# Metaphoric Evaluation of Forced Migration Perception According to Students in Social Studies Education

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**Abstract**

Nowadays, people need to move due to wars, inner conflicts, illness, and environmental disasters and for better life conditions in the world. People always seek for a better and happier life during their life. This research was carried out to determine the students' metaphoric perceptions towards forced migrations. The study includes a total of 179 students as participants at the social studies department at Dumlupınar University. In the research, the answers of the following questions were searched: a. Which metaphors were used to explain "forced migration" term? b. Under which categories were the metaphors developed by the participants classified? The data gathered in the study was collected by completing the phrase "Forced migration is like..., because...? Phenomenology design and content analysis technique was used in the research. According to the findings; 111 metaphors were produced related to forced migration term by the participants. According to the results of the research, the participants expressed their thoughts about forced migration term in 8 different categories in terms of their common features.

**Keywords:** Forced migration, Geography, Social studies

## 1. Introduction

Migration can be defined as the movement of the living creatures or people from one place to the other due to various reasons (Atalay, 2013) or the movement to another place in order to have better or more favorable living conditions (İzbırak, 1992). People may be forced to migrate from the place they live to another place due to various reasons. Political and economic reasons are at first among the causes of forced migration (İçduygu & Aksel, 2012). In Turkey, within the framework of the educational activities the phenomenon of migration is explained within the scope of Human Economic Geography included within the curriculum of the Geography course. Forced migration is when the individuals are forced to leave their permanent living areas due to reasons beyond their control in a compulsory way (Gürel, 2001) due to the force and effects of factors other than their own will (Erkan & Erdoğdu, 2006). The vast majority of migration within Turkey is made from the rural areas towards the urban areas voluntarily. However, since the beginning of the 1980s forced migration was made from the Eastern and South-eastern Anatolian regions due to terror, dam constructions and the weakening of economic activity (Erkan, 2002). Today, millions of people are subjected to forced migration from Syria towards Turkey due to the civil war going on in Syria.

Metaphor which is generally considered as a kind of rhetorical art can be defined as understanding one thing from the perspective of something else (Lakoff & Johnson, 2005) as a form to see and understand the word (Morgan, 1998) and as transferring the findings intelligently by describing a particular case with another concept (Creswell & Miller, 2000). At the same time metaphor can be explained as a mental model which allows the people to see a certain phenomenon with another phenomenon (Saban, 2008). Three elements (resembling, likened, the characteristics owned by the likened) are outstanding in metaphor, which is a linguistic assimilation (Saban, 2004). In a metaphor, the word needs to be used differently as its real sense, assimilation has to be intended and finally the state revealing the word's use in the real sense must be found (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Metaphor allows us to re-conceptualize, to see from different aspects and to clarify some cases which might have been overlooked previously by connecting the object or phenomenon that we want to understand to a concept network belonging to another sematic field (Taylor, 1984). Due to the significant impacts of the metaphors, studies related to metaphors are conducted very often in the social sciences (Bredeson, 1988).

Today metaphors are considered as powerful mental tools of the people to understand and explain highly abstract, conceptual or complex phenomenon (Wells, 2015). Metaphors which are used in various studies in the field of education (Arslan, & Bayrakçı, 2006, Döş, 2010) are used to explain the subject, concept, attitude and perception which are incomprehensible or difficult to understand in a more descriptive way. Metaphor is an important tool for the students to express courageously what they have learnt during their education (Aubusson, Harrison & Stephen, 2006). In addition, the educators can carry their life experiences gained outside the world into the classroom; many times they may allow the shy and introverted students to participate more in the lesson (Yazıcı, 2013).

Revealing the perceptions of the university students at different grades about the forced

migration is thought to create different perspectives to the educators. The aim of this study is to explain the perceptions of the students attending the Department of Social Studies Education about the concept of forced migration through metaphors.

The answers to such questions were sought:

1- Through which metaphors the students of the Social Studies Education Department describe their perceptions about the concept of forced migration?

2- Under which categories these metaphors can be classified in terms of their common features?

