DISTANCE EDUCATION FROM "IMPOSSIBLE" TO BE "POSSIBLE"

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Abstract

Distance education has been one of the hottest changes in the training sector last years. In an effort to understand and visualize this change, the authors of this paper have initiated a study that aimed to drive out the distance education students' metaphors in the last 5 years. The authors have distributed the "Distance Education Metaphor Analysis Survey" that comprised 35 items and captured information about distance education students' metaphors. First time in 2008, the questionnaire was distributed randomly to 120 university students in North Cyprus and Turkey. Same research study is repeated for the years 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012. Although students' metaphors were influenced by their way of life, their gender and their country; the "Impossible" metaphor was "out", and "Possible" metaphor was "in".

Keywords: distance education; metaphor; research; North Cyprus Students, Turkey Students

INTRODUCTION

Education is in the nature of all humans who are producing and transmitting the culture. All education applications have developed, parallel to the development of human beings. It can be said that Educational practices are going in the same road with the history of humanity. For example, in early stages, culture was transforming via informal process; however in an agricultural society, it was changing parallel to religion and management agencies (Başaran, 1994), where institutional structures were occurred in education. By the period of Industrial Society enlightenment; and social, political, and economic developments, importance of education was understood. Hence, it has been decided to be delivered to the people coming from all folks of life. According to all this necessities, as an alternative education, distance education took place in people's life. All the necessities of having new technological equipment and innovative method were subjects to lots of changes in people's life.

Today, telecommunication (In Greek language Tele means "between distances") has formed the basis of Information Society (Bell, 1998). Information Society is a network society in which knowledge is widely spread and continuously spread in a global scale; emphasizes the decisive concepts like flexibility, creativity and innovation (Birkök & Vuranok, 2010). What is necessary in the information society is: to reach the correct and complete knowledge. After the usage of Distance education applications in Industrial Society, the usage of these applications in Information Society for reaching the correct and the complete knowledge has become faster and inevitable. Distance education become researchers topics and a name on authors books. Educational Professions, Distant Education Researchers have defined distance education from their point of view. However, all the definitions and terms that we come across about distance education are not synonymous. Some of these are, "education with envelopes", "studying at home", "studying outside", "distance learning", "distance teaching", "distance education" and "distance instruction" (Kaya, 2002). Nonetheless, all these are used for defining the same term: Distance Education; an education where students and teachers are physically apart from each other.

When we look to the literature, it is seen that distance education terminology is used as student centred and distance learning is used as teacher centred (Kaya, 2002). This research study is using the distance education term as an upper concept, in a sense, including all the concepts mentioned above. When we look to distance

education applications England and Australia we can see that they were using it in a different content. England (1840) which is geographically dispersed over a wide area in the last quarter of 19th century; America (1874) (Kaya, 2002) and in Australia in the beginning of 20th century (1914) (Gramer & Browne, 1982), distance education has been seen as an alternative way of delivering education to mass of people. Distance education initial applications, which initially started as distribution of written documents, leave its place to radio, television, telephone and computer. Later, it is used as an alternative to materials and presentation systems; e-mail, computer conference and internet systems such as multimedia systems are used (Kaya, 2002). Distance education in Turkey and in North Cyprus, has started to be spoken later than the other countries due to the late revolution in technology. This paper investigates the history of distance education in Turkey and North Cyprus to understand the results of the metaphor survey, which was completed by reaserchers in five years.

Distance Education in Turkey

The necessities of New Republic evolution and need of higher educational level, the "distance education" has been subject of researches since 1927; however, it has not been used by institutions because of the low literacy level of the people. The first distance education application has been made in Ankara University, Faculty of Law, Banking and Commercial Law Research Institute in 1956. In the Ministry of Education, 1960-1961, has used the first stage of distance education: envelopes in education (Reis & Özdemir 2010; Kaya, 2002). In 1975, the institution of   Common Higher Education Institution (YAYKUR) is established, and this institution, in 1979, has delivered some distance education programs to train people to supply the manpower needs of the society (Kaya, 2002).

