures. Informative bulletins were distributed to students and parents. A free distance education infrastructure has been developed, which may be accessed at any time and from any location (Parlakkiliç, 2021). Although distance education was not widely used in formal education and training activities in Turkey until the Covid-19 epidemic, it has become compulsory to continue. In addition, the quality of distance education practices affects perceptions towards distance education (Demirbilek, 2021). Perceptions about distance education significantly affect learning outcomes and success (Offir et al., 2003; Zhang & Fulford, 1994). Various studies were conducted on the challenges encountered by teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders over the 1.5-year process of Covid-19 pandemic (Bektaş-Bedir & Bedir, 2021; Çokyaman & Ünal, 2021; Jensen, 2006; Kaleli Yılmaz & Güven, 2015; Kaya & Dilekçi, 2021; Kirmizi & Altuğ, 2021; Sarier & Uysal, 2021; Suleyman, 2016). However, the problems that teachers have been experiencing since the very beginning of this period has remained unexamined. Koçoğlu et al., (2021) and Yildiz (2021) were the

only attempt to figure out how teachers define this process by using metaphors. Both studies focused on teachers' views and enclosed regional aspects however this study tried to reach out almost all parts of the country and collected the data from 27 different provinces of Turkey. Data collection period has intentionally been extended to collect concrete and solid data which makes the results stronger. Additionally, considering the rising tension to get proper technological infrastructure and good-quality distance education among teachers, and all above-mentioned concerns, this study has a great significance as determining teachers' metaphors about the notion of distance education and revealed different characteristics of their mental images.

Aim of the Study and Research Question

This study aimed to determine teachers' metaphorical perceptions of "distance education during Covid-19." As a result, the study desired answers to the following questions:

- a. What kind of metaphors do teachers' have for "distance education during Covid-19"?
- b. Under what conceptual categories are teachers' metaphors based on their justifications?

Method

Research Model

The aim of this qualitative study was to determine teachers' metaphorical images about "distance education during Covid-19 pandemic. Jensen, (2006) investigated the epistemological legitimacy of metaphor analysis as a feasible method for qualitative educational research and discovered that metaphors play an important role in educational theory and practice. He divided the metaphors into four categories: active, inactive, dead, and fundamental. This article focuses on dead and fundamental metaphors, although it may also contain an examination of active and inactive metaphors, in which participants are asked to assign metaphors to their experiences. This paper studied to explore research contexts at teacher level.

Participants and procedure

The study sample consisted of 120 teachers who were currently working in 27 different provinces of Turkey. Participants were recruited using convenience sampling. Table 1 shows the participants' demographic characteristics.

Table 1. Demographics of participants

Variables		f	%
Gender	Male	51	42.50
	Female	69	57.50
Seniority	1-5 years	8	06.60
	6-10 years	23	19.16
	11-15 years	26	21.66
	16-20 years	22	18.33
	21≤	41	34.16
Type of School	Pre-school	8	06.66
	Primary School	45	37.50
	Secondary School High School	20	16.66
Level of Education	Undergraduate	47	39.16
	Graduate	93	77.50
	Total	27	22.50
		120	100

Of participants, 42.50% are male while 57.50% are female; 6.66% had between 1-5 years work experience, 19.16% had between 6-10 years, 21.66% had between 11-15 years, 18.33% had between 16-20 and 34.16% had between 21 years and over; 6.66% were working at pre-school, 37.50% were at

primary school, 16.66% were at secondary school and 39.16% were at high school; 77,50% were undergraduate and 22.50% were graduate (Table 1.).

Data Collection

The data were collected through a semi-structured form which consists of two parts. There were questions to determine the demographic characteristics of teachers in the first part. In the second part, to determine teachers' beliefs about distance education, they were asked to complete a semi-structured expression: “*Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like (a)....., (b) because (briefly explain why you feel like that)*”. According to (Roth, 1993), certain metaphors have a difficult to grasp structure that is accessible to several interpretations since they contain basic details based on distinct notions. In this sense, the most crucial yet hardest task is to understand the true meaning underlying metaphors. To address this issue, two open-ended questions were posed of teachers throughout the data collecting phase of this study. For the participants who could not meet face to face due to the outbreak, a Google form was generated, and most of the data were collected from there. The participants filled in a signed consent form. All the answers given constitute the main data set.

