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#### TEACHER CANDIDATES' VIEWS ON E-BOOKS AND SCREEN READING

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Today, it is a necessity to make use of information technologies in creating, distributing and accessing information resources. The electronic resources as products of the developing information technologies include bibliographical text databases, e-journals, e-books, open achieves and web sites. Today, Many printed material can be accesssed by electronically in readers. Furthermore, e-books have been increasingly preferred as a mode of reading because of its advantages such as portability, storage and rich content. Individuals who want to sustain their development on this mode of reading prefer screen reading. Because reading has become a necessity because of the developing information technologies. This study aimed to examine the views of students studying Turkish language teaching at an education faculty on e-books and screen reading. Action research, one of the qualitative research design, was used during the research. Data were analyzed by content analysis. Whereas 40.7% of the ones who have taken part in this study have expressed not knowing anything about e-books, 57.8% of the participants have claimed they have knowledge about the issue of e-books. 55.3% of the participants consider that e-books contribute to the habit of reading. 73% of the participants have expressed that they have no knowledge about screen reading.

**Key Words:** e-book, screen reading, teacher candidates

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Advents in communication and technology have triggered innovations in every area of life and these changes have also caused different trends in books publishing. Today, it is a necessity to make use of information technologies in developing, distributing and accessing resources of knowledge. With the increase in the number of portable devices having various features, printed tools and materials have started to be replaced with electronic ones. Perceived as one of the most convenient ways of accessing knowledge, the number of the users of these devices has boosted.

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This rapid change in technology has also affected the instructional practices and reading habits. Electronically prepared books and journals are preferred over printed versions. In our day, many printed materials can also be accessed in electronic environments. In this sense, ebooks can be described as the transfer of books to electronic environments so that they can be read on a computer or portable device. To put it more simply, e-books are the form of texts in various formats such as .txt, .pdf, HTML or XML which are accessible on electronic platforms (Lam, 2009; Hawkins, 2000). E-book technology was started by Micheal Hart at the University of Illinois in 1971 with an aim to create an electronic public library out of 10.000 books (Project Gutenberg). In 1990, by the help of HTML coding language, texts could be read on computers via the Internet, and in 1993, publicly available commercial websites started to be founded (Gürcan, 2005). With the spread of e-book technology and the increase in the number of readers using it, Rocket company released the first e-book device on which electronic documents could be viewed. Software enabling e-book devices to work such as Microsoft Reader and Adebo e-book Reader were published in 2000 and 2001, respectively (Mutlu, Korkut & Yılmaz 2006, p. 1270-1277).

To describe it technically, e-books are the electronic files that can be read using laptops, desktop computers, cell phones and other e-book devices, and consist of the same copy of their printed versions, only with extra features and advantages for the readers (as cited in Rukancı & Anameriç 2003, p. 147-166). Consequently, a huge database started to grow and the number of users increased in the course of time. With its advantages such as portability, storage, rich content, flexible font size and being environmentally friendly, e-books have been increasingly preferred as a way of reading, which resulted in new technological terminology related to reading concepts. One of these is screen reading. Reading on computer screens have gained importance continously as a source of information. (Hansen & Haas, 1988). In screen reading, the reader tries to understand the pieces of text presented one after another in the half size of a printed-paper. For this reason, screen reading is also called as "reading pieces" (Güneş, 2009, p. 26). Apart from its difficulties, screen reading has a number of advantages as well, and has become quite widespread. For screen reading to be productive, eye and mental skills should be developed. To improve their knowledge of the world and enhance their professional development, individuals choose screen reading. It has become a necessity because of the rapidly developing information technologies of the day (Güneş, 2009). Screen reading is the act of reading electronically or digitally through a screen like a computer monitor (İleri, 2011, p. 2). The literature on screen reading revealed findings by comparing two types of reading. These findings showed that reading from paper are faster than screen reading (Dysan & Haselgrove, 2001; Hansen & Haas, 1988; Nielsen, 2010; Joan & Joan, 2012).