## 2. Method

Phenomenology was used in this research that was conducted by qualitative method. Phenomenology is defined as focusing on cases which we are aware of but we do not understand in a thorough and detailed manner (Crobley, 2002). The cases can be encountered in the world in different forms such as perceptions, events, experiences, concepts, trends and conditions. The cases that can be encountered in various forms during our daily life may not be understood fully. The cases which are not totally unknown but also not fully understood by the people create a suitable research area for the phenomenology studies (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In the phenomenology studies the findings which are desired to be achieved as the result of the research and the groups and individuals providing these findings are encountered as data resources (Büyüköztürk at all, 2014). The main aim of phenomenology is to reduce the individual experiences about a phenomenon to a universal description (Creswell, 2013).

### 2.1. The model of the research

The participants of this research consist of 330 students who were studying at Dumlupınar University, Faculty of Education and Social Studies Department in the 2015-2016 academic years. The fact that the researcher has been living in the province of Kütahya has been effective in choosing the study. The sample of the study was created by choosing easily accessible samples. In the choice of this sample, speed and practicality is gained for the research by selecting a case which is near and can be accessed easily by the researcher (Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2013). The sample of the research consisted of 179 students who were studying at Dumlupınar University, Faculty of Education, Department of Primary Education, and Department of Social Studies Education. The gender distribution of the participating students is given in Table1.

Table 1. Descriptive data according to gender

| Gender | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|--------|---------------|----------------|
| Female | 91 | 54.2 |
| Male | 82 | 45.8 |
| Total | 179 | 100 |

### 2.2. Data collection tools and the collection of data

Previous literature review was conducted prior to data collection to reveal perceptions

uncovered in previous studies and to provide a framework for data analysis." (Alger, 2009; Aydoğdu, 2008; Cerit, 2008; Günay, 2015; Inbar, 1996; Kalyoncu, 2013; Pishghadam & Navari, 2010; Pishghadam, 2009; Shaw at all, 2008; Semerci, 200; Saban et al., 2006; Saban, 2004, 2008, 2009; Töremen & Döş, 2009). During the literature review it was observed that in the previously conducted studies mostly the completion of open-ended sentences was used. Looking at the previously conducted relevant studies, the students were asked to complete the sentence "Forced Migration is like….., because….." in order to reveal the perceptions of the students current study participants in the 2015-2016 academic year about the forced migration. The responses from the students about the metaphors related to the concept of forced migration within a 20 minute period constituted the data source of the research.

*2.3. Data analysis*

The data analysis includes the export of the meaning of the data, the combination, reduction and interpretation of what was said by the people and what was read and seen by the researcher (Merriam, 2009). The content analysis technique was applied in the evaluation of the data. The processes used in this technique varied according to the aim of the required analysis and according to the type of the material that was available to be analyzed (Büyüköztürk at all, 2014). The main aim during the data analysis was to access the concept and relationships that could explain the collected data. In the content analysis, by subjecting the data that was interpreted and summarized during the descriptive analysis to a more descriptive process, the theme and concepts which were imperceptible from the descriptive approach can inform the result of this analysis. Collecting the similar data within a particular context and organizing them in a way that could be understood by the reader are essentially required processes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The metaphors that were developed by the participants were subjected to analyzing and interpreting processes at different stages. These stages were respectively (Saban, 2008, 2009): naming, grouping, creating categories, ensuring validity and reliability, and processing the data.

2.3.1. At the stage of naming

Students' responses were examined to determine the metaphors they used. A temporary list was created by collecting the metaphors written on the papers under certain groups alphabetically. Some (13) of the students did not write any metaphor, the data of these students were excluded from the evaluation.

2.3.2. At the stage of grouping

According to the metaphor analysis each metaphor was analyzed by being separated into pieces in terms of the similarities and common features. The metaphors written by the students were analyzed in terms of theme, source and the relationship between the source and theme. In the study 111 valid metaphors were created by 179 students. The raw data were revised by arranging these metaphors alphabetically and a sample list was created with the arrangement of metaphor expressions that were considered to represent the metaphors the best. These were used as a reference source while collecting the metaphors under certain

sections and to ensure the validity of the study during the data analysis and interpretation stages

### 2.3.3. At the stage of creating categories

The obtained metaphors were examined according to the aspect of the common features they had on the concept of forced migration. A total of 8 different sections was created by evaluating each metaphor under a specific theme in terms of geography. For example; the metaphors placed under the category of "Forced Migration as an Economic Result" were considered to affect the economic life of the people who are forced to migrate and also the environment where they moved. "Forced Migration" was seen as a concept including economic values such as the small governments are forced to obey the big ones, being forced to go somewhere else to find work, having changing economic activities, "and the stress and pain of being compelled to migrate".

