

Elementary school students' metaphor perceptions of foreign students

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the metaphor perceptions of Turkish students who have foreign students in their classrooms about foreign students. In the study, phenomenology design was used as the qualitative research method. Criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to determine the study group. In the selection of the participants in this study, the main criterion was the presence of Turkish students with foreign students in their classrooms. According to this criterion, a total of 84 primary school students constituted the study group. As a data collection tool, two sentences were used as the data collection tool: "In my opinion, foreign students are like Because ..." form consisting of two sentences was created. Content analysis technique was used to analyze the data. According to the findings obtained from the analysis of the collected data, a total of 39 metaphors were produced in the study group. These metaphors were categorized as positive and negative. While the positive metaphors of the students were divided into 6, that is, categories diversity, kind-heartedness, equality, industriousness, beauty and protectiveness, no negative metaphors were found. It can be concluded that Turkish students who have foreign students in their class have positive perceptions towards their foreign friends. In order to enrich and reinforce positive perceptions, value-sensitive education plan practices are recommended.

Keywords: Foreign students, metaphor, perception, primary school.

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INTRODUCTION

The term metaphor originally came from the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle. It can also be called a pedagogy term used in different fields. Today, although the term is known in the fields of literature, art, etc., it is used as a tool in disciplines such as psychology, pedagogy and sociology (Demir and Yıldırım, 2019). Metaphor has found their equivalent in our language as "metaphor". In addition to being seen as a kind of analogy, they are the shapes, visuals and symbols created in the mind by a concept that is intended to be said. It is a kind of imagination-triggering tool and the desire to be together with modern knowledge (Alptekin and Kaptan, 2018; Usta, 2016). The term metaphor, which has a long history in the language of Western countries, was included in Turkish at the end of the last century and started to be used in different fields (Demir and Yıldırım, 2019).

Many phenomena and concepts that are difficult to express can be conveyed simply through metaphors. With metaphors as a tool, it is easier to see individuals'

perspectives on life (Alptekin and Kaplan, 2018). It is known that there are many methods to reveal perceptions. Metaphor as a perception tool is used as an important method in determining perceptions. It enables even familiar terms to be expressed more clearly (Gözler, 2018). Perception is defined in TDK as "Becoming conscious of something by directing attention to it, perception." Many methods can be used to measure Turkish students' perceptions of foreign students. One of them is "metaphors". The concept of metaphor has started to be frequently used in education after the 2000s.

The importance of metaphors in education is applied in educational administration, curriculum development and planning, teaching, promoting learning and developing creative thinking skills (Arslan, 2006). Şeyihoğlu and Gencer (2011) emphasize that metaphors, apart from their use in daily life, have been used in education and training since ancient times and that teachers, consciously or unconsciously, use

metaphors to express ideas, concepts and abstract elements. The use of metaphors will contribute to students' expressing their thoughts about foreign students in the context of creative thinking (Aydın and Pehlivan, 2010).

When the literature on the opinions of foreign students is examined, it is seen that there is very little use of metaphors and utilization of metaphors. There are mostly studies on foreign students around the titles of "Turkey and Turkish". In this framework, three studies were found in the relevant literature. One of these studies is Sarıdaş's (2022) study titled "Investigation of Foreign and Local Students' Views on Each Other through Metaphors". Sarıdaş obtained 150 valid metaphors in this study. According to the data obtained, the metaphors were categorized as positive and negative. 48 of 74 domestic students used positive, 24 negative and 2 neutral metaphors and 70 of 76 foreign students used positive and 6 negative metaphors. In her study, the researcher found that domestic students created positive metaphors for foreign students as a source of information, friend/friend, diversity, contributor waiting for help and full of mystery. The second related study is Demirtaş and Taş's (2019) study titled "Investigation of Classroom Teachers' Metaphor Perceptions of Syrian Students (Konya Sample)". In the study, 133 classroom teachers from 17 different primary schools with Syrian students in their classrooms volunteered. Teachers developed 80 different metaphor images while expressing their perceptions about Syrian students. These images were categorized into 8 different categories. It was determined that the most recurrent metaphor was the "flower" metaphor with a frequency of 16. The third study is Yurdakul and Tok's (2018) study titled "Refugee/Immigrant Students from Teachers' Perspective". Unlike the other two studies, this study was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, metaphor perceptions were determined and in the second stage, a semi-structured interview form was created by considering metaphorical perceptions. This study aims to determine the views about refugee students through metaphors and to suggest solutions to the problems they experience in education. In the study, 32 metaphors were obtained from the evaluated papers. It was determined that the teachers participating in the study generally had positive opinions about refugee students. Teachers produced the most metaphors under the theme of "harmonious student". These metaphors are guest, harmonious, incompatible and flower plucked from its branch. By analyzing the metaphors produced, themes were formed under the titles of students with language problems, students with cultural difference problems, students with emotional problems and harmonious students. When both the research and literature are examined, this situation constitutes the problematic situation of the research because the opinions of Turkish students about foreign students are not sufficiently known. This study aims to determine the opinions of Turkish primary school students on foreign students through metaphor perceptions. In this context, the metaphorical perception developed towards foreign

