

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students' Metaphors for the Concept of History\*

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### Abstract

*Problem Statement:* History is a science that helps people guide their futures; it is an indispensable part of education. It is important for students to know the past well in order to understand the present better and direct their future. History does not have magical laws to generalize in predicting future. However, we have to know that history can give us lines of vision for today and tomorrow. Students meet the concept of history for the first time in elementary school. They learn about history and they ground what they learn around the framework of social studies. In this context, the students' perspectives of the concept of history are very important for a better social studies and history education. One of the most important ways to determine students' perceptions of the concept of history is by creating metaphors.

*Purpose of Study:* The purpose of this study is to examine the metaphors of elementary school students for the concept of history.

*Methods:* Since this study examines an existing situation, it is a descriptive study. This study uses phenomenology design, a qualitative research method. The participants have completed the phrase of "History is like . . . because it . . ." to define their concept. The data are analyzed qualitatively and the metaphors are classified into conceptual categories.

*Findings and Results:* The 8<sup>th</sup> graders who participated in the study developed a total of 308 metaphors for the concept of history. These metaphors compose sub-categories such as like "comprehensive," "useful and important for nation," "complex," "loved and addictive," "informative," and "repetitive." Students developed 99 metaphors for the comprehensive history sub-category, 75 for the useful and important for

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nation sub-category, 52 metaphors for the complex history sub-category, 28 metaphors for loved and addictive history sub-category, 44 metaphors for the informative history sub-category, and 10 metaphors for the repetitive history sub-category.

*Discussion and Conclusion:* Each person has various perceptions about each notion and there was diversity between the students' perceptions. As opposed to the behavioral approach, the cognitive approach sees knowledge as a personal and individual form of knowledge. Diversity in the concept of history is natural within this frame.

*Key Words:* History, social studies, qualitative research, metaphor

History is among the most important topics of study among school programs and in intellectual life (Aslan, 2006). History is a science that helps people direct their futures, and history is also an indispensable part of education. Students' having a good perception of history is important in terms of understanding the present better and guiding their future. Besides, according to Dilek (2007:32), history does not have magical laws to predict the future. However, we have to know that history teach us for today and tomorrow. According to Tosh (2002), knowledge of history provides a basis for the projection of social, political and economic inclinations to the future, but it does not provide certain predictions. This allows us to see the conditions of future events. According to Nichol (1996), history is important because it makes students good citizens and patriots and it brings the community together.

Dilek (2007) explains the contemporary function of history in this way: history education contributes to the students' personal development, socialization and citizenship. There are two objectives for teaching history—disciplinary and social aims. The educators' answers to "What can we teach to the students about past?" and "What are the aims of the history teaching?" are abstracted from the necessity to teach history as a discipline with its own realities. In many countries, history lessons are a tool for citizenship education; this is a clear indicator that it is not being used for disciplinary purposes (Dilek, 2007).

According to Freeman and Levstik (1988), history is the chronological record of major events. In fact it is the story of how the world reached its present state (cited in Reild & Young, 2004). In some cases, it can be as interesting as a fictional tale, but usually it is not interesting for students.

According to Dilek (2007), history is mostly taught out of its own purpose. Elementary school social studies should interest students in history and make them love history. Elementary school is the educational level where the students meet the concept of history for the first time. It is thought that determining the students' views toward history at this age can help researchers understand the problems about history teaching and historical thinking. Also, the student's perceptions of history can help form an idea about the current situation of history teaching in social sciences.

Akinoğlu and Arslan (2007) indicate that history has content problem, and it cannot be said that we are not as successful grounding historical concepts as scientific concepts. They accept this as a problem emerging from the nature of social sciences, but not a weakness of history. There is no absolute rightness in scientific

data presented by social scientists dealing with the past and present of mankind. The results of social science research, done among different cultures about the causes and effects of an incident, can differ in different cultures. This structure of social sciences should be taught to students (Demircioğlu and Tokdemir, 2008). In this point of view, it is natural for students to have different meanings of history. With social sciences and history teaching having many views about historical events and thinking, history is more than memorizing historical events. Dilek (2007) said historic thinking as understanding history is a talent that should be developed in students to interpret the past and establish a connection between yesterday and today. This study tries to present the students' meanings of history. Also, researchers tried to determine their ability to think about history via their thoughts about history. The students' way of understanding history represents their ability to think in a historical way. The research helps determine their thoughts toward history using the comparisons they made. Metaphors are one of the best ways to determine students' perceptions of the concept of history. Metaphors are defined as qualifying a phenomenon or concept with more familiar and well-known terms and putting forth the similarities between the two (Groth & Bergner, 2005; Arslan & Bayrakçı, 2006). There is a widespread recognition that metaphors play a significant aesthetical, ornamental and pedagogical role in literature and education (Botha, 2009).