Data Analysis

Data analysis procedures consist of several stages (Creswell & Creswell, 2017);

- a. Organize and prepare the data for analysis: First, the metaphors were sorted and arranged in alphabetical order to see them clearly. 28 participants' responses were excluded from the analysis because they did not express any opinions.
- b. Read and look at all the data: This step provides a general view of the information and opportunity to see on its overall meaning. The classified metaphors rearranged, and the data were revised to categorize the metaphors. In addition, notes were gathered based on explanations written by teachers in response to the second question.
- c. Start coding of the data: This involves taking developed data, segmenting the metaphors into categories.
- d. Generate categories: Categories were generated for the concepts of “distance education” based on the participants' responses. These categories are the ones that appear as major finding in this research. The literature was reviewed to find similar studies to category development.
- e. Representing the categories: Categories will be represented using a narrative passage to convey the finding of the analysis.

Validity and Reliability: Patterns, similarities and common themes were found in the responses, which were then used to create coding categories. Each metaphor was examined for its qualities before being matched with other metaphors that shared the same traits. As coders, two distinct experts were contacted for the study's reliability. These two coders were then consulted to evaluate if the metaphors accurately described the categories, and the themes accurately represented the metaphors. Following that, the agreement rate between the coders was determined by the formula of Miles and Huberman (1994);

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{number of agreements}}{\text{total number of agreements} + \text{disagreements}} * 100$$

Table 2. Consistency Level between classification of metaphors conducted by the researcher and coders

Variable	Researcher	Coder 1	Coder 2
of metaphors in agreement by both researcher and coders	87	89	85
Reliability	94,5%	96,7%	92,3%

The internal reliability for the concepts of "distance education" was 94.5%, 96.7% and 92.3% respectively, showing acceptable dependability. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), a study is regarded reliable if the consistency rate is more than or equal to 90% and is provided by comparing classifications performed by two or more distinct field experts.

Findings

This part presents the participants' metaphorical perceptions of "distance education" and conceptual categories based on those metaphorical perceptions.

According to findings of the study, participants generated 44 different (85 in total) metaphors for the concept of "distance education". In Figure 2, metaphors produced by teachers are presented in the form of a word cloud according to their density.

**Figure 2.** Metaphors related to the concept of Distance Education

Figure 2 explains that 10 out of 44 metaphors (Watching movie, Artificial, Flower Computer, game, Oxygen, Monologue, Fast food, Echo, Aquarium, Balloon, Candle, Metaphor, Platonic Love, Pantomime, Snowflake, Torture, Picture, Cloud) were developed by teachers more than the other metaphors.

Table 3. Participants metaphors for the concept of distance education.

Metaphor	f	Metaphor	f	Metaphor	f
Watching a movie	7	Picture	3	Gate	1
Artificial Flower	4	Cloud	2	Iceberg	1
Computer game	4	Fairy-Tale	1	Marriage	1
Oxygen	4	Dentures	1	Milk the bull	1
Monologue	4	Arid Land	1	Mirror	1
Fast food	3	Bridge	1	Stick	1
Echo	3	Dead end	1	Pressure cooker	1
Aquarium	3	e-book	1	Salt-free food	1
Balloon	3	e-cigarette	1	Wind	1
Candle	3	Horror movie	1	Raindrop	1
Metaphor	3	Magic	1	Teeter-tooter	1
Platonic Love	3	Mirage	1	Tunnel	1
Pantomime	3	Friendship	1	Water	1
Snowflake	3	Hot pepper	1	Joke	1
Torture	3	Life buoy	1	Total	85

Table 3. shows that the participants generated 44 different (85 in total) metaphors for the concept of “distance education”. 28 participants did not express any opinion and 7 of the statements were determined they were not metaphors, so 35 participants responses were not included in Table 3. The most common metaphors respectively were *watching a movie/view* ($f=7$), *artificial flower* ($f=4$), *monologue* ($f=4$), *computer game* ($f=4$), *oxygen* ($f=4$), *aquarium* ($f=3$), *balloon* ($f=3$) (Table 3).