students is an important factor in determining the acceptance status of these students and the quality of their education. For this reason, the study will be up-to-date research on what Turkish students think about foreign students living in Turkey.

METHOD

The study was conducted within the scope of the phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research designs. The phenomenological design creates a suitable research ground for studies aiming to investigate phenomena that we are aware of but cannot fully comprehend (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). In this study, the facts stated by primary school students about foreign students were examined.

Working group

The study group was determined using criterion sampling, one of the non-random purposive sampling methods. The study group consisted of 84 primary school students studying in Antalya province and having foreign students in their classes. The main purpose of the criterion sampling method is to study the situations that meet the specified criteria. The main criterion in this sampling is that the participants have studied with foreign students in their classes. Foreign students at the school were not included in the study. The gender distribution of the students participating in the study is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants.

Gender	Number of students	Percentage (%)
Girl	40	47.61
Male	44	52.38
Total	84	100

When Table 1 is analyzed, it is seen that 47% (40) of the participants were female students and 52% (44) were male students.

Data collection

For each class in which the students in the study group were present, the researcher conducted the application during one class hour without informing each other. Before starting the application, each class was informed that their participation in this study was voluntary and that they could not participate if they wished. In order to determine the metaphorical descriptions of the students, they were asked to write the following sentence about the concept of foreign students: "Foreign students are like Because ..." sentence was used as a form. First of all, the concept of metaphor was defined and it was

stated that they would benefit other people scientifically if they expressed their thoughts. It was emphasized several times for the students to express the reason for their metaphors. Saban (2008) stated that "In studies where metaphor is used as a research tool, the concept of "as" is generally used to evoke the link between the subject of the metaphor and the source of the metaphor more clearly. In this study, the concept of "because" was also included and the participants were asked to provide a justification or logical basis for their metaphors. No time limit was mentioned in order not to create a time anxiety factor for the students to create the metaphors. Since the aim was to benefit from students' initial thoughts about the metaphor, a time limit was not necessary. "Foreign students are like Because ..." which they wrote in their own handwriting, was used as the main data source in the study.

Data analysis

The facts collected from the students' work were analyzed using "content analysis". Content analysis is a technique that offers the possibility of working in non-direct ways to specify the behavior and nature of people. It is a technique in which some words are summarized into smaller content categories by coding with certain rules. Content analysis allows inferences to be made about the message (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2018).

The analysis and metaphors were analyzed by the researcher according to the following stages: First, the data obtained from the students were collected according to the classes. Then the findings were grouped according to their similarities. In the second stage of the analysis, the metaphor perceptions derived by the students were reviewed and sorted alphabetically. For the sake of student confidentiality, each student will be coded by writing the letter Ö and the ranking number next to it. For example, Ö5 for the fifth student. The metaphors of the students who produced the same metaphor were written side by side. 39 different metaphors were generated from 84 students. Then, sample metaphors representing each metaphor were determined and selected as "sample metaphor expression". The purpose of this selection was to help categorize the metaphors and to enable interpretation of the data. After the sample metaphors were determined, they were regrouped according to their valid similarity. These grouped metaphors were categorized into positive and negative groups. In the positive group, 6 categories were formed and in the negative group, no metaphor was encountered and 6 categories were formed in total. Direct quotations are included in the findings section. The data obtained in the study were analyzed using the metaphor analysis proposed by Saban, Koçbeker and Saban (2006). These steps are shown in Figure 1.