This study examines the perceptions of the concept of history of 8<sup>th</sup> graders who take Ataturk's Principles and Revolutionary History class through metaphor analysis. For this purpose, this study searched for answers to the following questions:

Which metaphors do elementary students use while explaining the concept of history?

Considering the common traits in which category can the metaphors be gathered?

### Method

This qualitative study aims to examine the existing situation as it is. Qualitative research methods were used during data collection, analysis and interpretation. This study used phenomenology design, a qualitative research method. Phenomenology design focuses on the phenomenon that we are aware but do not understand fully and deeply. Phenomenon can be confronted like events, experiences, perceptions, tendencies, contexts and situations. (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005: 72).

#### *Participants*

The research was conducted in the 2009-2010 academic year with the 8<sup>th</sup> graders of İbn-i Sina Elementary School in Erzurum, Turkey. In total, 101 students participated in the study. The 8<sup>th</sup> graders were chosen as participants in this study because they were taking the Ataturk Principles and Revolutionary History class, which consists of only one subject, unlike social studies. Social studies include subjects such as history, geography, economy, law, archeology, sociology and psychology. The 8<sup>th</sup> graders were preferred because researchers assumed that the students had accumulated enough knowledge about the concept of history by the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

### *Data Collection*

The researcher prepared a form to determine the participating students' perceptions of the concept of history. In the first section of this form, the students were asked to provide personal information related to several variables. In the second section of this form, they were asked to complete the phrase, "History is like . . . because it . . ." The students not only developed metaphors but also discussed why they used that metaphor. This was applied for one class hour (40 minutes) in each class. After collecting student-written essays, the metaphors were analyzed in this context.

### *Data Analysis*

The students' perceptions of the concept of history were analyzed with the metaphor analysis method. The data were evaluated by content analysis. The main aim of content analysis is to examine the contexts and relationships to explain the data gathered. It is necessary to conceptualize the data gathered then organize the data logically according to the contexts and themes that explain the data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005: 227). Like other studies that used metaphor analysis (Balci, 1999; Saban, 2004; Groth & Bergner, 2005; Ocak & Gündüz, 2006; Saban, Koçbeker & Saban, 2006; Semerci, 2007; Aydoğdu, 2008; Cerit, 2008; Güven & Güven, 2009; Saban, 2009), the analysis of student-developed metaphors and interpretation was done in the following stages:

- Determining metaphors
- Reading the papers and numbering them
- Coding
- Classifying metaphors
- Developing categories
- Ensuring validity and reliability
- Transferring data into SPSS package program for quantitative data analysis (At this stage the frequency of the metaphors has been determined).

It is necessary to explain these stages in more detail. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2005: 274), researchers have come across some important expectations, including taking precautions about reaching knowledge and identifying the data clearly and in a way that will enable another researcher to evaluate. Every paper was numerated after all of the students' metaphors were read. The contexts were codified and listed (such as: tree, heart, water, etc.). The list was compiled for two main purposes: (a) to use it as reference guide gathering the metaphors under a specific category and (b) to validate data analysis process and commentaries (Saban, 2009: 286). The blank papers were separated from the others. Then the students' metaphors were analyzed according to their common traits. This stage observed how the students conceptualized the history concept. Every student metaphor was analyzed in terms of the subject of the metaphor (history), the source of the metaphor and the relation of the source and subject of the metaphor. Then, six conceptual categories (Table 1) were formed by identifying every metaphor image with a specific theme ("comprehensive," "important and useful for nationalities," "has complex structure," "informational," etc.). The 8<sup>th</sup> graders who participated in the study developed 308 metaphors for the concept of history.

**Table 1.***Conceptual Categories of the History Concept and Specialties Representing Them*

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*Comprehensive History* (Nichol, 1996; Şahin, 2002; Şam, 2007)

History is a wide concept and science.

There is no end to history's subjects.

After long surveys history research has reached today's level.

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Historical events are continuous.*History Important and Useful for Nationalities* (Kütükoğlu, 1994; Nichol, 1996; Tosh, 2002; Özbaran, 2003; Yıldız, 2003; Aslan, 2006; Dilek, 2007; Safran, 2006)

History is the memory of a nationality. It takes an important place in a country's life.

History helps people direct their future by understanding the past.