In recent years, the number of studies on e-books and screen reading have increased (Abdullah & Gibb, 2008; Larson, 2012; Maden, 2012; İleri, 2011; Duran & Ertuğrul, 2012) and the effect of e-books on reading comprehension, how teachers and students used this technology, electronic reading habits and attitudes as a part of current educational settings were examined.

The role of information technologies has been largely emphasized in the education programs 2014 in Turkey that take technology as its basis in researching, finding, internalizing, presenting and evaluating the knowledge and that aim to acquire the skill to use information technologies.

Along with the knowledge, skills, values and concepts that are aimed to be delivered to the students, new education programs presume accessing information via information technologies, using and making it more permanent. In this age of information and technology in which the traditional approaches to education are inefficient, the skills described in multiple intelligence and constructivist approaches also include use of information technologies effectively.

Today, communities or individuals who can access information, use it and update it are accepted as qualified. As a result of this adaptation, individuals have to use any sort of tools that can help them access, use and share information in their learning environments. With the developing information and communication technologies, the sources of information that can be used by individuals have also changed. Being used by millions of people and being in every aspect of daily life, Internet has its place in course books and other learning environments as a way of accessing information. To further improve this, in line with the aims of Strategies for Information Society Document, State Development Plans, Ministry of Education Strategic Plan and IT (Information Technologies) Policy Report, all classrooms will have been equipped with IT tools until the year 2013.

One of the components of the FATİH Project includes "Effective Use of Information Technologies in Education Programs" with which it is aimed to adapt the education programs that are described as activity and outcome or student centered so that they would include the use of information technologies in teaching. The primary focus of this component is, then, enabling the effective use of information technologies with which the classroom are equipped within the FATİH Project based on aims and outcomes of the courses, learning areas and instructional principles and methods.

To reach the outcomes, the necessary e-materials (i.e. learning materials, video, audio, e-tests etc.) will be prepared along with the supporting information technologies. Among these e-materials, the main focus will be on 'enriched e-books' and their use on smart boards and tablet computers. Started to be used in FATİH Project, enriched e-books have a different structure that those of pdf or any other formats. While users need software to view an e-book, enriched e-books don't require it and users have full access to the rich content.

With the use of enriched e-books, it will be easier to reach the technological awareness as aimed in FATİH Project. In particular, by the help of the tables to be distributed to students, teachers will follow the content over enriched e-books, and interact with students when necessary. In enriched e-books, the course books accepted by the Ministry will be made more interactive with animations, videos, audios, pictures, maps, graphs, tables etc.

Fatih projet that was put to use by the Ministry of Education has given its start beginning from the second half of 2011-2012 academic years. In this sense, teacher candidates should be closely interested in information technologies in order to be able to teach their future students by making use of new technologies effectively.

This study aimed to examine teacher candidates' knowledge and views on e-books and screen reading. For this purpose, survey questions for students were prepared. Themes were created.

Turkish language teachers are expected to be capable of accessing information using information technologies so that they will be able to make their students members of the information society. The aim of this study is to identify Turkish language education students' level of knowledge related to e-book and screen reading concepts.

Three research questions guide this study:

- 1. What do the teacher candidates know about e-books in general?
- 2. Do they think that e-book applications are effective in developing reading habits?
- 3. What do they know about the term 'screen reading'?

#### 2. METHOD

The research method employed in this study is case study design. Based on the research topic, holistic single case design is preferred. Holistic single case design can be used in cases that are not previously studied or accessed. Studying such cases is important in terms of revealing previously unknown issues and being a resource for researchers in further studies (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). Whereas the examination of situation analysis starting from an individual and reaching a school offering researchers a wider range of rich and detailed data, it does not involve the objective of generalisation like other qualitative research approaches (Lichtman, 2013). In situation studies, the issue considered is the thoroughly study of one or more events, situations, societies or other classified systems. The situation defines a complete system. Situational studies can also be defined as the research of a Daily issue in its real contexts (Yin, 2014). The situation which is a matter of consideration is the level of knowledge among the candidate teachers regarding the issues of e-books and screen reading that are closely related Technologies.