As shown in Figure 1, the data collected from the students in the study were first divided into codes. Then, categories were determined and codes were distributed



Figure 1. The steps of metaphor analysis.

among the categories. The reliability and validity study of the study with sample metaphors was completed and then all the collected data was analyzed.

FINDINGS

Metaphors produced by students with foreign students in their classrooms regarding foreign students

The metaphors produced by the students with foreign students in their classes about foreign students are shown in Table 2.

When Table 2 is analyzed, Turkish students produced 39 valid metaphors about foreign students. Of these, 25 were expressed by more than one student and 14 were expressed by only one student. When the data are analyzed, we see that the most frequently produced metaphors are flower ($f = 5$), angel ($f = 5$) and Arab ($f = 5$). These are followed by flag ($f = 4$) and black ($f = 4$) metaphors. Russian ($f = 3$), sun ($f = 3$), blue ($f = 3$), world ($f = 3$), ant ($f = 3$), human ($f = 3$), and mother ($f = 3$) metaphors were produced more than the others.

Themes and categories of metaphors produced by students with foreign students in their classrooms regarding foreign students

A total of 39 metaphors obtained from the responses of the students were categorized as positive and negative. The students' positive metaphors were divided into 6 categories: diversity, kind-heartedness, equality, industriousness, beauty and protectiveness, while no negative metaphors were found. The categories obtained are shown in Table 3.

According to Table 3, all 84 students used positive metaphors and no negative metaphors. The metaphors used by Turkish students and their interpretations are as follows:

Table 2. Metaphors generated by Turkish students for foreign students.

Queue	Metaphor	f	Queue	Metaphor	f	Queue	Metaphor	f
1	Flower	5	14	Long	2	27	Foreigner	1
2	Angel	5	15	Light	2	28	Moon	1
3	Arab	5	16	Turkish	2	29	Book	1
4	Flag	4	17	Hero	2	30	Su	1
5	Black	4	18	Athlete	2	31	Outfit	1
6	Russian	3	19	Chick	2	32	Hair	1
7	Sun	3	20	Chocolate	2	33	Language	1
8	Blue	3	21	Beautiful	2	34	Headscarf	1
9	World	3	22	Sweet	2	35	Bee	1
10	Ant	3	23	Aslan	2	36	Mosque	1
11	Human	3	24	Cat	2	37	Smile	1
12	Anne	3	25	Friend	2	38	School	1
13	Brother	2	26	Father	1	39	Cute	1

Table 3. Themes and categories related to metaphors.

Answers given by students			
Positive	39	Negative	0
Difference	14	-	-
Good Heartedness	8	-	-
Equality	5	-	-
Diligence	5	-	-
Beauty	5	-	-
Protectiveness	2	-	-
Total	39	-	-

Metaphors belonging to the category of difference

In this study, in which it was observed that all Turkish students produced positive metaphors for foreign

students, the data related to the category of 'Difference' were found the most. Metaphors, frequencies and sample student expressions related to this category are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Category of difference about foreign students.

Metaphor	f	Exemplary students	Direct quotations
Arab	5	Ö37	Foreign students are like Arabs. Because they look like Arabs.
Flag	4	Ö52	Foreign students are like flags. Because like flags, they are of different races.
Black	4	Ö21	Foreign students are like black. Because they are children of another country.
Russian	3	Ö6	Foreign students are like Russians. Because they have blond hair and blue eyes.
Blue	3	Ö12	Foreign students are like blue. Because their eyes are blue.
Long	2	Ö80	Foreign students are like tall. Because they are very tall.
Chick	2	Ö62	Foreign students are like chicks. Because they are yellow.
Chocolate	2	Ö60	Foreign students are like chocolate. Because their faces are black.
Foreigner	1	Ö13	Foreign students are like foreigners. Because their language is different.
Outfit	1	Ö46	Foreign students are like clothes. Because I know they are foreigners by the way they dress.
Hair	1	Ö40	Foreign students are like hair. Because by their hair we know they are from a different country.
Language	1	Ö38	Foreign students are like a language I don't understand. Because we cannot have a friendly conversation.
Headscarf	1	Ö57	Foreign students are like headscarves. Because they wear headscarves.
Mosque	1	Ö76	Foreign students are like mosques. Because I saw them in the mosque a lot in the summer.