By 1970's, education via envelopes, radio and television was widespread to other institutions outside of the Ministry of Education. After the foundation of Anadolu University in 1982; distance education was widespread in Turkey. Main materials in the lectures of Anadolu University are books, television and radio, academic consulting and implementation services, which was introduced in 1994, with computer-aided education (Kaya, 2002). Distance education has spread rapidly since 2002. Ministry of Education has supported distance education. Projects are carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education and Anadolu University; in 1985, 130.000 teachers and in 1990, 54.000 teachers have completed a degree through distance education (Uşun, 2006). Revolution in Internet technologies provided interactive study opportunities, and the number of distance education courses have increased.

Fırat University has started to use Internet services in education in 1990 and delivered distance education via "e-mail"; in 1995, they have used video-records in distant courses. In 1997, Middle East Technical University (METU) has started delivering master of education courses as "distant education courses". In Spring 2001, METU has started delivering asynchronous web-based distant education courses to other courses (Kaya, 2002). In 2000, Istanbul University started to use Teleconference system (By transferring images to the electronic board at Haran University) to deliver distant courses. In 2009 Istanbul University has established distant education faculty. In 2011, it has established open-education faculty; and has delivered distant courses. It was delivering live courses including simulations, video and slides as well as written materials in its faculties.

Since 1999, Sakarya University Information Department, has delivered several courses parallel to the process in the widespread of the Internet usage. For the first time, in the academic term 2002-2003, distance education courses are started to be given at Distance Learning Associate Degree Programs (Çallı, Bayam & Karacadağ, 2002). Asynchronous internet-based distance education courses are given at Sakarya University (Kaya, 2002). In Turkey, about 30 state universities and about 10 private universities are delivering associate, bachelors, and master's distant courses. In addition to this, there are many universities, which give distance education services and deliver some of its courses as live internet conferences. Some of the universities prefer delivering asynchronous distance education courses; some of the universities, in addition to asynchronous courses, also deliver synchronous courses.

Upon the Ministry of National Education, the following distance education programs are held: General Directorate of Educational Technologies, Open Education High School, Primary School, Open Vocational School Vocational and Technical Open Education. The facilities in these schools are distributing written materials, radio and television programs, academic counselling services via telephone and email (Kaya, 2002). These

schools serve, prepare and send printed material, radio and television programs and provide an e-mail and phone (Kaya, 2002).

In our country, as well as all over the world, usage of Internet and the use of facilities provided by the Internet have increased significantly. Turkey firms have directed the usage of this superior communication power and tried to make web-based systems. As a result of combination of web-based systems with database, the development in the field of education moved quite fast (Ergin & Akseki 2012. In Turkey, having a Learning Management System (LMS) which offers necessary application facilities (Reis& etc., 2012) and so on, may be reasons of some problems, however; especially for the delivering of training needs of people, distance education is rapidly developing in all levels of education. Specially, it provides many opportunities especially to women who want to have a bachelor's degree. Turkey has wide geographic areas that have folk at different levels of economic and social stature. Unfortunately, in some regions of Turkey, there are families who do not like their girls going to a university at a far city. Housewives due to their belief of *"household and child caring are among woman's duties"*, may have problems to attain to formal education (Demiray, 2010). On the other hand, for the people who have started to work after they have finished the lyceum education, distance education offers a significant opportunity for distance learning applications. Based on the grounds of the above, interest to distance education is high in Turkey. Therefore, the services in this area have improved. In the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports offers distance education courses to primary school, middle school, high school and lyceum students as distant applications via Internet. In formal education, distance education can be used as a supportive education method to the traditional courses like VİTAMİN (Korkmaz & Aygün, 2010). Most of the researchers in history have thought distance education as a supportive education to other educations (Uşun, 2006).

The first Second Life Virtual Campus in Turkey was created by Middle East Technical University (METU), and its first virtual "Teaching Methods Course" was delivered in Computer Education and Instructional Technology Department in a blended way (Bulu&İşler, 2011). This was a huge step in Turkey towards in virtual reality. Now, lots of universities are working on several projects related to usage of virtual platforms in education.

By the Primary, middle school and high school education project Fatih (Opportunity Research and Technology Improvement); internet-based education is going to be widespread. This project aims to present students pre-recorded educational videos over Internet, online-books and materials as well as asynchronous presentations. Since 2011 and 2012 academic period this project has started to be implemented in 52 schools. It aims to be implemented in more schools in the following years. If this project will be successful and it works for all the schools, then we can say that distance education will be implemented in all levels of education in Turkey.