Table 4. shows the conceptual categories for the participants’ metaphorical perceptions regarding the concept of “distance education” depending on their justification, and literature review.

Table 4. The conceptual categories for the participants’ metaphorical perceptions

Conceptual Categories	Metaphors	f	%
1. Distance education as one-way activity	watching movie (7), monologue (4), pantomime (3), computer game (4), echo (3), platonic love (3), mirror (1).	25	29.41
2. Distance education as a simulation	artificial flower (4), aquarium (3), fast food (3), e-book (1), e-cigarette (1), metaphor (3), picture (3), mirage (1), iceberg (1).	20	23.52
3. Distance education as temporary service	balloon (3), candle (3), cloud (2), dentures (1), joke (1), raindrop (1), snowflake (3), water (1), wind (1).	16	18.82
4. Distance education as bad experience	torture (3), horror movie (1), hot pepper (1), pressure-cooker (1), food without salt (1).	7	8.23
5. Distance education as a survivor	oxygen (4), lifebuoy (1), magic (1), stick (1).	7	8.23
6. Distance education as vain activity	arid land (1), dead end (1), milk the bull (1), fairy tale (1).	4	4.70
7. Distance education as transition.	Bridge (1), gate (1), tunnel (1).	3	3.52
8. Distance education as mutual activity	Friendship (1), marriage (1), teeter-tooter (1).	3	3.52
	Total	85	100

Participants’ metaphors for “distance education” were grouped under eight conceptual categories; “Distance education as one-way activity, distance education as a simulation, distance education as temporary service, distance education bad experience, distance education as a survivor, distance education as a vain activity, distance education as transition, distance education as mutual activity.”

While the conceptual category of *distance education as one-way activities* are consisted of 7 different metaphors (25 in total; 29.41%); *distance education as simulation* are of 9 different metaphors (20 in total; 23.52%); *distance education as temporary service* are of 9 different metaphors (16 in total; 18.81%); *distance education as bad experience* are of 5 different metaphors (7 in total; 8.23%); *distance education as a survivor* are of 4 different metaphors (7 in total; 8.23%); *distance education as vain activity* are of 4 different metaphors (4 in total; 4.70%); *distance education as transition* are of 3 different metaphors (3 in total; 3.52%); *distance education as mutual activity* are of 3 different metaphors (3 in total; 3.52%).

The following quotations are from the participants concerning the conceptual categories of “*distance education as one-way activities; distance education as simulation; distance education as temporary service; distance education as bad experience; distance education as a survivor; distance education as vain activity; distance education as transition and distance education as mutual activity.*”

Conceptual category of distance education as one-way activities

25 participants generated 7 different metaphors on the concept of distance education in this category. These are as follows respectively, watching movie (7), monologue (4), pantomime (3), computer game (4), echo (3), platonic love (3), mirror (1). Some samples are given below:

T116: “*Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like watching a movie because you can only see and hear that, not touch or feel.*”

T112: “*Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like a computer game because there is little physical interaction.*”

T94: “*Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like monologue because students would turn to ghosts.*”

Conceptual category of distance education as simulation

20 participants generated 9 different metaphors on the concept of distance education in this category. These are as follows respectively, artificial flower (4), aquarium (3), fast food (3), e-book (1), e-cigarette (1) metaphor (3), picture (3), mirage (1), iceberg (1). Some samples are given below:

T119: “*Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like an artificial flower because it is not alive, you cannot, touch, smell or feel, that is just an image.*”

T59: “*Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like reading an e-book or vaping because they fulfill their function but do not taste the same.*”

T20: “*Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like an aquarium because it seems real but not original. As much as you can fit inside the screen, but is the ocean like that? It contains much, much more, originality, creativity, movement, and many other beauties that we can't count yet.*”

Conceptual category of distance education as temporary service

16 participants generated 9 different metaphors on the concept of distance education in this category. These are as follows respectively, balloon (3), candle (3), cloud (2), dentures (1), joke (1), raindrop (1), snowflake (3), water (1), wind (1). Some samples are given below:

T87: “*Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like a balloon because when you meet the students in the classrooms again, you would witness that all the courses you did have disappeared.*”

T99: “*Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like a candle because the effect is short-lived.*”

T35: “*Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like a snowflake because the moment you want to see it up close, it disappears.*”

Conceptual category of distance education as bad experience

7 participants generated 5 different metaphors on the concept of distance education in this category. These are as follows respectively, torture (3), horror movie (1), hot pepper (1), pressure-cooker (1), food without salt (1). Some samples are given below:

T38: "Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like torture because there is no technical infrastructure, preparation or readiness at all."