As seen in Table 4, fourteen different metaphors were produced by 31 students under the category of 'Difference'. The most frequently produced metaphor was Arab ($f = 5$), while the others were flag ($f = 4$), black ($f = 4$), Russian ($f = 3$), blue, ($f = 3$), tall ($f = 2$), chick ($f = 2$), chocolate ($f = 2$), foreigner ($f = 1$), clothes ($f = 1$), hair ($f = 1$), language ($f = 1$), headscarf ($f = 1$) and moon ($f = 1$). Within the scope of this category, students emphasized the physical differences of foreign students and the concepts that were different to them in their lives.

Metaphors belonging to the category of kindheartedness

Some of the positive metaphors produced by Turkish students for foreign students fall under the category of 'Kindheartedness'. Metaphors, frequencies and sample student expressions related to this category are given in

Table 5.

As seen in Table 5, eight different metaphors were produced by 18 students under the category of 'Kindheartedness'. The most frequently produced metaphor was angel ($f = 5$), while the others were sun ($f = 3$), light ($f = 2$), hero ($f = 2$), friend ($f = 2$), lion ($f = 2$), smile ($f = 1$) and moon ($f = 1$). Within the scope of this category, students emphasized that foreign students are well-intentioned, helpful people.

Metaphors belonging to the equality category

It is seen that some of the positive metaphors produced by Turkish students for foreign students are grouped under the category of 'Equality'. Metaphors, frequencies and sample student expressions related to this category are given in Table 6.

Table 5. Category of Kindness about Foreign Students

Metaphors	f	Exemplary students	Direct quotations
Angel	5	Ö3	Foreign students are like angels. Because they are very kind-hearted.
Sun	3	Ö11	Foreign students are like the sun. Because they are happy.
Light	2	Ö22	Foreign students are like light. Because they illuminate every place with happiness.
Hero	2	Ö14	Foreign students are like heroes. Because they help us.
Friend	2	Ö84	Foreign students are like friends. Because they are friends to us.
Aslan	2	Ö7	Foreign students are like lions. Because they are very strong, they protect us against the other kids in the class.
Smile	1	Ö44	Foreign students are like smiles. Because I see them laughing all the time.
Moon	1	Ö49	Foreign students are like the moon. Because just as the moon illuminates the night, they illuminate the day.

Table 6. Equality category about foreign students.

Metaphors	f	Exemplary students	Direct quotations
World	3	Ö69	Foreign students are like the world. Because we all have the right to live in the world.
Human	3	Ö16	Foreign students are like people. Because we are all human beings.
Brother	2	Ö24	Foreign students are like brothers and sisters. Because I see them as our brothers and sisters.
Turkish	2	Ö39	Foreign students are like Turks. Because they learn Turkish.
Su	1	Ö2	Foreign students are like water. Because water is essential for all of us to live. They also have the right to life.

As seen in Table 6, five different metaphors were produced by 11 students under the category of 'Equality'. The most frequently produced metaphor was World ($f = 3$), while the others were human ($f = 3$), brother ($f = 2$), sister ($f = 2$), Turk ($f = 2$) and water ($f = 1$). Within this category, students emphasized that foreign students have equal rights with other people.

Metaphors belonging to the category of diligence

One of the categories in which the positive metaphors

produced by Turkish students for foreign students are collected is the category of 'Diligence'. Metaphors, frequencies and sample student expressions related to this category are given in Table 7.

As seen in Table 7, five different metaphors were produced by 8 students under the category of 'Diligence'. The most frequently produced metaphor was ant ($f = 3$), while the others were athlete ($f = 2$), book ($f = 1$), bee ($f = 1$) and school ($f = 1$). Within this category, students emphasized that foreign students are hardworking people.

Table 7. Hardworking category about foreign students.

Metaphors	f	Exemplary students	Direct quotations
Ant	3	Ö51	Foreign students are like ants. Because they always work.
Athlete	2	Ö30	Foreign students are like athletes. Because I always see them doing sports.
Book	1	Ö15	Foreign students are like books. Because they love to read very much.
Bee	1	Ö10	Foreign students are like bees. Because they work like bees.
School	1	Ö36	Foreign students are like schools. Because it is at school that we meet them the most.