The knowledge and views of students at the Turkish Language Education Department of Dokuz Eylül University were not previously examined. Moreover, it has significance in the sense that these terms such as e-books and screen reading are important for all teachers no matter their majors are.

#### POPULATION AND SAMPLE

To identify the sample, critical case sampling was used. For the sample concerned, it was argued that "the situation that has been encountered here can also be seen in similar situations" (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008, p. 110). However, qualitative researches are not appropriate for generalisations, in a quantative research, the objective is not generalisation but the depiction of a whole Picture. Thus, the findings of the research might help a group with similar characteristics to the studied group. As a result, universal generalisation is out of question.

Setting out from the assumption that "the level of knowledge of Turkish language education students at an education faculty can also be the case in other education faculties", the participants were composed of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> year 58 female and 38 male students at the Turkish language education department Buca Faculty of Education (including day and evening schooling shifts). In the study which was conducted with a total of 76 students interview forms were used to gather the data (Cemaloğlu, 2011; Kuş, 2009; Çepni, 2001)

#### **DATA GATHERING TOOL**

A semi-structured interview form which was developed by the researcher was used in the study to examine the participants' knowledge, experience, and views related to the concepts of e-book and screen reading. An interview form consisted of carefully written and ordered set of questions which are the same for each interviewed individual (Pattor, 1987 cited in Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008) reduces the effect of the interviewer and makes it easier compare and analyse the data. At first, open-ended and easy-to-understand questions related to e-books and screen reading were developed. To get expert opinion, the questions were presented to five experienced faculty members and two Turkish language teachers. Based on the feedback, the necessary adjustments were done. The instrument composed of four questions and a personal information form was distributed to the students. In the interview form, seven open-ended questions were asked to the candidate teachers considering their personal knowledge, e-books and screen reading. Data were collected at the end of a one-hour application.

### DATA ANALYSIS

The participants expressed their views and opinions on the semi-structured interview form by writing. The gathered data were analyzed using content analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008; Ekiz, 2009). The collected data has been examined more thoroughly in content analysis, and with the help of explanatory approach, concepts and themes that haven't been noticed could

be discovered in a better way. In this study, in the stage of coding the data, coding done in a general frame was preferred. It was tried to reveal the significant expressions within the data. These expressions were then coded and the codes were gathered in a list. The related codes were either combined or renamed. In this way, the themes of the study were formed. The answers given to the open-ended questions by the candidate teachers have been read by two different researchers and three codes have been formed on the knowledge of e-books, the effect of e-books on reading habit and screen reading. These codes have ben classified into six themes. To support the themes and codes, quotations and abbreviations related to the personal characteristics of the participants were also included as for these abbreviations, In the quoted sentences, (part. 1,2,3...), the views of the participants are abbreviated. No other information about participants have been given regarding their lack of contribution to the problem of the research.

### 3. FINDINGS

#### **FINDINGS**

As for the first research question which focused on teacher candidates level of knowledge related to e-books, two different themes were identified as a result of the qualitative analysis of the data.

Tablo 1 Student views on the code of "Knowledge related to E-Book"

Themes	f	%	Selected Answers
I don't have idea	31	40,7	I don't have enough of knowledge to have a view on.
			(58 F, 64 F, 66 F)
			I don't think I have enough of knowledge on this
			concept. It might be the reading on the Internet.(8 F,
			10 F, 11 F, 16 F, 19 F, 20 F, 21 F, 46 F, 47 F, 54 F)
			I don't have much knowledge. I think it's reading a
			book on a computer.(29 M, 33 M, 34 M, 41 F, 42 F, 70
			M)
			I don't know. I have never heard of it. (22 M)
			None (28 M, 31 M, 32 F)
			I don't have much knowledge. I've learn a little bit
			from the instructors. (2 F,45 F, 59 F, 68 F)
			I don't have much knowledge on e-books. To infer
			from the name, books are published online, and we
			view them on a computer. (9 F, 14 F)
			E-books, I think, are not something useful. (39 M, 69
			F)