T52: "Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like a horror movie because you are constantly tense throughout the process, and you can never predict what the result will be."

T120: "Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like a pressure-cooker because if you can't regulate the heat, the results can be very dangerous."

Conceptual category of distance education as a survivor

7 participants generated 4 different metaphors on the concept of distance education in this category. These are as follows respectively, oxygen (4), lifebuoy (1), magic (1), stick (1). Some samples are given below:

T68: "Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like oxygen because even if it is not enough, it keeps the patient alive."

T84: "Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like a lifebuoy because it came to our rescue in our most difficult moment."

T90: "Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like a magic because suddenly appeared and contributed a lot to both teachers and students."

Conceptual category of distance education as vain activity

4 participants generated 4 different metaphors on the concept of distance education in this category. These are as follows respectively, arid land (1), dead end (1), milk the bull (1), fairy tale (1). Some samples are given below:

T103: "Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like arid land because no matter what you sow, you will not get additional yield."

T111: "Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like a dead-end because all efforts are just counting in place."

T40: "Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like fairy-tale because there is no control, no assurance whether the students could understand the lessons or not."

Conceptual category of distance education as transition

3 participants generated 3 different metaphors on the concept of distance education in this category. These are as follows respectively, Bridge (1), gate (1), tunnel (1). Some samples are given below:

T40: "Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like a bridge because it enables both teachers and students to reach out education."

T92: "Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like a gate because"

Conceptual category of distance education as mutual activity

3 participants generated 3 different metaphors on the concept of distance education in this category. These are as follows respectively, Friendship (1), marriage (1), teeter-totter (1). Some samples are given below:

T53: "Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like a friendship because without the unity of the hearts, it cannot progress.

T89: "Distance education during Covid-19 pandemic is like a marriage because it requires mutual sacrifices."

Results Discussions Suggestions

This study examined the beliefs through metaphors developed by teachers working at Turkish schools about the concept of "distance education during Covid-19 pandemic". The following interpretations are given in light of the qualitative findings obtained in this section of the study. Eight conceptual categories were generated in this study. These categories are "Distance education as one-way activity, distance education as a simulation, distance education as temporary service, distance education bad experience, distance education as a survivor, distance education as a vain activity, distance education as transition, distance education as mutual activity." There is very limited research in the literature (Ballová Mikušková & Verešová, 2020; Bergdahl & Nouri, 2020; El et al., 2021; Kirmizi & Altuğ, 2021), since there has not been a pandemic in which education has been so restricted and mass school closures have occurred recently. The categories and metaphors obtained from this study are similar to the results of studies on distance education during Covid-19 pandemic.

While 25 participants defined this process mostly as "simulation", 20 of them explained it as "one-way activity", so they expressed the feeling of loneliness they had. Similarly, Ballová Mikušková & Verešová, (2020) stated that during the pandemic period, the negative emotions of teachers increased while positive emotions decreased. Bergdahl and Nouri (2020) investigated the transition from conventional to remote teaching in Swedish schools' forces by Covid-19, and the study found that some teachers set aside time to prepare with colleagues, while others were left to their own devices with little or no assistance. El et al., (2021) sought to research and evaluate the initial experience of faculty members and students with distant learning at a university. They stated that while staff and students were pleased with the institution's readiness for distant education and believed in its benefits and prospects, they were concerned about the obstacles that distance learning faces. This situation can be interpreted as the infrastructure and human resources of higher education institutions are more ready for the transition to the distance education process. Similarly, in Turkey, 121 of 189 (64%) public universities began remote education one week after institutions closed, 41 (21.6%) began two weeks later, and 25 (13.2%) began three weeks later (Sahin et al., 2020).