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History brings national identity, unity, solidarity and interdependency to the citizens.*Complex History* (Nichol, 1996; Özbaran, 1997; Akınoğlu & Arslan, 2007; Dilek, 2007)

History is complex because it examines the activities of all kinds of people in the past.

Historic events can be intermingled with each other.

In history the result of an event can be the reason for another event.

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Historic events can change at any moment.*Informative History* (Carr, 1988; Nichol, 1996; Safran, 2006)

History is a science that transmits knowledge about the past and enables us to take lessons from this knowledge.

History enables people to learn how mankind contributed to culture and civilization.

People need history to learn information about them.

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Thanks to history, people have general culture.*Loved and Addictive History* (Drake and Brown, 2003; Köksal, 2008)

It is not possible to give up history.

History came up because of the curiosity of the people.

History regenerates and increases the interest in the past.

People can enjoy reading history.

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The interest in history books increases gradually.*Repetitive History* (History in which similar events are repeated) (Kafesoğlu, 1963; Özlem, 2004; Akınoğlu & Arslan, 2007; Dilek, 2007)

In history similar events can exist.

While evaluating similar events, the conditions of the time should be considered.

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History isn't repeated, but the mistakes are repeated.

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Some research has been done to provide the validity and reliability necessary to prove persuasiveness. Persuasiveness is one of the most important standards of research. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2005: 264), validity and reliability (transferability) are necessary. Perspective-focused data gathering, expertization and detailed representation methods have been used to provide persuasiveness and transmissibility. Reporting the data gathered in detail and the researcher explaining his path to the results are among the important criteria for qualitative research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005: 257).

According to Johnson and Christensen (2008), “As is known, when someone wants to generalize some research findings, external reliability is important. Generalizing isn’t the main aim of qualitative research” (p. 281). Therefore, Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer the consistency concept instead of qualitative research’s reliability concept (cited in Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005: 271). Researchers gave a list of the metaphors in alphabetical order and the names and specialties of six different conceptual categories to a different field expert. The expert classified every metaphor on the list according to categories, with the aim of confirming whether the metaphors given under the six categories determined in the research represent the conceptual category. Then the researcher determined the numbers of the different metaphors and the same ones after comparing his own match and the expert’s match. After the comparison, some sums were done using Miles and Huberman’s (1994: 64) formula (reliability= agreement/ agreement + divergence); the reliability rank of the research was 95 percent. According to Saban (2009), adequate reliability is acquired in qualitative research when the proportion of expert and researcher is 90 percent or higher.

### Findings and Results

This section presents information related to the categories and describes the categories. Table 2 gives the frequency distribution of students’ metaphors for the “comprehensive history” category.

**Table 2.**  
*Frequency Distribution of Students’ Metaphors for “Comprehensive History” Category*

| Metaphor name  | n     | Metaphor name      | n  |
|----------------|-------|--------------------|----|
| Water          | 14    | Chain              | 2  |
| Tree           | 9     | Shopping           | 1  |
| Space-eternity | 8     | Feet               | 1  |
| Life           | 6     | Bear               | 1  |
| Old person     | 6     | Food chain         | 1  |
| Road           | 5     | Plant              | 1  |
| Rope           | 3     | Age                | 1  |
| Diary          | 3     | Bag                | 1  |
| River          | 3     | Closet             | 1  |
| Ocean          | 3     | Inheritance        | 1  |
| Numbers        | 3     | Jet                | 1  |
| Octopus        | 2     | Ear                | 1  |
| Family         | 2     | Stairs             | 1  |
| Wall           | 2     | The Ottoman Empire | 1  |
| Communication  | 2     | Resume             | 1  |
| Wind power     | 2     | Nail               | 1  |
| Watch          | 2     | Land               | 1  |
| Dictionary     | 2     | Star               | 1  |
| Time machine   | 2     | Giraffe            | 1  |
|                | Total |                    | 99 |

Table 2 shows the 99 metaphors students developed for the comprehensive history category. In this category, the most frequent metaphor was “water.” According to students, history is a wide concept and science. For example, a student likens history to an octopus. He says that history has a wide content and various branches by saying, “*according to me history looks like an octopus because it has long and various branches like an octopus.*” History can be categorized diversely according to time, place and subject—world history, national history, political history, civilization history, religious history, etc.