I have idea	44	57,8	Yes, I know a bit. And I know it from TV and my friends. (1 F, 3 F, 4 M, 5 M, 6 M, 7 M, 15 F, 17 M, 18 M, 24 M, 30 M, 35 M, 37 M, 50 F, 53 F, 62M, 63 M, 65 F, 73 F, 74 F)  I follow the recent innovations in Internet technologies
			since we are in the 21st century. E-book is one of them. E-book is fun since it is online and includes both visual and audial materials. (23 F, 36 M, 38 M, 40 M, 61 M, 71 M, 72 M, 76 F)
			Yes, I know. We talked about it in our undergraduate computer course. (26 M, 27 M, 43 F, 49 F, 51 F, 52 F, 60 F, 67 F,75 F)
			I know about e-books. It is related to uploading some novels or resource books to the Internet. You can download by paying for it. I know these from social media and the computer course. (12 F, 25 F, 44 F,48 M, 56 M, 57 M)
			E-book is related to reading a book on the Internet via a computer. I know it from social media. (13 F)
To Have Partial Knowledge	1	1,5	Although I don't exactly know what it is, I know that it is reading on a computer. (55 M)

Examining the Table 1, 31 students didn't have any knowledge related to e-books. It is quite notable to have such a high figure. Students didn't have correct information on e-books. It can be seen that they felt themselves insufficient on the topic. A student said: "I don't think I have enough knowledge on this." (F 8), (F 10), (F 11), (M 16), (F 19). Another attention-getting point is that students mostly gave short answers. "I don't know. I have never heard of it." (M 22). "E-books, I think, are not something useful." (M 39), (F 69).

As seen in Table 1, 44 students had knowledge to various extent on e-books, which seems quite good among the number of the participants. However, if their expressions are examined, it can be seen that most of them were based on interpretations and comments rather than an explanation. It can be said that they mostly made interpretations or explanations based on broad or partial knowledge. "Yes, I know. We talked about it in our undergraduate computer course." (M 26),(M 27),(F 43), (F 49). "Although I don't exactly know what it is, I know that it is reading on a computer." (M 55). For this code, 21 students felt themselves sufficient to a small extent on the topic but didn't give enough information on how they knew that. "Yes, I know a bit. And I know it from TV and my friends." (F 1), (F 3),(M 4),(M 5),(M 6). On the other hand, 6 of the participants provided more details. "I know about e-books. It is related to uploading some novels or resource books to the Internet. You can

download by paying for it. I know these from social media and the computer course." (F 12),(F 25),(F 44),(M 48),(M 56),(M 57).

Table 2 Student views on the code of "The effect of e-book use on reading habit"

Themes	f	%	Selected Answers
Reading Improves Reading Habit	34	44,7	Many people prefer to read on a screen. If one wants to read, it could be any way. (7 M, 20 M, 22 M, 23 F,62 M, 63 M, 66 M, 65 F)
			I think e-book applications would be very useful if they are made popular with the right strategies. (10 F, 34 M, 51 F) It would be effective. The reason is people are getting much more into the Internet. E-books would be useful to keep pace with the new age. (13 F, 17 M, 24 M, 11 F,12 F, 29 M, 44 F, 47 M, 57 M, 59 F, 70 M, 71 M, 76 F) E-book is a facility of our age. We can't ignore new gadgets although we can't touch the paper and smell it. It is especially good for the children in the information society. It is a great idea to put books on computer screen of which the children are addicts. (14 F, 54 F, 56 M, 64 M) It could be more useful, more convenient to access many resources whenever needed. (55 M, 75 F) E-books are quite practical and economic in terms of accessing many books, however, it is better for those already having a reading habit. I don't think e-books would be useful in developing such a habit. (32 F, 36 M, 58 F,) It could be useful, but it may take a long time. (49 F)
Reading does not Improve Reading Habit	42	55,3	E-books are something that I certainly don't approve. One should touch the paper, smell it and feel it. (9 F, 15 F, 18 M, 19 F, 26 M, 50 F, 69 F)
			It can be useful to a certain extent. But it won't be continuous although exiting at first, and one reads less by e-books. It can't replace reading by touching and smelling the book. (16 M, 21 M, 25 F, 30 M, 37 M, 40 M, 35 M, 72 M,) I don't think it can. It is important for being a book fan to hold a book while reading and have a habit of forming a library. (27 M, 28 M, 31 M, 33 M, 1 F,38 M, 43 F, 45 F, 46 M, 52 F, 61 M, 67 F, 68 F, 73 F, 74 F) E-books are not something for individuals to develop themselves. Book is a unique culture. We take notes, underline some words which you can't do on e-books. E-books kill imagination. (39 M)