While 16 participants perceived this situation as temporary service, 3 of them adopted as transition, and it will end up soon. Karataş and Tuncer (2020) investigated the impact of Emergency Distance Education on the development of language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) of Turkish pre-service teachers of English as a foreign language, concluding that the onset of Covid-19 created an unsustainable climate for all educational systems by jeopardizing educational quality. The pandemic's emergency conditions inhibited the realization of the right to an education. Another study showed that teacher candidates could not have felt any "student-teacher" relationship because they could have seen the teacher only from the screen and not have communicated competently (Kaleli Yilmaz & Güven, 2015). The inability of the classroom interaction (teacher-student interaction), which is one of the most important elements of education, to be at the desired level raises questions about the sustainability of this situation, especially in K12 schools.

7 participants were placed in "bad experiences" and 4 of them were in "vain activity" conceptual categories by using the metaphors such as "torture, horror movie, hot pepper, pressure-cooker, food without salt" or "dead end, fairy tale". Koçoğlu et al., (2021) also found the metaphors like "fear, worry, flu, death, mask, infectiousness, loneliness and problem. According to the analogies produced by teachers, it is doubtless that distance education is perceived as negative experience. Similarly, Bektaş-Bedir & Bedir (2021) aimed to determine the metaphors that teacher candidates created for Covid-19 and the majority of the metaphors created by the teacher candidates were negative metaphors. In another study, teachers emphasized that distance education has some disadvantages such as less

interaction and productivity, insufficient infrastructure and technical problems, less equality of opportunity. (Hebebcı et al., 2020). Moser et al., (2021) states that despite reporting well-designed courses, preK-12 instructors and those with no prior experience with online teaching were the least sure that instructional goals were reached. Cantürk & Cantürk (2021) found that teachers produced metaphors mostly under “interaction issues and requirements” categories. Additionally, the availability of data packages and Internet networks, as well as ownership of cellular phones or laptops, are required for the implementation of online learning during Covid-19. Students must have them for all instructional activities to go successfully (Rasmitadila et al., 2020). Although the epidemic has seriously affected education, teachers have faced serious problems not only in their school life but also in their private lives, considering the human dimensions of the situation. In Turkey, in addition to coping with distance education, teachers had to deal with the social and psychological challenges of the epidemic in their personal lives (Sahin et al., 2020). In another study on university students, 81 negative metaphors were generated, and these were mostly related to teaching process, usefulness, student situation, assessment and evaluation (Aksoy, et.al., 2021).

According to the 7 participants, distance education practices are survivor. The virtual teaching and learning tools provide new opportunities and experiences for both teachers and learners. Kirmizi & Altuğ (2021), aimed to determine the views of primary school teachers who use the EBA virtual environment during the Covid-19 pandemic in Turkey. According to the participants, EBA enabled the education process to continue uninterrupted and teachers were able to reach their students directly. Students improved their technology use skills thanks to their efforts to connect to EBA. Similarly, Kaleli Yılmaz & Güven (2015) found that distance education promoted the use of technology in education and raised the ability of using web 2.0 tools of school administrators, teachers, parents and students. Some other studies supported that online learning/teaching helped both teachers and learners it was manageable, and students could conveniently access teachers and teaching materials (Andrade-Vargas et al., 2021; Mukhtar et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020).

The study highlighted the presence of having different ideas and struggles among Turkish teachers. These findings also highlight the presence of a caveat in the implementation of distance education practices and educational policies in the emergency times. All the initiatives and decisions are developed at the Ministry of National Education and presented to the schools. This study shows us teachers have no or very limited involvement in the development of these practices, yet they are the ones who have been struggling with all elements of this process. The findings ship us the reconsideration of the ideas how we are ready to implement distance education during emergency times.

This study determined teachers’ mental images of “*distance education during Covid-19*” through metaphors. Metaphors are highly effective tools for determining mental perceptions. The following are suggestions based on the results:

- i. Teachers’ metaphoric perceptions of distance education should be used to develop better policies to implement during emergency times.
- ii. Possible causes of negative metaphors should be addressed to reform distance education policies.
- iii. To investigate the principles of distant education, future studies should employ diverse research methodologies and recruit larger groups of participants from other places.
- iv. Future studies should focus on mainly students’ perceptions or other stakeholders to attain larger audiences.

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