A student says the subjects of history never end by saying, “*history is like shopping because it never ends.*” In this metaphor the student states that the necessities of human life are permanent, just as history is permanent. The meaning of shopping metaphor can be related to its continuity. The other students express the continuity of history with metaphors such as:

*History is like Ottoman Empire, it grows gradually.*

*History is like my fingernail because it grows more and more.*

*History is like a chain, there is always another link.*

*History is like a river, it doesn't have an end and it flows.*

*History is like eternity because history doesn't have an end.*

The students' metaphors represent history's long survey. The other metaphor that indicates history is wide are:

*History is like a full close because something is always hidden in it.*

*History is like natural numbers because it has infinite. It is so wide.*

*History is like roads. It doesn't have an end.*

*History is like wind energy, it never ends. It will continue as life continues. For this reason it has a very wide range.*

**Table 3.**  
*Frequency Distribution of Students' Metaphors for "History that is Useful and Important for Nations" Category*

| Metaphor name   | n     | Metaphor name            | n  |
|-----------------|-------|--------------------------|----|
| Heart           | 10    | Foundation of a building | 1  |
| Pen             | 9     | Knife's trace            | 1  |
| Flag            | 7     | Refrigerator             | 1  |
| Sun             | 6     | Eyeglasses               | 1  |
| Light-lamp      | 4     | Medicine                 | 1  |
| Blood           | 4     | Cow                      | 1  |
| Moon            | 3     | Skeleton                 | 1  |
| Car             | 3     | Turtle                   | 1  |
| Our ancestors   | 2     | Tie                      | 1  |
| Atom            | 2     | Diamond                  | 1  |
| National anthem | 2     | Chair leg                | 1  |
| Pencil lead     | 2     | Oil                      | 1  |
| Sweater         | 2     | Honor-glory              | 1  |
| Wealth          | 2     | Wine                     | 1  |
| Soldier         | 1     | Foundation               | 1  |
| Shoe            | 1     |                          |    |
|                 | Total |                          | 75 |

Table shows the 75 metaphors students developed for the history that is useful and important for nations category. In this category, the most frequent metaphors were "heart, pencil, flag and sun." When we look at the metaphors at this category, the assigned meaning of history is affirmative. The students came up with an explanation for importance and necessity. One student explained history's importance in the nation's life as "history is like the skeleton of human body, because the skeleton keeps the human on his feet, it is history which keeps a nation on its feet." Another student said, "history is like flag, because a nation is nothing without its flag and also a nation is nothing without its history." Another student focuses on the importance of history by saying, "history is like fridge. We have to full the fridge if it is empty and we ought to have money to full it. We have to work to earn the money. Usually the fridge is full of fruit, meat, etc. This shows that we won't stay hungry. History lesson is just like that. We have to know and understand our history. If we understand it we can take anything from there when it is necessary." The students' metaphors said that history helps national awareness, national identity, unity, solidarity, and interdependency; it also helps people direct their future by understanding it. Some significant metaphors with a similar meaning are:

*History is like pencil. If we write down the knowledge we learn and use it when we need it, the history reminds us out history as a nation. We always need it.*

*History is like a car because we go somewhere via car. If we know history, we can go to the past.*

*History is like our fame and honor; it is the most proud thing.*



*History is like the sun, it enlightens life and people.*

*History is like a diamond, it is very precious.*

*History is like a cow, we benefit from all parts of it.*

*History is like a sweater because our history protects and warms us.*

*History is like olive oil, because it rises to the top of everything and shows us the correct way.*

The student used the olive oil metaphor in an unusual way. "Rising like oil" is always used in a negative way, such as "always wanting to be right." However, the student tried to assign it an affirmative meaning. The metaphor focuses on the fact that history shows people the right way. Using the word in different ways shows that metaphors can have different meanings (Dös, 2010: 615).

**Table 4.**

*Frequency Distribution of Students' Metaphors for "Complex History" Category*

| Metaphor name     | n     | Metaphor name | n  |
|-------------------|-------|---------------|----|
| Computer-Internet | 9     | Forest        | 2  |
| Human             | 8     | Grocery book  | 1  |
| Hair              | 7     | Trash can     | 1  |
| Vein              | 6     | Ant           | 1  |
| Map               | 5     | Maze          | 1  |
| Crossword puzzle  | 2     | Cotton candy  | 1  |
| Soup              | 2     | Community     | 1  |
| Night             | 2     | Rubik's cube  | 1  |
| English lesson    | 2     |               |    |
|                   | Total |               | 52 |