There is no need for e-books. It can be useful for tech-savvy people to develop a reading habit. However, it is not necessary for those already having a habit of reading.

It can't replace books and emits radiation. (42 F)

I think e-books not only affect reading habit negatively but also damage one's eyes, although it may have some advantages. (48 M)

I don't know anything on this. (1 F, 2 F, 3 F, 4 M, 5 M, 6 M, 53 F)

It could be, or not. One can be distracted by other things on the Internet. (60 F)

In Table 2, it can be seen that 42 students thought e-books could contribute to one's reading habit. 55,3% of all the students participated in the study had a negative view on the usefulness of e-books on developing reading habit. 7 of these students didn't comment since they didn't know anything about e-books. They didn't provide any other details. "I don't know anything about it, it emits radiation, no smell of the paper." (M 48).

As seen in Table 2, 34 student out of 76 (44,7%) had a positive or at least not negative views. By mentioning that "it would be useful, practical and economical…", 13 students thought that e-books would positively affect one's reading habit. In their study, Yıldırım et al. (2011) also found that users listed the advantages of e-books as portability, storage, flexibility in font size, rich content and being environmentally friendly.

Table 3 Student views on the code of "Screen reading"

Themes	f	%	Selected Answers
Not Sure	3	3,94	(1 F, 3 F, 4 M)
No	73	96,05	( 2 F, 5 M, 6 M, 7 M, 13 F, 14 F,16 M, 17 M, 18 M, 21 M, 22 M,
Information		23 F, 24 M, 25 F, 26 M, 27 M, 29 M, 30 M, 31 M, 33 M, 34 M, 35	
			M, 37 M, 39 M, 40 M, 41 K, 42 F, 44 F, 45 F, 46 M, 47 M, 48 M,
			50 F, 51 F, 52 F, 53 F, 54 F, 56 M, 57 M, 58 F, 59 F, 60 F, 62 M,
			64 F, 66 M, 67 F, 68 F, 69 F, 72 M, 73 F, 75 F, 76 F)
			I don't know anything. I think it is about reading a text on a
			screen. (28 M)
			I don't exactly know what it is but by looking at the term it
			must be the learning in front of a computer or a TV. (70 M)
			Believe me, I haven't heard of this term before. Is it
			something related to social media? (74 F)
			I don't exactly know about screen reading but I think screen
			reading is reading looking at the screen at e-books. (36 M, 38
			M)

Understanding signs and words on the screen and making interpretations on them. (8 F, 15 F, 49 F, 55 M, 63 M)

I think reading on a screen means reading an e-book. Reading printed books is more joy and less trouble. However, for accessibility, e-books are advantageous. (61 M)

It is a service for visually challenged people to read screens. (31 M)

Screen reading is related to texts flowing rapidly on a screen and individuals' retention of the texts. (71 M)

It could be reading books on the Internet. (10 F)

Although I'm not sure, it can be related to visual reading. Screen reading may include interpreting images, photographs, caricatures, and videos. (11 F)

Making sense of the shapes on a coputer or TV screen in one's mind. (12 F)

We can call it visual reading as well. It is naming visual texts by student perceptions. (19 F)

Understanding the symbols on a computer screen. (20 M)

Screen reading is a concept related to the appropriateness of broadcasts for age groups, categorizing them like below 13 or 18 years old. (32 F)