### 2.3.4. At the stage of ensuring the validity and reliability

The credibility of the results in scientific research is regarded as an important measure. In general, the validity is related to the accuracy of the research results while reliability is concerned with the re-achievement of the research results (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). At this stage the opinion of two experts was asked to see whether the metaphor categories were verified under the 8 sections determined by the researcher. The list of metaphors was divided by the experts into categories which satisfied the commonalities. The reliability of the research was calculated by the researcher through calculating the consensus or dissensus between the two classifications of this common study on the basis of "Reliability = ((Consensus): (Consensus + Dissensus)) X 100" (Miles &Huberman, 1994). In the qualitative studies, when the compliance between the expert and the researcher is above 90% then reliability is ensured at an acceptable level (Saban, 2009). The expert whose opinion was asked in this research placed 6 metaphors by placing them into different sections. According to this; reliability was calculated as ((111)/ (111+6)) x 100= 94.87 (95%) and accordingly the reliability was ensured.

### 2.3.5. At the phase of processing the data

8 conceptual sections were developed. These sections consisted of 111 metaphors that were determined after the examination and classification of the data coming from the student. The data was processed on the computer. After this stage, a table was created which included the frequencies and percentages of the 179 students, 111 metaphors and 8 sections.

## 3. Findings

In this research which examined the perspectives of the students (given in Table 2) metaphors formed during the classification process which was carried out in accordance with the data obtained from the students. These sections were the following respectively; reflection of the natural events 8.2%, Natural disaster 7.1%, Economic result 10.5%, An event affecting the human body 4.3%, A part of a game 4.3%, Restriction of freedom 34%, Psychological devastation 19%, Political event 5.5%, excluded from the evaluation 7.1%.

Table 2. Number of metaphors created by the student

| Sections | N | Numbers of Metaphor | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| As the Reflection of Natural Events | 15 | 10 | 8.2 |
| As a Natural Disaster | 13 | 8 | 7.1 |
| As an Economic Result | 19 | 18 | 10.5 |
| As an Event Affecting the Person | 8 | 8 | 4.3 |
| As a Part of a Game | 8 | 7 | 4.3 |
| As the Restriction of Freedom | 61 | 30 | 34 |
| As Psychological Demolition | 34 | 23 | 19 |
| As International Politics | 10 | 7 | 5.5 |
| As an excluded from the evaluation | 13 | 0 | 7.1 |
| Total | 179 | 111 | 100 |

When looking at the metaphors created in relation with the concept of force migration, 85 of the 111 metaphors created by the 179 participants were written by only one student while 26 of them were repeated by more than one student. There were two metaphors which were written the most; chaos from the section of restriction of freedom was created by 6 students while separating from the family in the section of psychological devastation was also written by 6 students.

Table 3. The metaphor sections related to the concept of Forced Migration

| Sections | Metaphors |
|---|---|
| As the Reflection of Natural Events | Migration of the birds (4), Leaves falling from the tree (3), Desert flowers, Sun, Land forms, Rivers, Waterless land, Moisture reaching saturation, Hungry lion, Test offered by the nature |
| As a Natural Disaster | Earthquake (5), Flood(2), Avalanche, Dry Lake, Simav, Volcano, Land turning to desert, Big Bang |
| As an economic Result | The deterioration of order (2), Unemployment, Perhaps death-perhaps opportunity, Syria, Colony, Money, Case of Earning life, Gaziantep, Civil servant, Un-kept Promises, Economic interests, Trouble of earning life, Cheap labour, Begging, Poverty, Misery. |
| As an event affecting the Person | Obstacle, Hunger, Organ Mafia, İllness, Medical Assistance, Unbalanced Nutrition, Prostitution, Lack of Education. |
| As a part of a Game | Lesson (2), The game of the Cloud of Hope, The fall of the Domino, Puzzle, Worship, The effort of unsleep during the lesson, Regional game |
| As the Restriction of Freedom | Chaos (6); Rootlessness (5); War (4); Exile (4); Escape(4); Unwillingly leaving the nest (4); Helplessness (3); Death (3); Prison (3); Persecution (2); Being fired (2); Separation (2); A bird whose nest was destroyed (2); Migration, Exchange, Refugee, Staying airless, Irregular home, Collapse of life, Dereliction, Impossibility, Restlessness, Massacre, Pigeon taken from its cage, The life of a polar bear in the desert, Missing the motherland, The flower whose pot was changed, An apple which was sprayed against worm, New-born child, Violation of the human rights |
| As Psychological Destruction | Separating from the family (6), Broken branches (3), dislike food(2), Dark cliff (2), Living in the desert (2), Death of a beloved (2), Psychological depression, Cold winter night, Losing something valuable, Disqualification, Renunciation, Taking the hope of a smiling child, Going to the unknown, Unfinished memories, Unwillingly started new life, Walking naked on the Street, İllness, Sinking boat, Camp, Divorce, Psychological support, Black spot, Aegean Sea |
| As International Politics | The bleeding wound of the Middle East (4), Deterioration of the relationships, Lack of Solutions, Housing permits, Loss of identity, Temporary settlements, Tent cities |

*3.1. Forced migration as the reflection of nature event*

In this section 10 metaphors were created by 15 students. Among these metaphors," the migration of birds" (4) and the" leaves falling from the tree" (3) were represented by more than one student while the other two were represented only by 2 students. In this part the description of the following metaphors can be given as examples.

"Forced Migration is like the migration of the birds, because they escaped from their country and took shelter somewhere else like the birds whose living area was over."

"Forced Migration is like a flower blooming in the desert, because the exposure to forced migration makes the compliance more difficult."

"Forced Migration is like a test offered by the nature, because the nature with its different faces drags the people to different places."

### 3.2. Forced migration as a natural disaster

In this part forced migration was described as a natural disaster which could happen to people. Here 8 metaphors were created by 13 students. Among these metaphors "Earthquake" (5) and "Flood" (2) were represented by more than one student while the others were represented by one student.    The examples of this section are the followings.

"Forced Migration is like an earthquake, because due to its impact on the individuals' psychology it makes the living conditions also difficult."

"Forced Migration is like flood, because if the movement which starts with a drop sweeps everything it drags the people just like forced migration".

"Forced Migration is like a land turning to desert, because losing the former beauty and knowing that it will never be the same is something hard to accept."

### 3.3. Forced migration as an economic result

This section describes that there may be changes in the economic condition of the people after being forced to migrate and these changes would affect not only the people but also the economic life of the place where they moved. In this section 18 metaphors were created by 19 students.   Within this section the "Deterioration of order" (2) was represented by more than one student while the other metaphors were represented by only one student.   The descriptions of the sample metaphors belonging to this section are the following.

  "Forced Migration is like Syria, because it is made unwillingly, urged by necessity and leads to wars."

"Forced Migration is like social explosion, because the societies are ready to explode due to the negative effects of forced migration."

"Forced Migration is like cheap labour, because it emerged in Turkey as a problem which is taking place now and may arise in the future too."

### 3.4. Forced Migration as an event affecting the human body

In this section it was revealed by the students that the forced migration affected the human body in different forms. In this part 8 metaphors were created by 8 students. All of these metaphors were represented by one student. The descriptions of the sample metaphors belonging to this section are the following.

"Forced Migration is like hunger, because the hungry people will be unhealthy."

"Forced Migration is like unbalanced nutrition, because the unhealthy life causes illnesses such as cholesterol and obesity"

"Forced Migration is like prostitution, because the helplessness of the people may lead to moral disorders"".

*3.5. Forced Migration as a part of a game*

In this section forced migration was considered as a game by the students. Because they perceived forced migration as a game which you are obligated to play or a game that remained unfinished. In this section 7 metaphors were created by 8 students. Among these metaphors "Lesson" (2) was represented by more than one student while the others were represented by only one student. The descriptions of sample metaphors belonging to this section are given below.

"Forced Migration is like a piece of domino, because the migration of one piece affects the others too."

"Forced Migration is like an unfinished puzzle, because the unfinished puzzle is meaningless so is the forced migration. Life has no meaning."

"Forced Migration is like worshipping, because it may be difficult to fulfil but it brings happiness."

*3.6. Forced migration as the restriction of freedom*

In this section it was revealed by the students that before and after the forced migration situations may emerge which can restrict the freedom of the people. In this section 30 metaphors were created by 61 students. Among these metaphors chaos(6), rootlessness (5), war (4), exile (4) escape (4), leaving the nest unwillingly (3), death (3), prison (3), persecution (2), and being fired (2), separation (2) and a bird who nest was destroyed (2), were represented by more than one student while the other metaphors were represented by only one student. The sample metaphor descriptions related to this section are given below.

"Forced Migration is like slavery, because the path of our live is convicted to opposite direction."

"Forced Migration is like chaos, because people are exposed to change place unwillingly."

"Forced Migration is like exile, because the people are forced to leave their homes and countries."

*3.7. Forced Migration as psychological demolition*

In this section it was explained that after forced migration socio-psychological changes may arise and these changes affect not only those who migrate, do not migrate or are forced to go, but also the economic life of the place where these people move. In this part 23 metaphors were created by 34 students. Among these metaphors; separating from family (6), broken branches (3), dark cliff (2), living in the desert (2), losing a beloved one (2), were represented by more than one student while the other metaphors were represented by only

one student. The sample metaphor descriptions related to this section are given below.

"Forced Migration is like sinking boat, because it is the place where dreams end".

"Forced Migration is like fading away the hopes of a smiling child, because it is hard to leave the motherland."

"Forced Migration is like a cold winter night because it is so lonely and hopeless."

*3.8. Forced Migration as a political event*

In this section forced migration compared to something that can bring along many political upheavals not only in the Middle East but in every part of the world. In this part 7 metaphors were created by 10 students.   The sample metaphor descriptions related to this section are given below.

"Forced Migration is like the loss of identity, because it is not certain where you belong to."

"Forced Migration is like insolubility, because solution cannot be found through politics."

"Forced Migration is like the bleeding wound of the Middle East, because Syria has become the trouble of Middle East.

## 4. Discussion and Conclusions

In the conducted study the 111 metaphors which were created by social science students were divided into 8 sections. With the help of these metaphors the students' awareness about the concept of forced migration was explained. On the basis of the metaphors revealed by the students it can be said that the concept of forced migration cannot be explained by one metaphor.

Participants in this study had experienced lessons in social and economic geography in first to fourth grades. When asked to provide metaphors for the concept of forced migration, many student participants seemed to draw on concepts learned in these previous social studies courses

The fact that 34% of the participants suggested that forced migration was the restriction of freedom, 19% of them considered it as psychological destruction and 10.5% of them as an economic result showed that this concept was seen as a psycho-social construct. Additionally, 8.2% of the classification was the reflection of natural events and 7.1% of it was natural disaster which showed the geographical dimension while 5.5% of the responses demonstrated the political dimension as well. In this study the concept of forced migration was demonstrated in different dimensions by the students.

In the course Population Geography, study participants demonstrated their perceptions of forced migration in a variety of important ways based on this idea further studies can be carried out about the changes which are desirable in the perceptions of the students in the course of Population Geography by considering the aims in geography education. In this study researchers aimed to demonstrate that the metaphors have a wide range of uses also in the field of education. At the same time it was demonstrated that the metaphors were

extremely useful in concretizing and understanding the abstract concepts in the brain.

During the last 30-40 year period people around the world and in Turkey left their homes and moved to other places due to various reasons especially due to terror. These forced displacements brought different changes not only to the socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-psychological state of the migrants but also to the lives of the people living in the places where they moved.

When looking at the metaphors expressed by the students, it was observed that the concept of forced migration could be explained by more than one metaphor in the study. This study might be similar to previous studies (Öztürk, 2007, Aydın, 2010, Aydın & Ünaldı, 2010, Geçit & Gençer 2010, Kaya, 2011, Kaya, 2013, Tuna & Budak, 2013, Özder, Kaya & Ünlü 2012, Günay, Aydın; & Damgacı, 2015, İbret & Aydınözü, 2011) due to the way of examining a concept related to geography but this study was found to be different due to the fact that it was the first time to work with the up-to-date concept of forced migration.

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