Table 4 shows the 52 metaphors students developed for the complex history category. In this category, the most frequent metaphors were "computer-internet, human, hair, vein and map." Most of the metaphors in this category are negative. In this perspective, a significant number of students have negative attitudes toward history because of its complex structure. This can be explained by the fact that history contains so much information that needs to be learned. In other words, the students' negative attitudes toward history occur because of the complexity of history lessons in social studies classes. In the words of the student who says that history is complicated like a crossword (*History is like a crossword. It gives pleasure when you solve it. It is complicated like a crossword*), this situation is not negative. The students usually try to explain the complicated structure of history by comparing it to the complicated things in their lives. Some significant metaphors in this category are:

*History is like computer and the Internet because it is complicated. There is a lot of information on the Internet; it is difficult to know which one is important. In history there are also so many things.*

*History is like a human because it cannot be understood easily.*

*History is like Aslı's hair because it starts to be mixed up from one point.*

*History is like a soup because it is mixed. We cannot determine what is what.*

*History is like a labyrinth. It is hard to exit when you enter it.*  
*History is complicated like the notebook of a grocery.*  
*History is like our veins because it has a complicated structure.*  
*History is complicated like a map.*  
*History is like cotton candy. It is mixed.*  
*History resembles to a dustbin because only I do not exist in it.*

**Table 5.**  
*Frequency Distribution of Students' Metaphors for "Informative History" Category*

| Metaphor name | n  | Metaphor name | n |
|---------------|----|---------------|---|
| Book          | 14 | Library       | 2 |
| Teacher       | 8  | Television    | 2 |
| Flower        | 6  | Using car     | 1 |
| Brain         | 5  | Proverb       | 1 |
| Encyclopedia  | 2  | Rumi          | 1 |
| Guide         | 2  |               |   |
| Total         |    | 44            |   |

Table 5 shows that students developed 44 metaphors for the informative history category. In this category, the most used metaphor was "book." Additionally, it is interesting to find metaphors like "teacher, flower, brain, proverb, using car." Some statements related to the students' metaphors for this category and the reasons for using this metaphor are:

*History is like an encyclopedia because it has all kinds of information in it.*  
*History is like Rumi because it is very impressive.*  
*History is like a flower because when you smell it, its secrets come out. When you learn history, its secrets come out.*  
*History is like a guide because it shows us direction and informs us.*

The metaphors for this category show the pragmatic side of history. For example, 14 students likened history to a book and focused on its being educative.

**Table 6.**  
*Frequency Distribution of Students' Metaphors for "Loved and Addictive History" Category*

| Metaphor name         | n | Metaphor name | n |
|-----------------------|---|---------------|---|
| Love                  | 6 | Candy         | 2 |
| Friend                | 4 | Chocolate     | 1 |
| Baby-child            | 3 | Watermelon    | 1 |
| Supported soccer team | 3 | Adventure     | 1 |
| Birthday cake         | 3 | Cigarette     | 1 |
| Mathematics           | 2 | Sleep         | 1 |
| Total                 |   | 28            |   |

Table 6 shows that students developed 28 metaphors for the loved and addictive history category. In this category, the students compared the concept of history to the things they like and love, such as "love, friend, baby, soccer team, birthday cake,

mathematics, candy, etc.” When we look at the metaphors in this category we can say that the assigned meaning for history is generally affirmative. The students focused mostly on the spectacular side of history. One student explained that history causes addiction by saying, “History is like an adventure because you wonder about the end of it while you read it and you addict yourself to it.” Another student said, “history is like love, you become attached with passion and cannot leave it.”

Other metaphors telling that history is loved and it causes addiction:

*History is like love because it becomes deeper in time.*

*History is like my friend because it is loved so much.*

*History is like a child because a child is lovable and history is readable.*

*History is like a cake. We cannot stop eating a cake like we cannot stop learning history.*

*History is like sleeping – sometimes it is so tasty.*

*History is like smoking because it causes addiction*

**Table 7.**

*Frequency Distribution of Students’ Metaphors for “Repetitive History” Category*

| Metaphor name | n | Metaphor name              | n  |
|---------------|---|----------------------------|----|
| Movie         | 4 | Myself                     | 1  |
| Elevator      | 1 | Parrot                     | 1  |
| Sock          | 1 | Turkish-Armenian Relations | 1  |
| Equation      | 1 |                            |    |
| Total         |   |                            | 10 |

In this category, the students explain the similarity of the past events. The related literature addresses how the events in history do not repeat, but how there are similar events in history. Table 7 shows that students developed 10 metaphors for the repetitive history category. In this category, “movie” was the most used metaphor. One of the students compared the concept of history to Turkish-Armenian relations. This metaphor connects the events of the past and the events of the present day. Connecting the past to the present is very vital in history lessons. Some statements related to the students’ metaphors for this category and the reasons for using this metaphor are:

*History is like a parrot because it repeats.*

*History is like an elevator because it climbs up and down, that is, it repeats.*

*History is like a sad Turkish movie because the same bad events reoccur all the time.*

*History is like sock. When the events reoccur, it may smell just like a sock that is being worn everyday.*

*History is like the Turkish-Armenian relations because just like the Turkish-Armenian relations, the events in history stumble.*

When all the tables are examined, the students’ abstract metaphors appear in the form of life, communication, age, honor, love, adventure, etc..