Distance Education in North Cyprus
Since North Cyprus is not an extremely large county, most of the students and teachers prefer to travel to the place of instruction. Thus, the traditional education is more widespread throughout the universities in North Cyprus. Universities deliver some of its courses as distant courses and distance education. Many students in North Cyprus attain to blended distance education courses in Turkey. Although, most of the students have high internet access, there are still students who do not have any internet connection at their home. This of course plays an important obstacle in the web-based distance education courses. North Cyprus Universities do not have an old history. First established university in Northern Cyprus was Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), and it was established in 1979.

In Eastern Mediterranean University, an online education program called EMU Online is run since 2001. In addition to this, two-year Information Management degree program has been started over the Internet in the 2002/2003 Academic Year with the approval of the Turkish Higher Education Council (Albay, 2004). Today, some of The EMU courses are being delivered asynchronously and synchronously over the Internet. For example, Applied Mathematics and Computer Science, Mathematics and Computer Education and Information Technology departments are delivering parts of their courses online. In 2000's distant courses in EMU were delivered via the web-platforms that the university teachers have developed. Teachers were widely using the HTML codes, Delphi, Asp-Net, Visual Basic, Java and JavaScript programming languages to prepare their own courses web-sites. They were preparing their course notes and uploading them to their own system. Similarly,

they were preparing online questionnaires by Java and JavaScript programming languages. However, this is not an easy work, since for this course instructors need to be good programmers. That is why, with the foundation of Moodle, most of the teachers were relaxed; and distance education was more widespread in Cyprus. Moodle's being a free learning management system took interest of most of researchers and instructors since its first version was established in 2002.

In Near East University (NEU) asynchronous and synchronous distance education courses were delivered since 2000's. In these courses, the video-conference programs like Skype, ooVoo and live-stream are widely used. On the other hand, among the free learning management systems Moodle, Wordpress are the widely used systems in NEU. Systems like Edu.20 are also used for delivering in-service trainings to English Language Teachers. In 2011, the first Second Life Virtual Campus in Cyprus called "VirtualNeu Teacher Training Center" was created in Near East University. Computer Education and Instructional Technology department "Foundations of Distance Education" courses were delivered in this platform. Students were entering to the Second Life classrooms synchronously and asynchronously. . They were creating their own avatars, listining to e- education radios, watching e-TV's and recording their own voice to the system. Besides the universities delivering courses to its students, courses were delivered to English Language Teachers in Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in VirtualNeu Teacher Training Center. Since Second Life platform required high internet access speed, teachers who have high internet access were was joining to this courses. Besides this, *the first Ubiquitous Distance Learning in Cyprus* was also delivered in NEU. The distant courses were delivered in various ways to students. Students were free to listen to their courses in their car radios which were delivered two days in a week and weekdays from 20:00 o'clock until 21:00 o'clock, in universities radio channel YDU FM; or they were free to enter to Second Life classrooms whenever they want and watch the prerecorded educational videos on that platform; or they were free to join to the traditional classrooms, or they were free to join to the course distant mobile compatible web-based instruction which contained avatar teachers' explanations and online questionnaires.

Girne American University which was established in 1985, also delivered asynchronous and synchronous courses web based courses to its students. "Girne American University Distance Education Center" was established in 2006. Their slogan was to have education "At everywhere and, at every time" (UZEM, 2011). GAU, like most of the universities have preferred using MOODLE, and is delivering 220 courses in this platform to 5000 students (UZEM, 2011).

Similarly in other universities in North Cyprus, like in Lefke European University and in Cyprus International University, we can see that some parts of courses are being delivered in distance. Except some applications in some universities, and distance education centers; distance education is not widespread in North Cyprus. Although universities include distance education courses to their curriculum, there is not a university, in North Cyprus which has all of its courses "online". It looks like that this will take some more time. Changing ones beliefs is a very hard thing. Without convincing people that distance education courses are successful and without providing the necessary infrastructure; we cannot expect them to be successful. These all are sure to affect students metaphors. Just guessing what they think is not enough, we should ask them! This was the intiative motive of this research study.

Metaphors

The art of expressing a thing in another way is called a metaphor. In literature metaphor is used to make an expression more beautiful; in philosophy and technology, it is used to help the understanding of a concept (Keklik, 1990). Metaphors are keys in distance education. Metaphors become essential elements that comprise the everyday language among specialists (Cook-Sather, 2003). It is widely used by teachers in defining abstract concepts. People find it hard to express their thoughts, fears, attitude and perception about a subject; however they can easily say what comes to their mind when someone mentions a "word". Thus, it is the educational experts, psychologists' and instructor duty to capture students "metaphors". By doing so, they can come out with many conclusions about students previous experiences and current tendencies. It is a lot easier for instructors if they know what their students thinks, to arrange the curriculum according to the students needs. They have proven to be a highly useful tool not only in the development of theories in the social sciences (Hartzell, 2004; Kendall & Kendall, 1993; Levassuer, 2004), but also in educational sciences. Metaphors are

widely used for educational purposes. They provide a convenient means by which to create a taxonomy; the first step towards description, than prediction and finally to understanding (Kerssens-van-Drongelen, 2001; Lewis & Grimes, 1999; Lynham, 2000). It is a lot easier to Metaphors are very important to describe, to understand and to predict distance education. When designing online self-study courses, it is important to consider student   perceptions of what online and self-study mean so that accurate expectations can be conveyed and de-motivating features minimized (Pittenger & Doering, 2010). Lecturers can help their students to create their own desired metaphors. We can command our metaphors and not let this tool of perception and understanding dictate the view of its user (Meyer, 2005). For making the change in metaphors possible, we should know what their metaphors are. We should not forget that; while changing perceptions is difficult, it is not impossible (Meyer, 2005).

Purpose

Authors aimed to drive out the distance education students' metaphors in the years 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012; hence provide a tool for future researches to create "desired metaphors" and change students attitude and perceptions. Sub-questions of this research study are:

- What are the differences among students' metaphors about "***commonly used distance education terms"*** in the **years 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012**?
- What are the differences among **Turkey** *distance education students' distance education metaphors* and **North Cyprus** *distance education students' distance education metaphors* in **2008**?
- What are the differences among **Turkey** *distance education students' distance education metaphors* and **North Cyprus** *distance education students' distance education metaphors* in **2009**?
- What are the differences among **Turkey** *distance education students' distance education metaphors* and **North Cyprus** *distance education students' distance education metaphors* in **2010**?
- What are the differences among **Turkey** *distance education students' distance education metaphors* and **North Cyprus** *distance education students' distance education metaphors* in **2011**?
- What are the differences among **Turkey** *distance education students' distance education metaphors* and **North Cyprus** *distance education students' distance education metaphors* in **2012**?
- What are the differences among **male** *distance education students' distance education metaphors* and **female** *distance education students' distance education metaphors* in the years 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012?

METHOD

Population

Each year, during 2008 and 2012, 100 questionnaires were distributed exclusively online via email in Turkey and 100 questionnaires were distributed exclusively online via email in Cyprus. The distribution of the questionnaire to the target group has proved a real challenge, and generally each student was questioned two times. Each year, when researchers reached 120 students, they have stopped collecting responses to the online survey. Table 1 shows the distribution of the population according to sex and country.

Table 1: Population

YEARS		Female	Male	*Total*
2008	Cyprus	30	61	*91*
	Turkey	21	8	*29*
2009	Cyprus	30	52	*82*
	Turkey	28	10	*38*
2010	Cyprus	7	62	*69*
	Turkey	38	3	*41*
2011	Cyprus	10	50	*60*
	Turkey	35	25	*60*

2012	Cyprus	20	54	*74*
	Turkey	36	10	*46*

In year 2008, twenty nine (21 Female, 8 Male) students from Turkey and ninety one students (30 Female, 61 Male) from Cyprus have attained to the research study. *In year 2009*, thirty eight (28 Female, 10 Male) students from Turkey and eighty two students (30 Female, 52 Male) from Cyprus have attained to the research study. *In year 2010,* forty one (38 Female, 3 Male) students from Turkey and sixty nine (7 Female, 62 Male) from Cyprus have attained to the research study. *In year 2011,* sixty (50 Female, 10 Male) students from Turkey and sixty students (35 Female, 25 Male) from Cyprus have attained to the research study. *In year 2012,* forty six (36 Female, 10 Male) students from Turkey and seventy four students (20 Female, 54 Male) from Cyprus have attained to the research study.

Instrument and Data Analysis
Distance Education Metaphor questionnaire was developed in Turkish. In order to evaluate the items in the questionnaire, experts evaluation (n=7) was wanted. Expert groups from education technologist evaluated the data gathering scale individually. Under the suggestions of experts, necessary corrections were done to the draft form of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was written in Survey Monkey and emailed to the students. It contained items like;

- Please do write first three things that come to your mind, when one mentions about "teacher"? Why? Can you explain your answer?
- Please do write first three things that come to your mind, when one mentions about "synchronous education"? Why? Can you explain your answer?
- Please do write first three things that come to your mind, when one mentions about "distance education"? Why? Can you explain your answer?

Descriptive statistics frequencies and percentages were used to analyze and to report the data gained from the questionnaire Survey Monkey.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of this research study are divided in 3 subsections: "Distribution of Metaphors according to years", "Difference between Cypriot and Turkish Students "Distance Education" Metaphors" and "Difference between Male and Female Students Metaphors".

Distribution of Metaphors According to Years
The metaphors used showed a consistency according to the years. For the word "**Teacher**" the most commonly used metaphors were: Guard (in 2008), Grade (in 2009), Director (in 2010), Course (in 2011) and School (2012).The change in the metaphors from Guard to School is very compelling. Students have answered that they think the teacher as a guard because teacher restrict their freedom in 2008. They were more concentrated on their grades for the year 2009, and they said that teachers are director of courses. *The metaphor school was somewhat unexpected for researchers in 2012.*

For the word **"School",** the most commonly used metaphors were: Prison (in 2008), Education (in 2009), Friends (in 2010), Tradition (2011) and Teacher (2012). The schools being seen as a prison was something extremely important for researchers. Student not feeling themselves as free as they need was something affecting their success. In 2009, course teachers were notified about students this metaphor and they were careful not to make students get bored in classes by including activities in courses. The change was apparent in 2009. In 2010, school was seen as a place to meet with "Friends". This also provided a positive mood for the course teachers. Anything that makes them come to school was good. Somewhat, students said that school is a place to learn "tradition" in 2011. What were most fascinating were students choosing the metaphor "teacher" for school and school for "teacher*". This was showing that in 2012, students were seeing that a school is a place with teachers; and a teacher has to be delivering courses in a school.*

For the word **"Student"**, the most commonly used metaphors were: Herd (in 2008), Worker (in 2010), Uniform (in 2010), Bag (2011) and Researcher (2012). In years 2010 and 2011, student was described with the belongings like uniform and bag. On the other hand, it took a wholly new definition after the years 2008 and 2009; such as "researcher". Students seeing themselves as a "Herd" and in the following years as a "researcher" can be a result of students feeling themselves more active in the education. This also can be a result of students' adaptation to the distance education courses. In Distance Education Applications, students are thought as active participants and distant courses are designed accordingly. All these are the results of the usage of technology according to the curriculum supporting the student supported education approach.

For the word "**Father**", the most commonly used metaphors were: Mountain (in 2008), Coach (in 2009), Money (in 2010), Director (in 2011) and Educator (2012). The change of students' way of seeing their parents also changed during the past five years. The word educator in 2012 was the most meaningful one for a student. If we look to the years, in 2008, we can see that the father was only a moral supporter, in 2010, he was a financial supporter, in 2009 until 2011, his governing and director facilities were emphasized, and in 2012, he was perceived as an educator. In fact, in all of the metaphors, the meaning of fathers' being an education supporter is hidden. Here, similarly there is a significant change from the narrow meaning to wider meaning. *As a result of these findings, we can say that support to education has increased.*

For the word "**Internet**", the most commonly used metaphors were: Web (in 2008), Lesson (in 2009), Director (in 2010), Infinity (in 2011) and Light (2012). The change of Internet metaphors was just expected and somewhat unwantedly explained an addiction in 2012. Students have said that Internet was a light, and if there is not internet they can do nothing, everything will be dark. According to these results, the internet took a wider part in students' life and maybe it will control their life in the future. If we do not want this, students should also be thought how to cope without Internet. For the word "**Online Education**", the most commonly used metaphors were: TV (in 2008), Web (in 2009), Chat (in 2010), Internet (in 2011) and Mobile (2012). Students defined the term online education by the technology they were using. They were watching TV, chatting, using Internet; and they were online with mobile technologies.

For the word "**Projector**", the most commonly used metaphors were: Machine (in 2008), Car Headlight (in 2009), Sun (in 2010), Necessity (in 2011) and Class (2012). In the years, 2011 and 2012 it is seen that projector become a more valuable educational tool in class. These results should be the effect of the more usage of technology on metaphors. For the word "**E-Education**", the most commonly used metaphors were: Mars (in 2008), Web-based Education (in 2009), Computer (in 2010), Time (in 2011) and Reachable (2012). The metaphor in 2008 was Mars, and students' explanation to this was, that distance education was as far as Mars. The metaphor "reachable" was an interesting one. We can reach e-education everywhere was students' explanation to this result.

For the word "**Computer**", the most commonly used metaphors were: Bills (in 2008), Technology (in 2009), Business (in 2010), Lesson (in 2011) and Door (in 2012). The word bills were intriguing, when we look to the students explanations about their metaphor; they were complaining from the bills of electricity, internet and so on. However, the metaphor "door" was used in 2012. Students have said that: "computer is a door that we can open to another world". For the word **"Virtual"**, the most commonly used metaphors were: Film (in 2008), Soul (in 2009), Wiki Spaces (in 2010), Web Page (in 2011) and Game Based (2012). Students' interpretation of "virtual"must be because of the virtual technologies that they have heard, seen or thought.

For the word "**Blended Education**", the most commonly used metaphors were: Girls and Boys (in 2008), Internet and School (in 2009), University (in 2010), Google and Chat (in 2011) and Facebook (2012). The most interesting one was the "Facebook" metaphor in the year 2012. Students have said that they were having blended courses in Facebook in most of their courses. Literally the "blended" means a mixture of things and the first usage of this term, in Turkey and in North Cyprus, was for the classes that girls and boys are in the same class. *Distance education coming into people lives have changed, not only how they live, how they think but it also changed how they talk, and the terminology that they have used.*

Table 2: Usage of Metaphors

Frequently Used Metaphors					
Keyword	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Teacher	Guard	Grade	Director	Course	School
School	Prison	Education	Friends	Tradition	Teacher
Student	Herd	Worker	Uniform	Bag	Researcher
Father	Mountain	Coach	Money	Director	Educator
Internet	Web	Lesson	Book	Infinity	Life
Online Education	TV	Web	Chat	Internet	Mobile
Projector	Machine	Car Headlight	Sun	Necessity	Class
E-Education	Mars	Web-based Education	Computer	Time	Reachable
Computer	Bills	Technology	Business	Lesson	Door
Virtual	Film	Soul	Wiki Spaces	Web-Page	Game-based
Blended Education	Girls& Boys	Internet & School	University	Google & Chat	Facebook
Synchronous Education	Traditional Education	Chat	Skype	Videoconference	Virtual Worlds
Asynchronous Education	Outside of Class	Relax	Homework	Night	Every time
Distance Education	Impossible	Magic	Space	Light	Laptop

For the word "**Synchronous Education"**, the most commonly used metaphors were: Traditional Education (in 2008), Chat (in 2009), Skype (in 2010), Vide conference (in 2011) and Virtual Worlds (2012). The usage of different educational tools also effected students Synchronous Education Metaphors. Since, they have experienced Synchronous Education in Virtual Words; they have taken it as their metaphor. For the word "**Asynchronous Education"**, the most commonly used metaphors were: Outside of Class (in 2008), Relax (in 2009), Homework (in 2010), Night (in 2011) and every time (2012). That is what it is in fact in ,2012, asynchronous education can be at "every time"; and also this is among the most important facilities of distance education.

For the word "**Distance Education"**, the most commonly used metaphors were: Impossible (in 2008), Magic (in 2009), Space (in 2010), Light (in 2011) and Laptop (2012). Students were in rebalance to the distance education. They were claiming that it is not possible. However, with the widely usage of the Web 2.0 tools in education; students feel themselves more secure and safe. They believed that it was not something too hard for themselves and their instructors. Thus, in 2012, somewhat not expected, a high percentage of students said that if they have a laptop and an internet connection then distance education was possible.

Prior experience, pre-existing attitudes and beliefs all may play a role in determining whether a student will be successful in distance education or not (Tuncay, 2011*). Nonetheless, the students have defined the teacher with negative and significant metaphors in early years; and later they have preferred a more positive and a board concept.* Educations were more teacher-centered; teachers teach them whatever they want and ask that things in exam. The metaphor Guard can be thought as a narrow and negative concept. In the following years, the teachers have defined with different concepts. The metaphor Guard can be thought as a narrow and negative concept. In the following years, the teachers have got a more board concept.

The evolution in distance education in two countries, can be seen on metaphors. The synchronous web-based online educations have increased in institutions in Turkey and North Cyprus, especially after the year 2010. In early years most commonly used synchronous education was made through Television distance education programs. In the following years, the metaphors used were much related with the usage of internet in various education platforms.

Difference between Cypriot and Turkish Students "Distance Education" Metaphors

Difference between Cypriot and Turkish Students "Distance Education" Metaphors can be seen in Table 3. In 2008, Cypriot students used the metaphors "Not Possible", "Webcam" and "Turkey". They have explained their answers as: distance education was delivered in universities in Turkey, and it is not possible to deliver it with the same opportunities in Cyprus. Students from Turkey used the metaphors "Strange", "TV" and "Expensive" for distance education. *Although students in Turkey were a lot more optimistic, they thought that distance education is a strange, expensive and an education that can be delivered through TV.* In 2009, Cypriot students used the metaphors "Online", "Internet" and "Modem". Students from Turkey used the metaphors "New", "Web-based" and "Internet" for distance education.

Table 3: Most Commonly Used Metaphors of Cypriot and Turkish Students

	Most Commonly Used Three Metaphors of **NORTH CYPRUS** Students			Most Commonly Used Three Metaphors of **TURKEY** Students			
2008	Not Possible (%50)	Webcam (%40)	Turkey (%30)	Strange (%30)	TV (%30)	Expensive	(%15)
2009	Online (%45)	Internet (%20)	Modern (%15)	New (%25)	Web-based (%10)	İnternet (%5)	
2010	Chat (%40)	Multimedia (%25)	Mix (%5)	University (%15)	Mix (%10)	Blended	(%10)
2011	Video Conference (%30)	Relax (%10)	Web-Page (%10)	Change (%35)	Future (% 25)	New (%20)	
2012	Virtual (%20)	Hard (%20)	Future (%20)	Education Choice (%15)	Ubiquitous (%10)	Students Choice (%10)	

In 2010, Cypriot students used the metaphors "Chat", "Multimedia" and "Mix". Students from Turkey used the metaphors "University", "Mix" and "Blended" for distance education. Cypriot students by expressing distance education with "multimedia" and "chat" metaphors theoretically and Students from Turkey used methodical metaphors. The "mix" metaphor was used by Cypriot and Turkish students; this should be due to the blended distance education programs in the universities.

In 2011, Cypriot students used the metaphors "Video", "Relax" and "Web-Page". Students from Turkey used the metaphors "Change", "Future" and "New" for distance education. An important change is seen in the year 2011, both in Cypriot students' metaphors and in Turkish students' metaphors. *By 2011, Cypriot student's started to feel they more relax in distance education programs with the video and web-pages. A more innovative idea was widespread through students in Turkey; who have used the metaphors "Change", "Future" and "New".*

In 2012, Cypriot students used the metaphors "Virtual", "Hard" and "Future". Students from Turkey used the metaphors "Education Choice", "Ubiquitous" and "Students' Choice" for distance education. A completely change was seen Cypriot students metaphors in the year 2012. With the wider usage of virtual platforms in distance education starting from 2011, students changed their metaphors to "virtual". The "hard" metaphor must be because of the difficulties they were facing in the new virtual approach. On the other hand, in Turkey students' answers, we can see their physiological and social perspectives. *Students by 2012, were trusting more in distance education programs opportunities, and they are saying that it is only a "Choice".*

Difference between Male and Female Students' Distance Education Metaphors
In 2008, the most commonly used the metaphor of male students was "Far" (%50) and the most commonly used the metaphor of female students was "No Class". This can be interpreted as: the male students have understood that students and teachers are far away from each other. However, female students' answer of the class was particularly interesting. This may be because of the courses not having a fixed physical environment.

Table 4: Distance Education Metaphors according to Sex

	Most Commonly Used Three Metaphors of MALE Students			Most Commonly Used Three Metaphors of FEMALE Students		
2008	Far (%50)	Relax (%40)	Turkey (%20)	No Class (%30)	TV (%10)	Expensive (%10)
2009	Online (%40)	İnternet (%20)	Modern (%15)	New (%25)	Web-based (%15)	İnternet (%15)
2010	Chat (%30)	Complex (%25)	Wiki Spaces (%10)	Master (%35)	Computer (%30)	No Uniform (%10)
2011	Lesson (%50)	Head (%40)	Web (%10)	Move (%40)	Interesting (%30)	Thinkable/Choice (%20)
2012	Virtual Worlds (%35)	Light (%30)	Future (%30)	Reachable (%25)	Door (%15)	Facebook (%10)

In 2009, the most commonly used the metaphor of male students was "Online" (%40) and the most commonly used the metaphor of female students was "New" (%25). This can be interpreted as; online applications took male students interest more than female students, and female students answered that distance education was something new for them in 2009. This is also interesting, because, students answer as "new" showed that they did not heard about it before. In parallel to females answer as "new", male students said that distance education was "modern". Same year, both male and female students used terms "Internet". This also shows that these students have come across with internet-based distance education or internet-supported education.

In 2010, the most commonly used the metaphor of male students was "Chat" (%30) and the most commonly used metaphor of female students was "Master" (%35). This can be interpreted as; it took more attention of the male students that in distance education people "were chatting". The possibility of having a master's degree with distance education was the attracting thing for female students. In 2011, the most commonly used the metaphor of male students was "Lesson" (%50) and the most commonly used the metaphor of female students was "Move". ***Male students were seeing distance education as somewhat what it should be: as a "lesson" in 2011. On the other hand, being "mobile" was interesting for female students.*** In 2012, the most commonly used the metaphor of male students was "Virtual Words" (%35) and the most commonly used the metaphor of female students was "Reachable" (%25). ***Virtual words being used in Cyprus and in Turkey in distance education courses affected student vision about distance education. Students started to believe in the education and themselves more that they answered that distance education is something reachable.*** The distance education metaphors according to their sex are given in Table 4.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Metaphorical thinking affects our perception of distance education and result in accepting new changes. This research study shows the metaphors which has changed in the last 5 years. It was observed that most commonly used metaphors of Cypriot and Turkish students were related with the *education type* that they have experienced, and with the *history of universities in Turkey and Cyprus*. Turkey distance education programs and technological changes being at least one year before the programs and educational innovations in Cyprus also effected their metaphors. For example, we can see that the metaphors of Cypriot students in years 2009 were similar to the metaphors of Turkish students in the year 2008. The most meaningful metaphor of male students was "Far" in 2008, and the most meaningful metaphor of Female students, in 2012, was "Reachable".

Most commonly used metaphors of male and female distance education students were not same. Male distance education students' metaphors *were more abstract* than female students' metaphors. The change of

metaphors among the years was also unavoidable. We can see that students used narrow and negative concepts in the early years, and in the following years, they expressed the terms with more board concepts. *According to this results, the usage of technology in education have brought us some positive conclusions; and some conclusions that one should be careful.* The use of metaphor "life" for internet should not be omitted. Educational researchers should make sure that students understand their importance of physically and mentally being live and healthy. Overuse of the internet is sure to bring some health problems with it. Therefore, student's seeing Internet as "life" should be changed by a desired metaphor. But what are desired metaphors? What should a distance education student should think and believe? What do us as distant instructors want them to believe? *In order to prevent students feeling into educational and psychological gaps, distant instructors should help students to create their own desired metaphors.* Nonetheless, this research study shows that Turkish and North Cyprus students have changed their way of thinking about distance education from "impossible" to "possible", through the last five years.

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