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Elementary School Students' Opinions on the Internet: A Phenomenological Analysis

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the students' opinions through metaphors on the Internet. Phenomenology is used as the research design. In the study, there are 110 participants and convenience sampling technique was used. Data were collected through open-ended questions from the participants. Analysis of the data was completed through content analysis. Codes and themes are used. The purpose of the study is to find if students are producing abstract and negative concepts or ideas about the internet or not. According to developmental psychology, they cannot think abstract.

Keywords: internet; opinions about internet; student opinions; phenomenology;

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the students' opinions through metaphors on the Internet. According to Saban (2014) in recent years, there is an increase in researches about the metaphor studies. This study is not about what the internet is, but it is about the internet means to students and why. Within this context, explaining the perception of internet for students through metaphors, this study provides a significant clue for these metaphors can be used as a probe (Saban, 2008). In this study, the two questions are connected to each other:

- What do you think is the internet? Why

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

According to Yildirim and Simsek (2013), phenomenology pattern focuses on events in a way that are not understood in detail and are not explained but realized. Phenomenology describes facts and how sense in the mind is made (Saban, 2014).

3. Participants

In this study, convenience sampling technique was used. Research mandatory "Information Technology and Software" course was held with the participation of 110 students that are at the 5th, 6th, 7th and grade in the X Middle School.

4. Data collection method

The data were collected using open-ended questions. The participants were asked to describe definitions in their minds about the internet through metaphor and were asked to write why they think. Since the last quarter of the 20th century there have been several investigations using metaphors (Yildirim & Simsek, 2013). Students' opinions about internet that provide information to grow very quickly was deemed appropriate to be taken through metaphors (Oktan, 2015). In the study, 24 different metaphors are used.

5. Data analysis technique

Analysis of the data was completed through content analysis. According to Yildirim & Simsek (2013), the purpose of content analysis is to achieve the concept and relationship of the explanations and the data collected. The data are encoded, then themes are found, code and data are organized and findings are reviewed. The collected data are classified into two separate themes. They were named as "Positive" and "Negative". There are two codes (common characteristics of the category) in forming two themes. All metaphors used are listed with their percentages in Table 1.

Table 1 Metaphors, Frequencies and Percentages

Brain	11	10,00	Book	11	10,00
Life	10	9,09	Information source	10	9,09
Teacher	9	8,18	Information box	9	8,18
Friend	6	5,45	School	5	4,55
Mind	5	4,55	Cigarette	5	4,55
Person	4	3,64	Information cube	4	3,64
World	3	2,73	Encyclopedia	3	2,73
Library	2	1,82	Dictionary	2	1,82
Virtual world	2	1,82	Toy	2	1,82
Fun box	2	1,82	Scientist	1	0,91
Source of light	1	0,91	Death machine	1	0,91
Poison	1	0,91	Satan	1	0,91

6. Reliability and validity

Only to ensure the validity and reliability, comments by the researchers are supported by quotations from the opinions of the participants.

7. Results

Participants explained 20 different metaphors as "Positive" about the Internet. The first of the codes "The Object That Hosts Information" contains 16 metaphors. The second code, "Entertainment Tool" contains 4 metaphors. There are 4 metaphors in the theme that contains "Negative" opinions about the Internet. "Addictive Substance" code contains one metaphor. The code "The Entity that Damages" contains 3 different metaphors. More detail is provided in Table 2.

7.1. Positive opinions on the internet:

An object that contains information in it. The majority of the students has mentioned that an object that contains information in it. They use the internet for research purposes, especially their homework assignments. Internet is like a teacher, a brain to them.

"The Internet is like a teacher. Because it makes our lives the better, it shares any information with us, it teaches us everything. And of course it likes to share as a teacher."

"I think the Internet is like the brain. Because it helps us in our lives every day. It teaches us all the information we do not know. So the Internet is our lifeblood. "

Internet is a tool that entertains. Some of the students can see the internet as a tool that entertains, takes them outside the real life, like a friend.

The Internet is like a box of fun. Because, it opens us to the game, entertaining programs and it entertains us.

"Internet is like to friend that loves to share. Because the Internet information with us, helps us offer any information. Internet shares with us what we don't know. Even sometimes plays games with us."

Table 2. Themes of the Opinions about the Internet, Codes, Metaphors

Category Name	Participants f (%)	Codes f (%)	Metaphors (f)		
"Positive" Opinion on the Internet.	102 (92,73)	The Object that Hosts Information	Brain (11)		
			Book (11)		
			Life (10)		
			Information source (10)		
			Teacher (9)		
			Information Box (9)		
			School (5)		
			Mind (5)		
			Person (4)		
			Information cube (4)		
			World (3)		
			Encyclopedia (3)		
			Library (2)		
			Dictionary (2)		
			20 (83,3)		

		Scientist (1)
		Source of light (1)
		Friend (6)
	Entertainment Tools	Virtual world (2)
		Toy (2)
		Fun box (2)
		Death machine (1)
"Negative" Opinion on the Internet	8 (7,27)	The Entity that Damages
	4 (16,7)	Satan (1)
		Poison (1)
	Addictive Substance	Cigarette (5)

7.2 Positive on the internet

Internet is an entity that damages. Students who described internet as "entity that damages", also expressed their opinions on family.

"The Internet is a lethal machine. Because family bond is breaking. There are some communication problems between our family. Our success is decreasing. Family ties are breaking."

Internet makes addicts. The majority of students reporting negative opinion see the internet as addictive and difficult to escape.

"For me, the Internet is similar to cigarettes. If we play very extremely we are dependent. We can obtain bad friends and bad habits, so let's be careful and so we play the internet dose."

8. Discussion

In this study, "Positive Opinions on the Internet" is divided into two codes. The students have used the brain, book, life, information source, teacher, information box, school, mind, person, information cube, World, encyclopedia, library, dictionary, scientist and source of light metaphors for "The Object that Hosts Information". Students have used the virtual world, toys, fun box and friends metaphor for "Entertainment Tools".

In this study, "Negative" Opinions on the Internet" is divided into two codes. Internet is represented in three different metaphors such as "The Entity that Damages". They are death machine, poison and evil. Cigarette was used only as "Addictive Substance" code.

According Kasıkcı et al. (2014), the most important objective of students' Internet use is "school work" in Turkey (%92,6). This study confirms this information. The differentiation of the educational environment and students with the digital age, students have now turned to new sources of information (Elci, 2015).

According to Denizci (2009), the students see the internet as a friend; there are people who spend time playing games, learning software, obtaining information on the computer and people are becoming increasingly more isolated. Isolated students now see the internet as a friend.

According to Gulerarslan (2010), description of the devil "The Entity that Damages" as a metaphor for the students is because students are aware of the potential damages of Internet.

According to Yalcin (2003), internet may have negative connotations in people's minds. Parents think that children in puberty are affected by internet (Kuzu, 2011). Families want to protect children from the addictive features of internet.

As a result, students view the Internet as a guide, as an assistant. This study is based on the views of middle school students on the Internet.

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