### Discussion, Conclusions and Suggestions

The following results are based on the research findings:

- The students developed 308 metaphors for the concept of history.
- The metaphors developed by the 8<sup>th</sup> graders who participated in the research were categorized into six categories: “comprehensive history,” “history that is

useful and important for nations," "complex history," "loved and addictive history," "informative history," and "repetitive history."

- The students' metaphors are mostly from concrete objects. A small number of students developed abstract metaphors.
- "Book (14), water (14), heart (10), tree (9), pen (9), computer-internet (9)" are the most frequent metaphors for the concept of history.

In his work, Yalçınkaya (2010) states that it is impossible to explain all aspects of a concept with a metaphor and the least developed metaphors are as important as the most developed metaphors. In this study, the least developed metaphors are also worthy of notice. In Şimşek and Bal's (2010) research where they studied the teacher candidates' perceptions of historical time through timelines, the variety of the symbols the students used to show time is consequential. It is significant that the students used analogies such as snake, train, stairs, pyramid, flower, two arms of a person, etc., in the timelines they prepared for "teaching purposes." This is like an objection to the timelines taped on the classroom walls for being boring and dull. This variety in analogies also can be seen as an attempt to escape a grim history education (Şimşek & Bal, 2010). Similar analogies are observed in this study. Students looked at the concept of history from different aspects and gave their own meaning to the concept. In the students' metaphors, a desire to escape the boredom of history is apparent. This study found that the elementary school students' perceptions of the concept of history are mostly positive. A similar study by İskender (2007) also found that teacher candidates' attitudes toward history are generally positive.

In his research on the historical awareness of senior students in social studies teacher programs, Gökçaya's (2001) results refer to history's didactic aspect. For example, in response to the "What does history mean to you?" question, students marked the "informative examples that show what is right and what is wrong" choice by a 3.8 ratio. In this study, the didactic aspect of the metaphors collected in the informative history category is significant. In this respect, this study's findings are consistent with Gökçaya's (2001) findings. Therefore, there are similarities in the perspectives of students from elementary school to university about the concept of history. Again, similar findings can be found in Şimşek's (2010) work where he examined the social studies and primary school teacher candidates' views on history, history education and historical time. In that study, it is obvious that the teacher candidates' perceptions of the concept of history are generally positive. According to Kaya and Demirel's (2008) research findings, high school students accept the importance of understanding history and knowing its relevance to their lives. In his work, Ulusoy (2009) stated that history lessons not only helped high school students develop positive feelings for their own country and nation but also they developed positive attitudes and values toward humanity. At the same time, history lessons also teach them to pattern themselves after benevolent, tolerant and peaceful politicians. In this study's "informative history" and "history that is useful and important for nations" categories, even elementary school students focus on the importance and necessity of history at that age with metaphors.

According to Ata (2007), veteran history teachers use the metaphor of "bridge between the past and future" to explain the importance of history. Two teachers (11- and 20-year veterans) used the metaphor of a "person who lost his memory" to define a student who did not have historical knowledge. In fact, this metaphor is

prevalent in books about history education. When they emphasized the purpose and importance of history education, history teacher candidates used the “learning from past mistakes” and “for culture” statements. One teacher candidate compared a person who does not know history to a child who does not know his/her parents. Another teacher candidate compared a person who does not know history to “a driver whose eyes are closed.” According to Demircioğlu’s research on what high school students (N=466) in Trabzon ascribed as the purposes of history lessons, 72 percent (336 students) used statements such as “history teaches the past” and 28.5 percent (133 students) said “history helps us to learn from our mistakes” (cited in Ata, 2007). Similar findings appear in all of the research on the teacher candidates’, teachers’ and high school students’ perceptions and attitudes of the concept of history. Elementary school students’ perceptions of the concept of history also are similar to these findings.

Just as people have different perceptions of every concept, this study found differences among the students’ perceptions of the concept of history. In contrast to the behaviorist approach, the cognitive approach views knowledge as subjective, and each person constructs his/her own knowledge. In this context, it is natural for the students’ perceptions to differ.