I have heard of it but couldn't remember it exactly. Although I'm not sure, it could be the messages on TV that are tried to be delivered to people watching. (43 F)

As far as I know it is reading and naming symbols or images. I think it is symbols replacing texts. (9 F)

As can be inferred from Table 3, 73 of the participants gave short answers about the screen reading concept as "I don't know" (F 2), (M 5), (M 6), (M 7), (F 13), (F 14), (M 16), (M 17), (M 18), (M 21), (M 22), (F 23), (M 24) (F 25), (M 26), (M 27), (M 29), (M 30), (M 31). Furthermore, 3 students' answers were short and without any explanation; "I'm not sure." (F 1), (F 3), (M 4). Another student said that he didn't ever hear the term before. In recent years, it is via the computers that knowledge is formed and shared. This process guides individuals who wants to catch up with the new trends and must-does of the contemporary society, and make conscious decisions and sustain their learning, to screen reading (Güneş 2010, p.26).

# 4. CONCLUSION

In the literature, the related studies mostly focused on history, advantages, spreading of e-books, distance learning applications of e-books, and its benefits for academic research. Lam 2009, Vidana 2003, McKnight and Dearnley 2003, Hollum & Gahala 2001, Hawkins 2000. However, there hasn't been any research encountered studying the case of students at Turkish language teaching departments in which most of the courses are towards social

skills. In this sense, the present study has significance. As a result of the study, it can be said that most of the participants didn't have knowledge on e-books. Teacher candidates either expressed that they didn't know anything with a short and brief answer or made interpretation based on the meaning of the word. These answers reflect that in this age of rapidly spreading Internet, the students were not much interested in e-books.

On the other hand, it is worth to note that the participants could exactly explain the term e-book but rather they provided their personal opinions. The ones saying that they knew what it was seems that they don't have much information about e-books. However, e-books are much more than an image of text files in the developing worlds in which these e-books are used as tools for teaching and learning.

In 1999, at the Ressurection Catholic School in the Ohio state, children literature (like Hansell & Gratel) was also digitalized along with course books being transferred to e-books. Although being argued as exciting, these e-book applications had also disadvantages (Poftak, 2001; as cited in Rukancı & Anameriç, 2003, p. 147-166). From the point of view of educators, e-book technology may ignore the works that are not up to date. Without having to wait for 6-8 years for a new edition of a course book, student and teachers will be able to download up to date materials right from the publishers (Rukenci & Anameriç, 2003). However, some people think that in spite of its advantages, e-books cannot replace classic printed books. The reason behind this is similar to what was identified in research findings, which was the desire to smell and thumb through the paper sheets (Maynard & Cheyne, 2005; Yıldırım et al. 2011). Despite the negative views, e-books are useful for enhancing the interactivity among students or between students and teachers. Moreover, they can also provide a positive atmosphere for learning when there are no technical problems (Shiratuddin et al., 2003). Chen (1998 as cited in Öngöz, 2011) argues that e-books enrich teaching environments and are suitable for many teaching methods and approaches. In some studies that have been carried out, it was indicated that teachers supported the use of e-books (Mansor and others, 2012) and that students have improved their abilities in understanding what they have read (Kelley, 2011). In Turkey, there have been practices focusing on the use of e-books in Dokuz Eylul, Koç, Mersin, Sabancı, Karadeniz Teknik, Ankara, Bilgi Universities, State Institute of Statistics and Ministry of National Education. While there are 4800 e-books available via "Ebrary" at the Dokuz Eylul University Library, it is surprising that 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year students studying Turkish language teaching don't have sufficient knowledge on the topic.

The following suggestion have been proposed based on the findings of the present study:

- Syllabuses of computer technologies courses within the program should be revised.
- 2. Students at the departments should be acknowledged about the concepts, terms, and applications related to e-books.
- 3. There should be joint seminars and projects with the department of computer education and instructional technology.

4. The cooperation between the university and the Ministry should be strengthened, and the teacher candidates should be motivated to develop themselves on the topic by presenting them models of a developing environment of which they will be part in the future.

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