Metaphors belonging to the beauty category

One of the categories in which the positive metaphors produced by Turkish students for foreign students are collected is the 'Beauty' category. Metaphors, frequencies and sample student expressions related to this category are given in Table 8.

As seen in Table 8, five different metaphors were produced by 12 students under the category of 'Beauty'. The most frequently produced metaphor was flower ($f = 5$), while the others were beautiful ($f = 2$), sweet ($f = 2$), cat ($f = 2$) and cute ($f = 1$). Within the scope of this category, students mentioned the physical beauty of foreign students and that they were friendly people.

Table 8. Beauty category about foreign students.

Metaphors	f	Exemplary students	Direct quotations
Flower	5	Ö72	Foreign students are like flowers. Because I feel they are beautiful when I look at them.
Beautiful	2	Ö19	Foreign students are like beauties. Because they are all beautiful.
Sweet	2	Ö16	Foreign students are like sweets. Because they give me something every day.
Cat	2	Ö53	Foreign students are like cats. Because they are cute like cats and their eyes are slanted.
Cute	1	Ö56	Foreign students are like cute. Because they laugh very well.

Metaphors belonging to the protective category

Some of the positive metaphors produced by Turkish students for foreign students fall under the category of 'Protective'. Metaphors, frequencies and sample student expressions related to this category are given in Table 9.

As seen in Table 9, two different metaphors were produced by 4 students under the category of 'Protective'. These metaphors are mother ($f = 3$) and father ($f = 1$) metaphors. Within the scope of this category, students emphasized that foreign students protect and support them.

Table 9. Category of protective approach to foreign students.

Metaphors	f	Exemplary students	Direct quotations
Mother	3	Ö8	Foreign students are like mothers. Because my friend protects me a lot against others.
Father	1	Ö71	Foreign students are like fathers. Because he takes care of my problems.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, which aimed to reveal Turkish students' metaphorical perceptions of foreign students studying with their peers in Turkey, it was seen that Turkish students made positive analogies about foreign students. This revealed that Turkish and foreign students have positive perceptions of each other in classroom environments. More in-depth analysis revealed that Turkish students had positive attitudes about foreign students. This shows that Turkish students adopt foreign students as their friends and show closeness and that

they can spend time together as friends even if they speak different languages. In addition to this, the fact that the metaphors they produced were low in terms of diversity reveals that the students do not have different perspectives on this issue and that they generally have similar ideas with a collectivist structure.

When the categories and metaphors for Turkish students are considered, it can be argued that the students have the idea that they do not have enough information about the culture and daily lives of foreign students, but at the same time they make efforts to communicate smoothly in the classroom, they are aware

that foreign students are different, they understand that they have difficulties and they experience uncertainty because they cannot communicate. In another study administered to both local and foreign students (Sardas, 2022) similar problems have been revealed. In this study, unlike local students, foreign students' metaphorical perceptions of Turkish students were also examined. It was found that foreign students positively perceived local students as friends, protectors and sources of information.

The presence of foreign students in the classroom is seen as an opportunity to learn about culture within the scope of education sensitive to cultural values. This behavior shows that in the future students will be respectful towards differences and that they will be in an opportunity environment in terms of diversity and that they will grow up in this structure (Kurtoğlu Karataş and Güngör Aytar, 2017). In general, it can be said that these students with a positive perspective will develop positive behaviors towards differences. The tendency to perceive a different nationality, culture and adapt to that culture shows that those people are trying to adapt.

When analyzed in general, it can be said that Turkish students have a positive perception of foreign students, which leads to the absence of negative situations in the classroom and a positive classroom climate of tolerance.

Within the scope of the findings obtained as a result of the research, it can be recommended for researchers to conduct similar studies in different regions and make comparisons, to examine metaphorical perceptions at different grade levels, to examine and compare these perceptions at socio-economic and academic achievement levels, and to examine the metaphorical perceptions of teachers about foreign students. In order to support positive perceptions, to raise students to be respectful and sensitive towards each other and to have universal values, it is recommended that sensitive educational practices should be realized and students should adopt those differences are richness.

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