The following suggestions are based on study’s findings and results:

- The elementary school students’ perceptions and attitudes of the concept of history can be determined using research methods and techniques such as surveys and interviews.
- The elementary school students’ perceptions of the concept of history can be identified.
- The elementary school students’ perceptions of various concepts (geography, economy, communication, population, time, space, community, individual, environment, chronology, etc.) they encountered in social studies can be examined through metaphors.
- Developing metaphors can be used as a method in social studies and history. In this way, students can look to events, ideas, objects and concepts from different angles.

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### İlköğretim 8. Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Tarih Kavramına İlişkin Metaforları

#### Atıf:

- Yalçınkaya, E. (2013). 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students' metaphors for the concept of history. *Eğitim Araştırmaları-Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 51, 273-290.

#### (Özet)

##### Problem Durumu

Tarih dersinin çağdaş işlevi Dilek (2007) tarafından "tarih öğretimi yoluyla, öğrencilerin kişilik gelişimi, sosyalleşme ve vatandaşlık eğitimine katkıda bulunma amaçlanmaktadır" biçiminde açıklanmıştır. Ülkemizdeki sosyal bilgiler dersi öğretim programının tarih kısmı başlıca ulusal ve siyasi tarih üniteleri vasıtasıyla hazırlanmıştır. Bu programda tarih öğretimi açık bir şekilde sosyal gereksinimleri amaçlamaktadır ve bu yüzden disiplin dışı amaçlar kapsamında değerlendirilmelidir. Fakat aynı derecede tarihin içe dönük amaçları da önemli olmalıdır (Dilek, 2007).



Bu çalışma ile öğrencilerin tarih kavramına yükledikleri anlamlar ve farklılıklar ortaya konmaya çalışılmış, bunun yanında tarih kavramına yükledikleri anlamlardan yola çıkarak tarihsel düşünme becerilerinin tespiti yapılmaya çalışılmıştır. Öğrencilerin tarih kavramını algılayış biçimleri onların tarihsel düşünme becerilerinin bir ürünü ve sonucu olduğu düşünülmektedir. Araştırma yoluyla öğrencilerin tarihe yönelik düşünceleri kullandıkları benzetmelerden yararlanılarak tespit edilmiştir.

#### *Araştırmanın Amacı*

Bu araştırmanın amacı, T.C. İnkılap Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük dersini okuyan İlköğretim 8. sınıf öğrencilerinin tarih kavramına ilişkin algılarının metafor analizi yoluyla incelenmesidir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda bu çalışmada aşağıdaki sorulara cevaplar aranmıştır:

İlköğretim öğrencileri tarih kavramını açıklamada hangi metaforları kullanmaktadırlar?

Ortak özellikleri dikkate alındığında tarih kavramına yönelik metaforlar hangi kategoriler altında toplanabilir?

#### *Araştırmanın Yöntemi*

Çalışma, mevcut durumu ortaya koymayı amaçladığından betimsel bir çalışmadır. Çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemleri arasında yer alan olgubilim deseni kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın 8.sınıf öğrencileri ile yürütülmesinin sebebi öğrencilerin bu sınıfta sosyal bilgiler dersinden farklı olarak tek bir disiplinden oluşan T.C. İnkılâp Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük dersini okumalarıdır. Sosyal bilgiler, sosyal bilimlerin kapsamına giren tarih, coğrafya, ekonomi, hukuk, arkeoloji, sosyoloji, psikoloji gibi birçok bilim dalının konularını içermektedir. Öğrencilerin 8.sınıfa gelene kadar tarih kavramına ilişkin bir bilgi birikimine sahip olduklarını dikkate alınarak çalışmanın 8.sınıf öğrencileriyle yürütülmesi daha uygun bulunmuştur. Öğrencilerin tarih kavramına ilişkin görüşlerini tespit etmek amacıyla veri toplama aracı olarak araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan açık uçlu sorular kullanılmıştır. Katılımcılar kavramlarını belirtmek amacıyla “Tarih..... gibidir. Çünkü.....dir” boşluğunu tamamlamışlardır. Veriler nitel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Öğrenciler tarafından üretilen her bir metafor, metaforun konusu (yani, “tarih”), metaforun kaynağı ve metaforun konusu ile kaynağı arasındaki ilişki bakımlarından analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmaya katılan 8. sınıf öğrencileri tarih kavramına ilişkin toplam 308 metafor geliştirmişlerdir. Araştırmaya katılan ilköğretim 8. sınıf öğrencilerinin tarih kavramına ilişkin geliştirdikleri metaforlar; “geniş kapsamlı olan”, “milletler için faydalı ve önemli olan”, “karmaşık bir yapısı olan”, “sevilen ve bağımlılık yapan”, “bilgilendiren”, “tekerrür eden”, biçiminde altı kategoriden oluşmaktadır.

