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## Turkish and Syrian Students' Perceptions of Peace through Metaphors

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### Abstract

This study aimed to examine metaphorical perceptions of 4th-grade primary school students on the concept of "peace". The study was conducted with Turkish and Syrian students who attend primary schools in Sanliurfa, a city on the west eastern part of Turkey during the fall semester of 2019-2020 academic year. The results of the study showed that Turkish students produced a total of 39 valid metaphors clustered under seven conceptual categories and Syrian students produced a total of 34 valid metaphors clustered under seven conceptual categories. While five categories were common for both groups, two categories were different. The categories of unity and solidarity, tranquility and happiness, conditions for peace, peace as a valuable thing, freedom, possibility/impossibility were common for both groups. Therefore, the findings from Turkish and Syrian students' metaphors were presented together with a comparative approach under these categories. The category of need/necessity for the metaphors by Turkish students and the category of symbols for peace for the metaphors by Syrian students were examined separately.

**Keywords:** Metaphor, Peace, Turkish and Syrian Primary School Students

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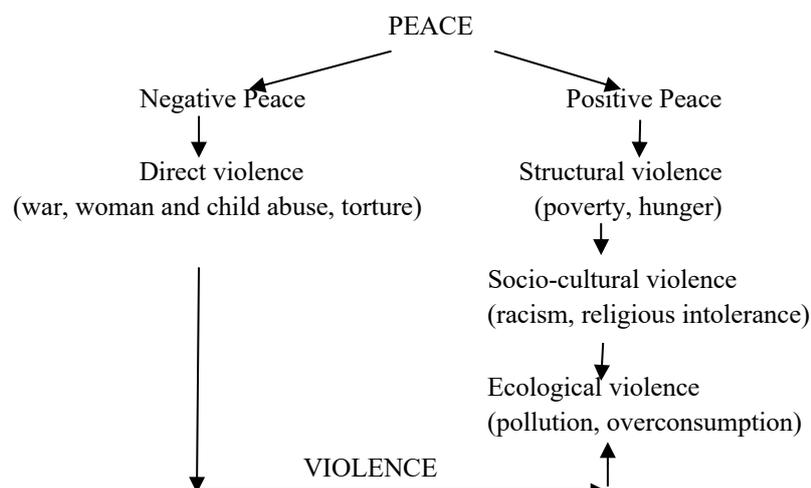
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## Introduction

"Peace" is mentioned in the quotes of many important figures in the history: *"Peace at home, peace in the world"* by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of Turkish Republic, *"Peace does not mean an absence of conflicts; differences will always be there. Peace means solving these differences through peaceful means; through dialogue, education, knowledge; and through humane way"* by Dalai Lama, *"Peace is not a relationship of nations. It is a condition of mind brought about by a serenity of soul. Peace is not merely the absence of war. It is also a state of mind. Lasting peace can come only to peaceful people"* by Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India in 1947. However, humanity has been in constant conflicts and wars for political, social, religious, etc. reasons. Since the 20th century, the world has witnessed two World Wars, Vietnam War, North Korea and South Korea War, Gulf War, Arab Spring wars, war between Israel and Afghanistan, civil war in Syria since 2011 and regional conflicts and terrorist activities. Millions of innocent people of all ages have died as a result of such wars and conflicts. In addition to wars, at the basis of all kinds of conflicts, violence, injustice, violence against children and women among individuals lies the absence of peace.

The definition of peace has changed in the historical process. Looking at the articles written in the 17th century, peace was defined as the absence of war and direct violence (Dobrosielski, 1987). This definition was accepted for many years. Then, in the second half of the 20th century, peace was defined in the 1960s as continuing competitive violence between political units. During the end of 1960s, the opinion that not only the wars and direct violence but also indirect violence built through social, economic and political systems caused people to suffer or die began to prevail. In other words, structural violence such as poverty, scarcity, diseases, discrimination against minorities, and ignoring human rights emerged (Hicks, 1987). Galtung (1995) defined peace as the absence of direct and indirect violence and later, the definition turned into peace as the elimination of all aspects of injustice. In this context, the first definition is seen as negative peace and the other as positive peace. Below is a holistic understanding of peace and violence by Castro and Galace (2019) in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Holistic understanding of peace and violence by Castor and Galace (2019).

Today peace is classified as personal peace, interpersonal peace, social peace, global peace, peace between humans and the Earth and beyond. The personal peace means having self-respect, love and inner peace. Interpersonal peace means having tolerance and love for other people and cooperating with them. Social peace means having tolerance and love for different groups and cooperating with them. Global peace means having no conflicts with nations, having tolerance and love for other nations and cooperating with them. Finally, peace between humans, the Earth and beyond means respect for the environment (Castro and Galace, 2019).

Nowadays, peace means that people try to resolve their conflicts together, respect the principles of justice, meet their basic needs, and value human rights (Harris and Morrison, 2003). As a result, the concept of peace is handled with concepts such as war, violence, respect, tolerance, justice, equality, unity, togetherness, inner peace. Today, peace is needed to solve all kinds of violence, conflict and war between individuals, different communities and countries. In order to establish and maintain peace, on the other hand, conditions such as love, respect, tolerance, justice, equality, unity and solidarity are needed. Each of these concepts are important values. Values can be defined as beliefs influencing and shaping our behaviors, thoughts over the course of our lives. Values can also be defined as the reflection of our wishes, choices and preferences, desired/undesired situations (Doğanay, 2006; Erdem, 2003; Güngör, 1998; Ulusoy and Dilmaç, 2012; Veugelers and Vedder, 2003). At this point, education plays an important role in establishing and maintaining peace as well as decreasing the effects of any possible violence culture to occur and create a culture against the violence culture (Erbaş, 2018; Kerem and Kamaraj, 2006; Keskin and Keskin, 2009). Peace is one the core values in all teaching programs, especially in Turkish Language Teaching and Social Studies lessons (MNE, 2019). According to Yılmaz (2003), measures to be taken to establish peace in a society and in the world other than education will not guarantee a long-lasting peace. Likewise, UNESCO (2002) states that education plays a vital role in establishing peace and the aims of the education systems should be to enable and promote economic and social growth, to raise people who respect human rights, to make democratic involvement possible and to settle peace (UNESCO, 2002). In this context, peace should be included in hidden or formal curricula as in the form of value education consisting of moral education, civic education, citizenship education, etc, or the students should be provided with peace education (Elkatmış, 2009; Matthews, 2002; Tarman and Kuran, 2014).

Cooper (1965) stated that when children reach the age of six, they begin to develop ideas about war and peace, while according to Hakvoort and Oppenheimer (1998) children develop ideas for the concepts of peace and war around the age of seven-eight. In his study, Cooper (1965) stated that children are able to produce fewer ideas about peace than war and associate peace with the concepts of unity, silence, lack of war and violence and friendship. Galtung (1969), on the other hand, stated that children between the ages of seven-eleven see peace as the absence of conflict, calmness, silence and peace. Students at the age of twelve can add more abstract meanings to the concept of peace and

express opinions on issues such as establishing peace (Galtung, 1969; Hakvoort and Oppenheimer, 1998). Similarly, the study by Hagglund (1999) concluded that younger children associate peace with more abstract concepts such as friendship and older children with international cooperation, equality and compromise. About the experiences of children, McLernon and Cairns (2006) stated that children living in an environment of war and violence affect their views on peace and their processes of being peaceful. Likewise, Oppenheimer, Bar-Tal and Raviv (1999) mentioned that as children are influenced by the environment they live in and pass through social learning processes based on interaction and observation, their perceptions on peace and war are directly affected by their environment. In this context, there are studies stating that children in war environment regard peace as freedom movement while children who do not experience war see peace as non-violence environment and unity, togetherness (Myers-Bowman, Walker, and Myers-Walls, 2005; Spielmann, 1986). However, even if children live far from the war environment, it is stated that factors such as age, gender, family status, media tools such as television, internet, peer groups may cause children to have certain perceptions about war and peace (Costello and Phelps, 1994; Oppenheimer, 2006).

In addition to these studies, there are other studies in the literature on the metaphors of children of different age groups towards peace (Bulut and Koca, 2017; Çelikkaya and Seyhan, 2017; Kanatlı and Schreglmann, 2017; Kılcan, 2013; Şan and Yılmaz, 2016; Topçu and Çelik, 2015). In these studies, participants produced such metaphors as happiness, life source, unity and solidarity. Especially, the researches by Biaggio, De Souza and Martini (2004) done with adolescents in Portugal, Brazil, Chile, Germany and the United States; by Biton (2006) with Israeli and Palestinian youths; Coughlin, Mayers, Dizard and Bordin (2009) with children from the Middle East (the United Arab Emirates) and the United States and by Ummanel (2018) with North and South Cypriot children on peace, war and violence are important as this research also compares the perceptions of children on peace.

This study aims to examine the metaphorical perceptions of Turkish and Syrian primary school students on the concept of "peace". The study was held in Sanliurfa province in Turkey. The city is of great importance for some reasons. First, it has been hosting hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees since the outbreak of civil war in 2011. Then, the city is on Turkey-Syria border; that is why, many refugees prefer to settle in there. According to the report by the Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management (2020), the number of the registered Syrian refugees in the city is 422.729. According to the statistical reports, the number of Syrian students continuing their education in kindergarten, primary, secondary and high schools in the city center is about 70.000. This number goes up to about 250.000 together with the towns of the city (Karademir and Doğan, 2019; MNE, 2019). Currently, Turkish and Syrian students are in the same schools and in the same classrooms. Many of these Syrian students have witnessed the devastating results of the civil war in their country

and as Sanliurfa is very close to Syria, Turkish students have also witnessed many events since the civil war started. Turkish students are also aware of the terrorist attacks in Turkey.

It can be claimed that the concepts of "war" and "peace" would have more meaning for both Turkish and Syrian students living in the city than any other students in other places. Therefore, this study is believed to be as it tries to determine what peace means for these students who have been witnessing the war very closely and who are in a multicultural environment. The study is also important to compare the metaphors and the reasons for the metaphors of the students who share the same atmosphere and same environment. It is also believed that together with the comparative studies in the literature (Biaggio, De Souza and Martini, 2004; Biton, 2006; Coughlin, Mayers, Dizard and Bordin, 2009; Ummanel, 2018), this study will contribute to the literature. As for value education, this study is believed to provide teachers and policy makers with valuable findings on how peace is perceived by the children of two countries with various ethnic and cultural backgrounds and what teaching and learning environment should be organized in terms of value education and/or peace education programs.

Regarding the main purpose of this study, the following sub-questions have been generated.

1. What are the metaphorical perceptions of Turkish students on peace?
2. Under what categories are Turkish students' metaphors are gathered?
3. What are the metaphorical perceptions of Syrian students on peace?
4. Under what categories are Syrian students' metaphors are gathered?

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

This is a metaphor study. Metaphor is an effective way to express emotions, thoughts, experiences, abstract concepts with concrete ones, something unknown with another thing known (Perry and Cooper, 2001; Soysal and Afacan, 2012). The use of metaphors in teaching-learning environments enables to turn abstract concepts and values in concrete ones, encourages students to think, promotes students' vision and imagination (Tünkler, Tarman and Güven, 2016). In this study, the researcher tries to examine the concept of peace as a phenomenon depending on the study groups' experiences on the concept. Therefore; the study was conducted with phenomenological inquiry, one of the qualitative research methods. The aim of this design is to put forward the phenomena happening in individuals' daily lives, which can be in the form of experiences, perceptions and tendencies. In other words, with phenomenological design, we try to understand how people interpret and make sense of the experiences that they are aware but they may not have in-depth understanding of such

phenomena (Meriam, 2013; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). In the study, the data were analyzed by content analysis.

### Study Group

The study group consisted of 227 Turkish and Syrian 4<sup>th</sup> grade primary school students who attend public schools in Sanlıurfa, Turkey during the fall semester of the academic year of 2019-2020. The participants were determined with criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling models. As this is a comparative study, the first criterion was to determine two student groups from two different nations. The second criterion was that students are supposed to have certain levels of communicational and literacy skills. Almost half of the study group consisted of Syrian students and the basic literacy skills of most of the Syrian students at lower grades in primary schools are very limited. Therefore, the researcher preferred to study with the 4th grade students. While the gender of the participants is given in Table 1, the nationalities of them are given in Table 2.

**Table 1.** Distribution of the study group according to gender

Gender	Number
Male	124
Female	103
Total	227

The majority of the study group consisted of male (103) students.

**Table 2.** Distribution of the study according to nationality

Nationality	Number
Turkish	117
Syrian	110
Total	227

### Data Collection

The data of the study were collected from the primary schools students in a suburb area by the researcher himself. Each student was given a piece of paper with a prompt on it as "Peace is like ..... because.....". Since the participants were primary school students and since almost half of the participants were Syrian students, whose mother tongue is Arabic, the researcher and the classroom teachers gave some examples of metaphors and their reasons. Besides, for the Syrian students, the researcher prepared the data collection form in Arabic so that they might prefer to fill it in their mother tongue as they might feel more comfortable with it. All the participants were asked to write a metaphor and reasons for the concept. The students were given 20 minutes to fill the form and later, the forms were collected for data analysis. The forms filled in Arabic were translated into Turkish by an instructor at the faculty of theology at Harran University.

## Data Analysis

The data obtained from the data collection tool were analyzed through content analysis technique. Metaphor studies in the literature were also examined in terms of data analysis. The fundamental step in content analysis is to gather similar data within the framework of specific concepts and themes and to interpret and organize them in a clear way for readers to understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The metaphors produced by the participants were analyzed using the following five stages (Saban, Koçbeker and Saban, 2006):

1. *Naming*: Firstly, the forms filled by Turkish and Syrian students were separately and the name of the metaphors were simply coded as *bird*, *friend*, *sky*, *tree* etc., during which the papers with no metaphors or reasons for metaphors were marked as "*description*" or "*no metaphor*". The forms which did not have either metaphors or reasons for metaphors were eliminated at this stage and a total of 106 forms by Turkish students and 89 by Syrian students were obtained.

2. *Sorting (clarification and elimination) stage*: Following the stage, the raw data analyzed in terms of *the topic*, *the vehicle* and *the ground* in order to eliminate those which are poorly structured one from the well-structured ones. At this stage, the forms were eliminated for the second time by deciding on whether the metaphors and descriptions or reasons for metaphors are logically connected to each other. At the end of this stage, 10 forms by Turkish students and 7 by Syrian students were eliminated.

3. *Sample metaphor compilation and categorization stage*: After second stage 96 valid metaphors by Turkish students and 77 valid metaphors by Syrian students were ordered alphabetically and analyzed to choose a sample expression for each metaphor. This compiling process was made to validate the analysis and interpretation of the collected data and to use the compiling for grouping the metaphors under certain categories. The researcher reached a sample metaphor list in which each one of the metaphors was analyzed in terms of the subject and source of the metaphor and logical connection between the subject and source. Finally, each metaphor image was set into one of seven categories for both participant groups. While deciding on the categories, the researcher found and read some studies on the metaphorical perceptions of primary school students on the concept of "peace" (Bulut and Koca, 2017; Çelikkaya and Seyhan, 2017; Kanatlı and Schreglmann, 2017; Kılcan, 2013; Şan and Yılmaz, 2016; Topçu and Çelik, 2015).

4. *Establishing the inter-rater reliability rate*: In order to assess the consistency of the coding system in the study, the list consisting of exemplar metaphors in alphabetic order and sample expressions for each metaphor and another list consisting of 7 conceptual categories with a brief description developed by the researcher were given to an outside researcher who has made metaphor studies. The outside researcher was asked to read the metaphor expressions and put each into one of seven categories. Agreement on these coding by the coders was calculated using Miles and

Huberman's (1994) formula (Reliability= Agreement/Agreement + Disagreement). The level of agreement was found to be .92.

5. *Analyzing the data quantitatively*: In the last stage of data analysis, all the metaphors and conceptual categories for Turkish and Syrian students were entered into an Excel spreadsheet, where percentage and frequency values were calculated.

## Findings

In this part of the study, metaphors on peace produced by the students were analyzed. Firstly, the metaphors obtained in the study were presented generally and then the metaphors in the conceptual categories were given and compared.

### Overall Findings

The first sub-question of the research is “What are the metaphorical perceptions of Turkish students in primary school on peace?”, and the metaphors by the students are given in Table 3. During the data analysis of the research, using the related data, it was determined that 96 Turkish students produced 39 well-structured metaphors.

**Table 3.** Metaphors produced by Turkish students related to the phenomenon of peace

Number	Metaphor	f	%	Number	Metaphor	f	%
1	Friend/Friendship	18	18,75	21	Heaven	1	1,04
2	Love	15	15,63	22	Knot	1	1,04
3	Happiness	10	10,42	23	Diamond	1	1,04
4	Flower	4	4,17	24	Sky	1	1,04
5	Sibling/Brotherhood	4	4,17	25	Tolerance	1	1,04
6	Dream	3	3,13	26	Spring	1	1,04
7	Sun	3	3,13	27	Human	1	1,04
8	Turkey	2	2,08	28	Goodness	1	1,04
9	Life	2	2,08	29	Heart	1	1,04
10	Helpfulness	2	2,08	30	Unity	1	1,04
11	Trust	2	2,08	31	Cake	1	1,04
12	Tranquility	2	2,08	32	Clothe	1	1,04
13	Water	2	2,08	33	Mercy	1	1,04
14	Tree	2	2,08	34	Breath	1	1,04
15	Bird	1	1,04	35	River	1	1,04
16	Family	1	1,04	36	Promise	1	1,04
17	Agreement	1	1,04	37	Dessert	1	1,04
18	Understanding	1	1,04	38	Space	1	1,04
19	Atmosphere	1	1,04	39	Victory	1	1,04
20	Ice	1	1,04		Total	96	100

According to Table 3, the most used metaphors are friend/friendship (f=18), love (f=15), and happiness (f=10). It can be said that the students preferred to produce both abstract (love, friendship, understanding, mercy, etc.) and concrete figures or concepts as metaphors (bird, flower, tree, cake,

clothe, etc). The metaphors of the students on the concept of peace are gathered under 7 categories (Table 4). These are "unity and solidarity", "tranquility and happiness", "conditions for peace", "need/necessity", "peace as a valuable thing", "freedom", "possibility/impossibility".

**Table 4.** The categories and metaphors related to the phenomenon of peace by Turkish students

Categories	Metaphors	The Number of Metaphors	f	%
Unity and Solidarity	Friend/Friendship (14) Sibling/brotherhood (4) Love (2) Tree (2) Help/helpfulness (2) Family (1) Knot (1) Amalgamation (1) Turkey (1)	9	28	29,17
Tranquility and Happiness	Happiness (10) Love (6) Tranquility (2) Friend (2) Ice (1) Heaven (1) Dream (1) Spring (1) Shining sun (1) Dessert (1) Homeland (1)	11	27	28,13
Conditions for Peace	Love (3) Friendship (2) Agreement (2) Goodness (1) Promise (1) Tolerance (1) Understanding (1) Trust (1) Mercifulness (1)	9	12	12,50
Need/Necessity	Love (4) Life (2) Water (2) Heart (1) Clothe (1) Breath (1) Trust (1)	7	12	12,50
Peace as a valuable thing	Flower (4) Sun (2) Atmosphere (1) Cake (1) Diamond (1)	5	9	9,38
Freedom	Bird (1) River (1) Sky (1) Turkey (1) Victory (1)	5	5	5,20
Possibility/ Impossibility	Dream (1) Human (1) Space (1)	3	3	3,12
All categories-Total		49	96	100

In Table 4, it can be seen that the participants produced the most metaphors under the category of unity and solidarity (f=28, 29,17%), which is followed by tranquility and happiness (f=27, 28,13%). Under the categories of conditions for peace and need/necessity, the participants produced 12 (12,50%) metaphors for each category. The least metaphors were under the categories of freedom (f=5, 5,20%) and possibility/impossibility (f=3, 3,12%).

The second sub-question of the research is “What are the metaphorical perceptions of Syrian students on peace?” and the metaphors by the students are given in Table 5. During the data analysis of the research, it was determined that 77 Syrian students produced 34 well-structured metaphors.

**Table 5.** Metaphors produced by Syrian students related to the phenomenon of peace

Number	Metaphor	f	%	Number	Metaphor	f	%
1	Friend/Friendship	20	25,98	18	Living in peace	1	1,30
2	Love	7	9,10	19	Book	1	1,30
3	Sibling/Brotherhood	7	9,10	20	Cologne	1	1,30
4	Sun/Sunny weather	4	5,19	21	A town without war	1	1,30
5	Bird	3	3,89	22	Happiness	1	1,30
6	Chocolate	2	2,59	23	Wind	1	1,30
7	Compassion/sympathy	2	2,59	24	Hug	1	1,30
8	Dove	2	2,59	25	War	1	1,30
9	Game	2	2,59	26	Water	1	1,30
10	Flower	2	2,59	27	Candy	1	1,30
11	Garden	2	2,59	28	Honesty	1	1,30
12	Valuable/Beautiful thing	2	2,59	29	Smile	1	1,30
13	Tree	1	1,30	30	Key	1	1,30
14	Mother	1	1,30	31	Dessert	1	1,30
15	White color	1	1,30	32	Kite	1	1,30
16	Biscuit	1	1,30	33	Turkey	1	1,30
17	Strawberry	1	1,30	34	Unique beauty	1	1,30
					Total	77	100

According to Table 5, the most used metaphors are friend/friendship (f=20), love (f=7), and happiness (f=7). It can be said that the students preferred mostly concrete figures or concepts like bird, chocolate, tree, key, kite, etc. as metaphors. The metaphors of the students on the concept of peace are gathered under 7 categories (Table 6). These are "unity and solidarity", "peace as a valuable thing", "tranquility and happiness", "conditions for peace", "freedom", "symbols for peace", "possibility/impossibility".

**Table 6.** The categories and metaphors related to the phenomenon of peace by Syrian students

Categories	Metaphors	The Number of Metaphors	F	%
Unity and Solidarity	Friend/friendship (19) Sibling/brotherhood (7) Game (2) Book (1) Love (1) Tree (1) Turkey (1)	7	32	41,56
Peace as a valuable thing	Chocolate (2) Flower (2) Garden (2) Valuable/beautiful thing (2) Biscuit (1) Candy (1) Dessert (1) Love (1) Mother (1) Strawberry (1) Sun (1) Unique beauty (1) Water (1)	13	17	22,08
Tranquility and Happiness	Sunny/beautiful weather (2) Cologne (1) Friend (1) Happiness (1) Hug (1) Living in peace (1) Smile (1) Wind (1)	8	10	12,99
Conditions for Peace	Love (5) Compassion/sympathy (2) Honesty (1)	3	8	10,39
Symbols for Peace	Dove (2) White color (1) Key (1)	3	4	5,19
Freedom	Bird (3) Kite (1)	2	4	5,19
Possibility/Impossibility	A town without war (1) War (1)	2	2	2,60
All categories-Total		38	77	100

In Table 6, it can be seen that the participants produced the most metaphors under the category of unity and solidarity ( $f=32$ , 41,56%), which is followed by peace as a valuable thing ( $f=17$ , 22,08%), tranquility and happiness ( $f=10$ , 12,99%) and conditions for peace ( $f=8$ , 10,39%). Under the categories of symbols for peace and freedom, the participants produced 12 (12,50%) metaphors for each category. The least metaphors were under the categories of freedom ( $f=5$ , 5,20%) and possibility/impossibility ( $f=3$ , 3,12%).

### **Conceptual Categories Related to Peace**

This part of the study presents the findings related to categories of metaphors by Turkish and Syrian students. There are seven categories for each participant group. The categories of unity and solidarity, tranquility and happiness, conditions for peace, peace as a valuable thing, freedom, possibility/impossibility are common for both groups. Therefore, the findings from Turkish and Syrian students' metaphors are provided together with a comparative approach under these categories. The category of need/necessity for the metaphors by Turkish students and the category of symbols for peace for the metaphors by Syrian students are examined separately. While giving direct quotations from the forms, "P and number" was used for the participant.

#### ***Unity and Solidarity***

In this study, "unity and solidarity" was determined as the first conceptual category for both groups. In this category, 28 Turkish students produced 9 well-structured metaphors, while 32 Syrian students produced 7 well-structured metaphors. The metaphor "friend/friendship" has the most frequency. 14 Turkish and 19 Syrian students preferred to use this metaphor for peace. The metaphor sibling/brotherhood (f=4) followed friend/friendship and was the second the most frequent. For instance, one participant says "*Peace is like friendship because friends are good to each other*" (P95), while another one says "*we can have peace with friendship*" (P31). These two students and the 12 participants believe that friendship is very important to succeed peace. Similarly, 4 students in this category think that brotherhood relation is a way to establish or have peace. For example, one student (P168) "*Peace is like our siblings because we are always together and we love and care about each other.*"

#### ***Tranquility and Happiness***

The second category in this study is tranquility and happiness. 27 Turkish students produced 11 well-structured metaphors. In this category, happiness (f=10) and love (f=6) have the most frequency. It can be said from the metaphors that the participants reflect their image on peace with mostly abstract (happiness, love, tranquility, dream, spring etc.), which give them happiness and tranquility. For instance, one student mentions "*Peace is like happiness because when there is peace, there is also happiness*" (P3) another says "*Peace is like love because if we don't want fight, we need to love people and have peace then*" (P168). Another student thinks that *peace is like heaven because people live in peace in the heaven* (P23).

While the category of tranquility and happiness was the second one for the metaphors by Turkish students, it was the third category for the metaphors by Syrian students. Under this category, 10 Syrian students produced 8 well-structured metaphors. Among the metaphors, "sunny/beautiful weather" have the most frequency (f=2). The other metaphors (cologne, friend,

happiness, hug, living in space, smile and wind) were each produced once. One student states that "*peace is like sunny weather because the sun warms the cockles of our heart*" (P116). Another student mentions "*Peace is like cologne because it refreshes me and gives me peace when I feel suffocated*" (P108).

### ***Conditions for Peace***

The category of conditions for peace is the third one for Turkish students' metaphors, while it is the fourth one for Syrian students' metaphors. In this category, 12 Turkish students produced 9 well-structured metaphors. Love (f=3) and friendship (f=2) in this category have the most frequency. It can be said that the participants in this category believe there are certain conditions to have peace. For these students, the absence of such conditions as love, friendship, trust, agreement, promise, etc. will destroy peace. One student says "*Peace is like love because if people love each other, they can live in peace*" (P158), while another one says "*Peace is like mercifulness because it teaches us peace*" (P72).

On the other hand, 8 Syrian students produced 3 well-structured metaphors. Similar to the most frequent metaphor by Turkish students, love (f=5) in this category has the most frequency. This metaphor is followed by compassion/sympathy (f=2) and honesty (f=1). Like Turkish students, Syrian students also believe that love is the most important condition for peace. One student says that "*Peace is like love because love means peace and when there is peace, there is also love*" (P157). Another Syrian student mentions that "*Peace is like compassion/sympathy because there is love and peace in compassion*" (P136). And another student says that "*Peace is like honesty. If there is no honesty, peace is impossible*" (P145).

### ***Need/Necessity***

This category is the fourth one for the metaphors produced on peace by Turkish students. Under the category, 12 Turkish students produced 7 well-structured metaphors. As in the category of conditions for peace, love (f=4) is the most frequent one. The metaphors life (f=2) and water (f=2) follow the metaphor love. For instance, one student thinks that "*peace is like love because if there is love, we live in comfort and peace is a need for that comfortable life*" (P161). Another student believes that "*peace is like life because the life becomes more difficult without peace*" (P51). Another student who uses water as a metaphor states that "*peace is like water we cannot live without water and we cannot live without peace*" (P89).

### ***Peace as A Valuable Thing***

The category of peace as a valuable thing is the fifth category for the metaphors by Turkish students, while it is the second one for the metaphors by Syrian students. While 9 Turkish students produced 5 well-structured metaphors, 17 Syrian students produced 13 metaphors under the category.

Flower (f=4) by Turkish student has the most frequency, which is followed by sun (f=2). The metaphors chocolate, flower, garden, beautiful thing by Syrian students are each produced twice, while the other metaphors like biscuit, candy, dessert, strawberry, etc. are each produced once. One Turkish student believes that "peace is like flowers because they are delicate and they need care" (P24). Like this student, one Syrian student also believes that "peace is like flower because flowers are very valuable and we must protect them" (P131). Another Turkish student thinks that "peace is like sun because peace enlightens everywhere as does the sun" (P45). And one of the Syrian students states that "peace is like chocolate because when there is peace, I become so happy as I do when I eat chocolate" (P137).

### ***Symbols for Peace***

This category is the fifth one for the metaphors produced on peace by Syrian students. Under the category, 4 students produced 3 well-structured metaphors. The metaphors are dove (f=2), white color (f=1) and key (f=1). The students who think that peace is like dove both state that "dove is the symbol for peace" (P146 and P154). Another Syrian student mention that "peace is like white color because white is pure and stainless" (P135), while the other student says that "peace is like a key because key is the symbol for peace and it opens doors" (P143).

### ***Freedom***

The category of freedom is the sixth category for the metaphors produced by both Turkish and Syrian students. While 5 Turkish students produced 5 well-structured metaphors, 4 Syrian students produced 2 metaphors under the category. The metaphors produced by Turkish students are bird (f=1), river (f=1), sky (f=1), Turkey (f=1) and victory (f=1). On the other hand, Syrian students used bird (f=2) and kite (f=1) as metaphors for peace. For instance, one of the Turkish students in this category states that "peace is like bird because it flies freely wherever it wishes" (P71) and another Turkish student thinks that "peace is like Turkey because there is peace in Turkey" (P172). Under the category, 3 Syrian students (P128, P130, P139) used bird as the metaphor for peace and all of them draw attention on the fly of birds freely. Especially one of them (P128) states that "peace is like a bird because birds fly freely everywhere and I want to be free, too". By such a statement, the Syrian student may have thought of the chaotic situation in his/her country. Considering the category, both Turkish and Syrian students established a bond between peace and freedom by using bird, kite, sky, Turkey, etc. as metaphors for peace.

### ***Possibility/Impossibility***

The seventh and the last category for the metaphors by both Turkish and Syrian students is the possibility or impossibility of peace. While 3 Turkish students produced 3 metaphors (dream, human and space), 2 Syrian students produced 2 metaphors (a town without a war and war) for peace. One of

the Turkish students believes that peace is not possible by saying that "peace is like a dream because there is no peace in the world; having peace in the world is a dream" (P91). Another Turkish student thinks that "peace is like human because people are the ones who protect or destroy peace" (P59). The other Turkish student states that "peace is like space because once peace is established, it becomes infinite like space" (P174).

Syrian students, on the other hand, established a bond between peace and war. While one of the students states that "peace is like a town without a war because it would be very nice if people were not fighting in my town, but they are fighting and there will be never be peace there" (P111), the other student believes that "peace is like war because wars never end" (P117).

It can be concluded that as the witness of the civil war closely, some Turkish students do not believe in the possibility of peace as they know that the war has been continuing for years. But they also believe that if people can truly establish peace, it can last for long times as does one of the Syrian students.

### **Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study aimed to determine 4th-grade primary school students' metaphoric perceptions of the concept of "peace" and the following metaphors had the highest frequency: friend/friendship, love, happiness, sibling/brotherhood by Syrian students have the highest frequency. Similar findings were found in the studies by Bulut and Koca, 2017; