

Pre-Service Turkish Language Teachers' Metaphorical Perceptions of Social Media Platforms

Kenan Bulutⁱ

Van Yüzüncü Yıl University

Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine pre-service Turkish Language teachers' metaphorical perceptions of social media platforms. Phenomenology, which is a qualitative research design, was used in the study. The sample consisted of 70 first-, second-, third- and fourth- grade students of the Department of Turkish Language Education of the Faculty of Education of Van Yüzüncü Yıl University. Data were collected using a form developed to help participants write metaphors on their minds and to express themselves clearly. The form consisted of a statement in the form of “*Social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc.) are like... because...*,” of which participants were asked to fill in the blanks to find out exactly to what they compared social media platforms and why. Data were analyzed using content analysis, which is a qualitative analysis method. Participants generated 73 metaphors, 67 of which were accepted as valid. The most frequently used metaphors were *drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, and sources of information*. The metaphors were grouped under ten conceptual categories; *addictive, harmful, pros and cons, communication, unnecessary and useless, useful, necessity, vastness, trap, and other*. The categories of *addictive* (22.38%) and *harmful* (22.38%) had the largest percentages. Of all metaphors, 37 (55.2%) were negative while 16 (23.88%) positive. Suggestions were made at the end of the study.

Keywords: Social Media Platforms, Pre-Service Turkish Language Teachers, Metaphor.

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ⁱ Kenan Bulut, Assist. Prof. Dr., Department of Turkish Language Education, Van Yüzüncü Yıl University, Turkey, ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4771-0459

Email: kenanbulut80@yyu.edu.tr

INTRODUCTION

People have had an indefatigable quest for learning and accessing information since day one because they are, by nature, curious beings with an insatiable thirst for knowledge. “Every discovery led to the next, and knowledge has accumulated over the centuries and made it to this day” (Coşkun, 2018, p. 948).

Unprecedented advances in technology have also transformed the fields of information and the Internet, and the developments in those fields have affected all other fields. However, advances in the field of information and the Internet are not only technological but also communicational, relational (human and social), and educational.

Çelik (2019, p. 41) argues that the Internet has become the primary source of information for people of all ages and states that “this technological system has been ‘the magic wand’ which has instantly responded to users’ needs and expectations and also torn down the wall of inaccessibility that had been erected around knowledge in every field.” What is more, “born out of the unity of computer and Internet technology, social media has spread at an unprecedented pace and become the ‘Internet star’ of today” (Çelik, 2019, p. 41).

Bostancı (2010, p. 36) defines social media as a form of communication based on sharing, interacting, and discussing beyond the limits of time and space and states that “people completely determine the content of social media platforms and use them to be in constant interaction with one another”. According to Mahajan (2009), the term social network refers to the creation of an online community that enables users to interact or share their opinions with one another for a common purpose. Based on Web 2.0. technologies, social media is a scene of tools and platforms that provide people and institutions with the opportunity to interactively share their views, experiences, and emotions through sounds, words, images, and other activities (Çelik, 2019).

Boyd (2008) argues that young people create digital personas that represent them accurately and that are well received by people around them. Eren, Çelik and Aktürk (2014) also state that people use the internet more and more as a means of socialization. According to Koç and Karabatak (2011), a “social network” is a type of virtual community where users define themselves online and communicate with people from different cultures and express their true emotions and thoughts by using ideograms and smileys that symbolize real-life gestures and facial expressions. It would, therefore, not be wrong to claim that face-to-face communication is replaced by online communication via computers, tablets, and smartphones on social media platforms on the Internet. According to Acir (2008, p. 70), one of the important features of social media platforms is that “they provide people with the opportunity to create online ‘profiles’ that may not necessarily represent their true identity.”

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), the social media era, as we know it today, probably began about 20 years ago when Susan and Bruce Abelson founded “Open Diary,” which was a social networking site that brought together a community of people writing online dairies.

According to Onursoy (2017), social media platforms are of great significance because they promote fast, simultaneous, and unlimited communication and socialization and serve as an alternative to traditional media and have a culture with a unique “language, rules, principles, codes of conduct, and rituals.”

Born in the 2000s into a world of colorful visuals and technology, Generation “Z” is definitely the largest cohort that uses the Internet. “They have ‘I-pads’, tablets, smartphones, and computers instead of dolls and cars” (Çelik, 2019, p. 41). They use the Internet and social media platforms to find their friends and to make new ones or to communicate with people from different circles and to play games etc. Subrahmanyam (2013, p. 238) argues that the New media is the electrocultural tool of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and states “research suggests that adolescents use online communication applications primarily to keep in contact with peers.” However, it is a fact that social media platforms have numerous benefits when used properly. According to some research results,

Kearney (2007) states that video games improve cognitive skills and promote learning. Haugland and Wright (1997, cited in Çelik, 2019) argue that new technologies, such as the Internet and social media, facilitate activities that fit well with children's learning models and encourage engagement, and offer environments that promote holistic learning processes and allow them to experience knowledge, and provide them with the opportunity to experience play and socialization in line with their developmental stages. Gülbahar, Kalelioğlu and Madran (2010) also state that social networking sites are also useful for institutions because they enrich mixed teaching experiences, facilitate students' learning processes, and support teachers' teaching and assessment processes. Of course, social media is not used only in those areas. Today, many people actively use social media to instantly express their views of current issues and to make statements.

It is important to address how social media and social media platforms, which are the most important means of communication of today, are perceived by the youngest people, who are their largest user base. After all, how something is perceived is as important as what it is and what it is used for. It is, therefore, an undeniable fact that how something is made sense of depends on how it is perceived. Metaphors are definitely one of the most effective ways of uncovering perception and understanding.

In the most general sense, a metaphor is a figure of speech where clearer words and concepts are used to describe something that is difficult to understand. According to Levine (2005, p. 172), metaphor comes from the Greek word *metapherein* (*meta* = beyond; *pherein* = to carry)

It is not always possible to clearly convey and express emotions and thoughts because the literal meanings of words and concepts do not always reflect our inner world. We, therefore, have to use the resources of language, one of which is metaphors, allowing us to convey what we have in our mind in a clearer way.

Metaphors are defined as a mental process that allows people or societies to pursue their knowledge and mental/cultural development, to convey their world views and perceptions, and to guide their memory correlations to some extent (Yıldızlı, Erdol, Baştuğ & Bayram, 2018). The Turkish Language Association (TDK, 2019) defines a metaphor as a 'figure of speech,' which, however, falls short of explaining it because not every figure of speech is a metaphor. A metaphor is more of an analogy (Ertürk, 2017). However, Salman (2003, cited in Ertürk, 2017) argues that, unlike an analogy, what a metaphor alludes to, and to what extent and why, has to be discovered by a listener or a reader themselves.

Metaphor, which is mostly used as a philosophical concept in the Western world, corresponds to the concept of figure of speech in the Eastern world. According to Demir (2009, p. 88), "metaphors' and 'figures of speech' are basically linguistic phenomena, despite different associations in the West And East, and therefore, are the products of a mental activity as a natural manifestation of potential language ability in humans". According to the author;

Although the conceptual boundaries of the two terms [metaphor and figure of speech] are vague, the main distinction between them is the meanings attached to them. At this point, figures of speech are generally regarded as an opportunity of rhetoric in our literature and worldview, whereas, in the west, metaphors have been addressed especially in the field of philosophy and have been almost elevated to the level of "truth itself" or "knowledge" with expanded spheres of influence and usage.

Although Çoban Keneş (2016) argues that metaphors can be traced back to Ancient Greek philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, Alexsander Spancer (2012) states that the prominent philosopher Aristotle defined metaphors as 'nothing but giving something a name of something else.' Kövecses (2010, p. 4) states that "from the cognitive linguistic view, a metaphor refers to the understanding of 'one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain.'" According to Saban (2004, p. 1), "metaphors are one of the most powerful mental tools that shape, lead on, and monitor what we think about the development and functioning of events."

In “*Metaphors We Live By*,” George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (p. 4) argue that the concepts that govern our thoughts are not just a matter of mind but also dictate in detail all the things we do in everyday life, in a way in which we are not exactly aware of. Therefore, an important means of finding it out is language, which draws a clear picture of what our conceptual system is like. According to researchers, “if we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 4).

Akşehirli (2007) argues that not only language, but also our conceptual system that we use in thinking and acting, is based on metaphors according to the contemporary theory of metaphor in the field of cognitive semantics. The use of metaphors in the educational environment has also become widespread. This can make it easier for individuals to learn by organizing them in the mind in processes such as comparing, associating, visualizing and interpreting the concepts discussed (Hiçyılmaz and Adanır, 2019). Therefore, metaphors, which are in all areas of our lives, especially in language, shape our world of conceptualization and affect our way of thinking. However, it is a known fact that metaphors are significantly affected by the cultural domain. Akşehirli (2007) divides the metaphors into three: conceptual, orientational, and ontological. Conceptual metaphors consist of two conceptual domains: source and target. The target conceptual domain is made sense of through the source conceptual domain. The source conceptual domain is a concrete concept while the target knowledge domain is an abstract or a physical concept or object. For example, in the metaphor ‘time is money,’ ‘money,’ which is a concrete concept, is the source knowledge domain whereas ‘time,’ which is an abstract concept, is the target conceptual domain. Therefore, “time” is made sense of through “money.” Vertical dimensions are widely used in orientational metaphors. The metaphor “more is up” is the most common example of an orientational metaphor. For example, in the idiom “boosting morale,” “morale” is an expression made sense in terms of up-and-down orientation in the vertical dimension, and thus, the idiom “boosting morale” is an orientational metaphor. “The rise of inflation” is also made sense in the up-down orientation. Akşehirli (2007) defines ontological metaphors as metaphors that turn intangible things into tangible things. For example, according to Akşehirli, the statement “it takes a lot of patience to endure this pain” turns *patience*, which is an abstract and uncountable concept, into something countable.

The aim of this study was to determine pre-service Turkish Language teachers’ metaphorical perceptions of social media platforms. Preservice teachers will have a significant impact on the development of new generations for years to come, and therefore, it is important to determine how they perceive the events and phenomena that deeply affect us in our personal or social life. Social media, on the other hand, plays a key role in our lives and becomes more and more prevalent. It is, therefore, necessary to identify preservice teachers’ perceptions of the concept of ‘social media’ and to determine the steps that are to be taken especially in the field of education accordingly. This was the starting point of this study.

To this end, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are pre-service Turkish Language teachers’ metaphorical perceptions of the concept of ‘social media’?
2. Under what conceptual categories are pre-service Turkish Language teachers’ metaphors of the concept of ‘social media’?

METHOD

Phenomenology, which is a qualitative research design, was used in the study. Phenomenological research is used to determine the meaning commonly attached by people to a phenomenon or concept through their experiences (Creswell, 2013). Phenomenology is a type of qualitative research used to analyze the phenomena (events, experiences or situations etc.) which we encounter in life but do not know or think much about (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). Phenomenological research focuses on what people feel about their experiences, how they perceive them, what they think

about them and how they construct them in their minds and what kind of awareness they develop as a result of that construction (Patton, 2002). This study employed a phenomenological research method because its objective was to determine how pre-service Turkish Language teachers perceived and interpreted social media platforms.

Study Group

The study group of the study is 70 pre-service Turkish Language teachers' who are studying at Van Yüzüncü Yıl University, Faculty of Education, Department of Turkish Language Education, first-grade, second-grade, third-grade and fourth-grade. The study was carried out with volunteer pre-service teachers'

Table 1. Distribution of the study group by grade level

Classes	f	%
First-grade	10	14,29
Second-grade	11	15,71
Third-grade	20	28,57
Fourth-grade	29	41,43
Total	70	100

Table 2. Distribution of the study group by gender

Gender	f	%
Female	38	54,29
Male	32	45,71
Total	70	100

Measure Development and Data Collection

Data were collected using a form developed to help participants to write metaphors on their minds and to express themselves clearly. The form consisted of a statement in the form of “*Social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc.) are like... because...*” Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and then were asked to fill in the blanks. Therefore, during this process, they were expected to clearly state to what they compared social media platforms and why. Data were collected from first-, second-, third- and fourth- grade pre-service Turkish Language teachers.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using content analysis. In phenomenological research, data are analyzed using content analysis to uncover meanings (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). The steps of metaphor analysis were; removing missing or improper metaphors, assigning codes to participants and transferring the metaphors to a computer, identifying and merging same common metaphors, determining frequencies, developing categories based on the explanations concerning the metaphors, consulting experts to check the categories for relevance, assign the metaphors to the categories based on the explanations concerning the metaphors, expert control, and exemplifying the metaphors. The meanings of the metaphors were used to develop categories. Experts were consulted at every stage of the analysis. Categories were developed based on the data, and the metaphors were assigned to the categories, and then were sent to another expert in the field for consulting. The categories were revised based on expert opinion and then were sent to the expert again. They were revised and finalized based on expert opinion. Therefore, another expert researcher was consulted both to determine the categories and to assign the metaphors to them.

At the end of all these processes, 70 pre-service Turkish Language teachers, who constituted the sample group generated a total 73 metaphors. However, six of them were not included in the analysis because they either did not serve the research objective or did not match with their explanations. The remaining 67 metaphors were used as data.

The metaphors in the categories were presented with their frequencies and examples.

FINDINGS

This section presented the results. The conceptual categories based on the 67 metaphors generated by participants were presented, and the categories and metaphors in question were interpreted. Participants' explanations of the metaphors were also discussed.

Table 3. Metaphors developed by pre-service Turkish Language teachers' for social media tools and frequencies and percentages of conceptual categories where metaphors are collected

No	Conceptual Categories	f	%	No	Metaphors	f	%
1	Addictive	15	22,38	1	Drugs	7	10,50
				2	Cigarette	5	7,50
				3	Alcohol	3	4,50
				4	Woodworm	1	1,49
				5	Cancer	1	1,49
				6	Illness	1	1,49
				7	Thief	1	1,49
				8	A bad friend	1	1,49
				9	Devil feathered spies	1	1,49
				10	Bad soul	1	1,49
2	Harmful	15	22,38	11	Satan	1	1,49
				12	Dump	1	1,49
				13	A weapon we aim at ourselves	1	1,49
				14	Nuclear weapons	1	1,49
				15	Chaos environment	1	1,49
				16	Tools that negatively affect human relations	1	1,49
				17	The common property of the village	1	1,49
				18	Game	1	1,49
				19	A mill that returning empty	1	1,49
				20	World	1	1,49
3	Pros and cons	9	13,43	21	Black and white clouds	1	1,49
				22	Fire	1	1,49
				23	A vehicle what latest model	1	1,49
				24	Antibiotic	1	1,49
				25	Like medicine	1	1,49
				26	The most dangerous natural disaster	1	1,49
				27	Sea water	1	1,49
				28	News tool	2	3,00
4	Communication	8	11,94	29	An important tool	1	1,49
				30	The tool to travel the world	1	1,49
				31	Newspapers	1	1,49
				32	Connection with the outside world	1	1,49
				33	Way	1	1,49
				34	A sixth sense organ	1	1,49
				35	A wasted river	1	1,49
5	Unnecessary and useless	5	7,46	36	Unnecessary objects	1	1,49
				37	Dusty coffee table	1	1,49
				38	Time eating tool	1	1,49
				39	Air	1	1,49
				40	Way	1	1,49
6	Useful	4	5,97	41	Star	1	1,49
				42	Rather a need	1	1,49
				43	A funfair	1	1,49
				44	Bread and water	1	1,49
7	Necessity	4	5,97	45	A basic need	1	1,49
				46	Water	1	1,49
				47	A meal eaten cold	1	1,49
8	Vastness	4	5,97	48	A book that its source is endless	1	1,49
				49	Space	1	1,49
				50	A bottomless well	1	1,49
				51	A globe	1	1,49
9	Trap	2	2,98	52	Mexican wave	1	1,49
				53	Spider webs	1	1,49
10	Other	1	1,52	54	A different world	1	1,49
Total		67	100			67	100

Table shows that participants generated a total of 67 metaphors under ten categories; *addictive, harmful, pros and cons, communication, unnecessary and useless, useful, necessity, vastness, trap, and other*. The large number of conceptual categories showed that participants had a wide range of metaphorical perceptions of social media platforms.

The categories of addictive (22.38%) and harmful (22.38%) had the most metaphors, followed by the categories of pros and cons (13.43%), means of communication (11.94%), unnecessary and useless (7.46%), useful (5.97%), necessity (5.97%), vastness (5.97%), trap (2.98%), and other (1.52%).

The categories of *addictive, harmful, unnecessary and useless, and trap* consisted of 37 metaphors (55.2%), which were all negative. The categories of *communication, useful, and necessity* consisted of 16 metaphors (23.88%), which were all positive. Of the metaphors in the remaining categories, some were positive and some negative. This result showed that participants developed mostly *negative* metaphors for social media platforms.

The most repeated metaphors were *drugs (7), cigarettes (5), alcohol (3), and sources of information (2)*, suggesting that participants compared social media platforms mostly to drugs, cigarettes, and alcohol. All other metaphors had a frequency of one.

The tables below show the metaphors in the conceptual categories and graphs and interpretations regarding their orientations.

1. Social Media Tools as Addictive

The metaphors and metaphor aspects of the participants' seeing social media tools as addictive are given in the table below.

Table 4. Social media tools as addictive

Sequence No	Metaphors	f	%	Metaphor aspect
1	Drugs	7	10,50	It is addictive. It causes us to spend most of our time here, it makes us addicted to himself. It delivers pleasure, but as a result, causes addiction, disconnection from the society and distress. The make addiction aspect is very high. It is more addictive as you use it. It is addictive when people use these tools unhealthy. More addiction occurs as you use.
2	Cigaretet	5	7,50	It is addictive. It is addictive and damages
3	Alcohol	3	4,50	It is addictive. It's a little hard to come out when you get inside It is addictive. It's hard get rid of. It keeps the individual from the flow of daily life and it makes addicted to himself. It is the sole occupation of the individual.

Participants' various metaphors showed that they perceived social media platforms as addictive. The metaphors in this category made up 22.38% of the total metaphors. They compared social media platforms mostly to *drugs (7)* and *cigarettes (5)*, which is probably due to the addictive nature of social media platforms. All explanations made by participants concerning the addictive metaphors included the statement *they cause addiction*.

2. Social Media Tools as Harmful

The metaphors and metaphor aspects of the participants' seeing social media tools as harmful are given in the table below.

Table 5. Social media tools as harmful

No	Metaphors	f	%	Metaphor aspect
1	Woodworm	1	1,49	Improves itself when finishing the tree
2	Cancer	1	1,49	It has a very harmful effect on human life.
3	Illness	1	1,49	Because it keeps people busy and deprives them of daily life.
4	Thief	1	1,49	It takes all our time.
5	A bad friend	1	1,49	It infects us the bad features it contains.
6	Devil feathered spies	1	1,49	It gives pleasure to use but all your personal information is in danger
7	Bad soul	1	1,49	It puts people against each other.
8	Satan	1	1,49	Most of the time, it takes people out of the way.
9	Dump	1	1,49	You can find many things you want and do not want. You come across without saying harmful-harmless, you see.
10	A weapon we aim at ourselves	1	1,49	We do the harm to ourselves.
11	Nuclear weapons	1	1,49	This social media kills slowly.
12	Chaos environment	1	1,49	Everything that is tried to hide from the public, when it is exposed here, chaos arises.
13	Tools that negatively affect human relations	1	1,49	People devote most of their time to them
14	The common property of the village	1	1,49	Everything shared is seen by everyone.
15	Game	1	1,49	As we get stuck on social media, we realize that time is wasted

Participants' various metaphors showed that they perceived social media platforms as *harmful*. The metaphors in this category made up 22.38% of the total metaphors. The fact that there was a wide range of metaphors in this category and that most of them were associated with harmful situations (nuclear weapons, worst natural disaster, cancer, etc.) showed that participants had mostly negative perceptions of social media platforms. All of the metaphors in this category had the same frequency. Some of the explanations stated by participants for the harmful metaphors were *it develops itself while eating up the tree, it has a very harmful effect on one's life, it takes up all of our time, and it often leads us astray*.

3. Social Media Tools as Pros and Cons

The metaphors and metaphor aspects of the participants' seeing social media tools as pros and cons are given in the table below.

Table 6. Social media tools as pros and cons

No	Metaphors	f	%	Metaphor aspect
1	A mill that returning empty	1	1,49	It kills time if it is not used beneficially.
2	World	1	1,49	It is a medium that contains both good and evil.
3	Black and white clouds	1	1,49	It has a positive or negative effect depending on the intended use.
4	Fire	1	1,49	It is useful if used correctly, harmful if used incorrectly.
5	A vehicle what latest model	1	1,49	A good driver makes good use of this vehicle. But a novice driver cannot use well, and crash.
6	Antibiotic	1	1,49	It is only useful when it is needed.
7	Like medicine	1	1,49	It benefits a little, overdose is harmful.
8	The most dangerous natural disaster	1	1,49	It is very effective when used beneficially but when using it for various nonsensical things, perhaps these tools may also lead to an irreversible disaster.
9	Sea water	1	1,49	Neither drinkable nor dispensable.

Participants' various metaphors in this category showed that they addressed both the positive and negative aspects of social media platforms. The metaphors in this category made up 13.43% of the total metaphors. All metaphors in this category had the same frequency. The orientations of the metaphors included such statements as *if it is not used effectively, it is a waste of time and it is good if it is used properly but it is harmful if it is used improperly*.

4. Social Media Tools as Means of Communication

The metaphors and metaphor aspects of the participants' seeing social media tools as means of communication are given in the table below.

Table 7. Social media tools as means of communication

No	Metaphors	f	%	Metaphor aspect
1	News tool	2	3,00	We can find all kinds of news, it offers all kinds of information.
2	An important tool	1	1,49	It enables people to go beyond individual life by uniting their lives.
3	The tool to travel the world	1	1,49	He can find the opportunity to get to know every place he wants, in any way, through social media. He can see everything he wants to reach with active users and travel in this way.
4	Newspapers	1	1,49	Tells some daily events.
5	Connection with the outside world	1	1,49	I only know this way from the agenda.
6	Way	1	1,49	It delivers the messages we want to convey.
7	A sixth sense organ	1	1,49	It keeps me informed from distant people.

It is only natural to perceive social media platforms as *means of communication* because they are, after all, means of communication. It is, therefore, not surprising that participants perceived social media platforms as means of communication even metaphorically. In three metaphors (sources of information, newspapers, connection with the outside world), participants perceived social media as mass media platforms whereas they perceived social media as a means of interpersonal communication in other metaphors (means of traveling the world, the sixth sense, etc.). The metaphors in this category made up 11.94% of the total metaphors.

5. Social Media Tools as Unnecessary and Useless

The metaphors and metaphor aspects of the participants' seeing social media tools as unnecessary and useless are given in the table below.

Table 8. Social media tools unnecessary and useless

No	Metaphors	f	%	Metaphor aspect
1	A wasted river	1	1,49	It is nothing but killing time.
2	Unnecessary objects	1	1,49	It has no added value.
3	Dusty coffee table	1	1,49	It injects to the individual, waste of time and learning unnecessary events.
4	Time eating tool	1	1,49	80% of our time is spent on social media.
5	Air	1	1,49	it is temporary.

Participants' various metaphoric perceptions showed that they regarded social media platforms in some ways as *unnecessary* and *useless*. This category included various metaphors. The metaphors in this category made up 7.46% of the total metaphors. They all had the same frequency. The orientations of the metaphors included such statements as *it is nothing but a waste of time* and *it contributes nothing*.

6. Social Media Tools as Useful

The metaphors and metaphor aspects of the participants' seeing social media tools as useful are given in the table below.

Table 9. Social media tools as useful

No	Metaphors	f	%	Metaphor aspect
1	Way	1	1,49	They are the discovery of new places and roads, for me.
2	Star	1	1,49	We learn and enlighten a lot of information with media tools. We also enlighten our environment. Of course, if we know how to use it beautifully.
3	Rather a need	1	1,49	In daily life, it is mostly used for agenda.
4	A funfair	1	1,49	It enables individuals who actively use social media to have fun.

Participants' various metaphoric perceptions showed that they considered social media platforms *useful*. Four metaphors emerged in this category and comprised only 5.97% of the total metaphors, suggesting that participants did not find social media platforms that useful. What is more, the number of metaphors describing social media platforms as *useful* was lower than that of metaphors describing them as *harmful*. The orientations of the metaphors included such statements as *to me, they are a means of discovering new places and paths* and *people who actively use social media have fun*.

7. Social Media Tools as Necessity

The metaphors and metaphor aspects of the participants' seeing social media tools as necessity are given in the table below.

Table 10. Social media tools as necessity

No	Metaphors	f	%	Metaphor aspect
1	Bread and water	1	1,49	People have become so dependent on these accounts that these accounts have become a need for people.
2	A basic need	1	1,49	If I do not log in every day, I feel something is missing.
3	Water	1	1,49	People cannot live without water. People have become so dependent on these areas today that I feel as if they are replacing of a physical need of their body.
4	A meal eaten cold	1	1,49	It's cold, you don't want to eat, but you can't do it without eating.

In this category, participants saw social media platforms as a necessity. The perception of social media platforms as a necessity today should be considered normal because the important position that social media platforms have assumed in our lives as means of both communication and correspondence has turned them in to a necessity. The metaphors in this category made up 5.97% of the total metaphors. The orientations of the metaphors included such statements as *people have become so dependent on those platforms that they have become a necessity for them, people cannot live without water. People have become so dependent on those areas today that I feel like I meet a physical necessity*.

8. Social Media Tools as Vastness

The metaphors and metaphor aspects of the participants' seeing social media tools as vastness are given in the table below.

Table 11. Social media tools as vastness

No	Metaphors	f	%	Metaphor aspect
1	A book that its source is endless	1	1,49	We reach the information we want whenever we want.
2	Space	1	1,49	There is unlimited data. Positive or negative, immense enough to imprison you and lose your path.
3	A bottomless well	1	1,49	The road gets longer as you dive.
4	A globe	1	1,49	In the generalizing and globalizing world, we can reach everything very quickly.

It can be seen in Table that a category of metaphors describing social media platforms as *vastness* emerged. The metaphors in this category made different comparisons. For example, social media was compared to *space*, an *abyss*, and *a book with infinite sources*, respectively, because it contains unlimited amount of data, the road gets longer as you dive deeper into it, and we can reach any information any time we want.

9. Social Media Tools as Trap

The metaphors and metaphor aspects of the participants' seeing social media tools as trap are given in the table below.

Table 12. Social media tools as trap

No	Metaphors	f	%	Metaphor aspect
1	Mexican wave	1	1,49	It reaches everyone with a single touch and imprison him.
2	Spider webs	1	1,49	As social media absorbs people, it captures and shackles and prevents him from paying attention to other things than himself.

Some participants saw social media as a trap, which is also common in our social life. The most common complaints about social media were that it was a waste of time and prevented some things that should be done from being done. Participants expressed these points of view metaphorically and compared social media to *a spider web* or *Mexican wave*, which is hard to escape from. The metaphors in this category made up 2.98% of the total metaphors.

10. Social Media Platforms as Other

A metaphor generated by a participant for social media platforms could not be categorized, and therefore, fell into the category of *other*. The table below shows this metaphor and its orientation.

Table 13. Social media tools as the other

No	Metaphors	f	%	Metaphor aspect
1	A different world	1	1,49	Most of the time you become someone you are not in the real world.

There is one metaphor in this category. Participant who expressed social media in this way stated that he/she compared social media to a different world because he/she stated that on social media, you are often someone you are not in real life.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Participants' metaphorical perceptions of social media platforms emerged in a wide variety of conceptual categories. Sixty-seven metaphors were grouped under ten categories: *addictive*, *harmful*, *pros and cons*, *communication*, *unnecessary and useless*, *useful*, *necessity*, *vastness*, *trap*, and *other*. The categories of *addictive* (22.38%) and *harmful* (22.38%) had the most metaphors, followed by those of *pros and cons* (13.43%), *means of communication* (11.94%), *unnecessary and useless* (7.46%), *useful* (5.97%), *necessity* (5.97%), *vastness* (5.97%), *trap* (2.98%), and *other* (1.52%).

The result above shows that pre-service Turkish Language teachers address social media from numerous dimensions. Many studies have reported similar results. Erdem, Alkan and Erdem (2017) stated that preservice teachers' metaphors showed that the concept of media cannot be approached from a single dimension.

Numerous studies investigate teachers', preservice teachers', and students' perceptions of social media platforms. However, there are no studies on pre-service Turkish Language teachers' perceptions of social media platforms. Therefore, the results of this study were discussed with reference to different studies on metaphorical perceptions of social media platforms.

Thirty-seven (55.2%) of the 67 metaphors generated by participants were under the categories of *addictive*, *harmful*, *unnecessary and useless*, and *trap* and had negative meanings. On the other hand, the positive metaphors under the categories of *communication*, *useful*, and *necessity* categories made up 23.88% of the total metaphors. Of the metaphors in the remaining categories, some were positive and some negative. This shows that the vast majority of social media metaphors generated by pre-service Turkish Language teachers are negative. In contrast, they have less positive perception of social media. Doğan and Erkan (2019) conducted a study with undergraduate students of the tourism faculty of a university to investigate their metaphoric perceptions of social media. Similar to the result of our study, they concluded that most students' metaphors of social media were negative. Moreover, their negative metaphors compared social media into *an abyss that does not let anyone out* or to *an infectious disease that spreads everywhere and makes everyone sick in a short time* or to *a medium*

where people look different than they actually do. They also developed the metaphors of *waste of time*, *weapon of mass destruction*, *minefield*, *poison*, and *a type of cancer* to describe social media.

Egüz and Kesten (2018) also conducted a study with preservice social science teachers and reported that their participants developed numerous negative metaphors, such as *virus*, *thief*, *monster*, *prison*, *boob tube*, *enemy* etc. to define social media platforms and generally had negative perceptions of them. Similar to most metaphors in the studies above, preservice social science teachers' metaphors in the negative categories compared social media to a *woodworm*, *cancer*, *disease*, *a weapon aimed at ourselves*, *nuclear weapon* etc.

In our study, *harmful* was one of the two categories with the most metaphors (22.38%), suggesting that although pre-service Turkish Language teachers are social media users, they are aware that it has numerous harmful effects. Erdem, Alkan and Erdem (2017) reported that most metaphors generated by preservice teachers for social media were under the concept of *harm*. They also drew attention to this point and stated, "the students state that social media is harmful but they continue to use it, perhaps because they want to cope with loneliness."

Another result of our study is that participants used positive or negative metaphors, such as *space*, *woodworm*, *Mexican wave*, *spider web*, *abyss*, *common property of a village*, *chaotic environment*, and *garbage*, to describe social media platforms. Ergüz and Kesten (2018) reported similar metaphors such as *witch's cauldron*, *marketplace*, *apple worm*, *space*, *ocean*, *spider web*, etc.

Eren, Çelik and Aktürk (2014) reported that secondary school students perceived Facebook as useful, a tool that should be used with caution, part of real life, the source of addiction, and the source of evil and compared it to negative things, such as cigarettes and alcohol or to positive things, such as a means of communication. Therefore, their results are consistent with ours. However, 56% of their participants had positive, 34% negative, and 10% both positive (when used with caution) and negative views of Facebook, which differs from our results because our participants (55.2%) with negative views of social media were twice as many as those with positive views of social media (23.88%).

Undoubtedly, one of the most important results of this study is that participants found social media to be addictive. This manifested itself in numerous metaphors and turned into a conceptual category with the greatest percentage. This showed that participants compared social media platforms mostly to drugs (7), cigarettes (5), and alcohol (3), which has been reported by numerous studies as well. In his study, Onursoy (2017) stated "this study shows that participants are addicted to social media in their daily lives. They demonstrate this through the metaphors on their drawings of someone snorting cocaine, and needles for drug injection" and concluded that the first and foremost negative value that participants attributed to social media is addiction. Doğan and Erkan (2019) also reported that Generation Z used the metaphors of *cigarettes*, *alcohol* and *drugs* to define social media. Ergüz and Kesten (2018) concluded that although preservice teachers continued to use social media very often, they generated metaphors depicting it as something addictive.

Some of our participants' metaphors were under the conceptual category of *useful*. Aside from that, there were some other categories including positive metaphors, such as *antibiotic*, *medication*, *sea water* (when used properly), *a means of traveling the world*, *connection with the outside world* (as a means of communication), *road*, *star*, *a basic necessity*. These metaphors show that participants perceive social media as part of life. This result has been reported by similar studies as well. Doğan and Erkan (2019) stated that the positive metaphors and their meanings indicated that *social media is life itself*, *a medium like a parent or teacher who teaches new things and where good moments are shared with best friends*. Ergüz and Kesten (2018) reported that participants used such positive metaphors as *world*, *ocean*, *snowball*, *teacher*, *friend*, *water*, *organ*, *sleep*, *sun*, and *cell* to define social media while Çelik (2019) stated that participants used such positive metaphors as *a smart book*, *teacher*, *scholar from the past*, *professor*, *scientist*, *teleported to knowledge*, *poet*, *great artist*, *relaxed*, and *free* to define social media. Erdem, Alkan and Erdem (2017) reported that participants used such positive metaphors as *a friend*, *big family*, *movie*, *sky*, *pen*, *headphones*, *to share*, *water*, *celebrity*, *time*, and *book* to describe social media. The researchers stated that the most common metaphor

concerning social media is *friend*, that the concepts of *sharing* and *communication* are the most commonly used metaphors in the literature to define the concept of social media, and that it is no coincidence that the first thing that comes to preservice teachers' minds when they think of social media is the concepts of *friend*, *communication*, and *sharing*. However, the first thing that came to our participants' minds when they thought of social media was the concepts of *drugs*, *cigarettes*, and *alcohol*. This result indicates that although pre-service Turkish Language teachers use social media platforms very often, they do not approve of them very much.

Another result of this study is the emergence of the category of *necessity*, in addition to those of *communication*, *unnecessary and useless*, and *trap*, which were expected to emerge. Our participants perceived social media as a necessity. The fact that they perceive social media platforms as a necessity today should not surprise us because a number of means used in many areas in the past have been replaced mostly by social media platforms today. There are some other studies that have reported that participants perceive social media as a necessity (Ergüz & Kesten, 2018).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is an unavoidable fact that the new generation, which was born into a world of visuals and social media, will use social media platforms more often than the university students recruited in this study. Therefore;

- The significance of social media and technology should be taken into account in the education of the next generations.
- The undeniable fact that using social media platforms more efficiently has numerous benefits should be taken into consideration more in the education of the next generations. Stakeholders in education should be informed about this to raise their awareness.
- Various studies should be conducted to determine the causes of negative metaphors and to find ways to eliminate them.
- Social media experts should hold various seminars in secondary schools, high schools, and universities to ensure that stakeholders in education have access to true information about social media.

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