#### *Araştırmanın Bulguları*

Öğrencilerin geniş kapsamlı tarih kategorisine ilişkin ürettikleri toplam metafor sayısı 99, milletler için faydalı ve önemli olan tarih kategorisine ilişkin ürettikleri toplam metafor sayısı 75, karmaşık yapısı olan tarih kategorisine ilişkin toplam 52, sevilen ve bağımlılık yapan tarih kategorisine ilişkin toplam 28, bilgilendiren tarih kategorisine ilişkin toplam 44 ve tekerrür eden tarih kategorisine ilişkin toplam 10 metafor geliştirdikleri görülmektedir. Geniş kapsamlı tarih kategorisinde öğrencilerin en fazla ürettikleri metafor “su” olmuştur. Milletler için faydalı ve önemli olan tarih kategorisinde en fazla üretilen metaforların “kalp, kalem, bayrak ve güneş” olduğu görülmektedir. Karmaşık yapısı olan tarih kategorisinde

öğrencilerin en fazla ürettikleri metaforlar “bilgisayar-internet, insan, saç, damar ve harita” olmuştur. Sevilen ve bağımlılık yapan tarih kategorisinde öğrenciler tarih kavramını “aşk-sevgi, arkadaş, bebek, futbol takımı, yaş pasta, matematik, şeker gibi” sevdikleri ve beğendikleri metaforlara benzetmişlerdir. Bilgilendiren tarih kategorisinde öğrencilerin tarih kavramını en çok kitaba benzettikleri anlaşılmaktadır. Tekerrür eden tarih kategorisinde ise öğrenciler tarih kavramını en çok filme benzetmektedirler.

Öğrencilerin ürettikleri metaforların daha çok somut nesnelere olduğu görülmektedir. Bunun yanında az sayıda öğrenci soyut metaforlar üretmiştir. Öğrenciler tarih kavramına ilişkin olarak en fazla kitap (14), su (14) kalp (10), ağaç (9), kalem (9), bilgisayar-internet (9) metaforlarını geliştirmişlerdir.

#### *Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri*

Çalışmamızda öğrenciler tarafından az sayıda üretilen tarih kavramına ilişkin metaforlar da dikkate değer bulunmaktadır. Öğrenciler tarih kavramına farklı açılardan bakmışlar ve tarih kavramını kendilerine göre anlamlandırmışlardır. İlköğretim öğrencilerinin ürettikleri bu benzetmelerde de tarih konularının sıkıcılığından kurtulma istek ve arzusu rahatlıkla görülebilir. Bunun yanı sıra yaptığımız bu araştırmada ilköğretim öğrencilerinin genellikle tarih kavramına ilişkin algılarının olumlu olduğu görülmektedir. Çalışmamızda bilgilendiren tarih kategorisinde toplanan metaforların didaktik yönü ağır basmaktadır. “Bilgilendiren tarih” ve “milletler için faydalı ve önemli olan tarih” kategorisinde üretilen metaforlarda ilköğretim öğrencileri bile o yaşta tarihin önemi ve gerekliliğine odaklanmaktadırlar.

Araştırma bulgu ve sonuçları doğrultusunda şu önerilere yer verilebilir:

- İlköğretim öğrencilerinin tarih kavramına ilişkin algı ve tutumları anket, görüşme gibi farklı araştırma yöntem ve teknikleri ile tespit edilebilir.
- Metaforlarla ilköğretim birinci kademe öğrencilerinin tarih kavramına yönelik bakış açıları belirlenebilir.
- Metaforlarla ilköğretim öğrencilerinin sosyal bilgiler derslerinde öğrencilerin karşılaştıkları çeşitli kavramlara (Örneğin; coğrafya, ekonomi, iletişim, nüfus, zaman, mekân, toplum, birey, çevre, kronoloji vs...) yönelik bakış açıları incelenebilir.
- Metafor üretme bir yöntem olarak tarih ve sosyal bilgiler derslerinde kullanılabilir. Bu sayede öğrencilerin olay, fikir, nesne ve kavramlara farklı açılardan bakmaları sağlanabilir.

*Anahtar Sözcükler:* Tarih, sosyal bilgiler, nitel araştırma, metafor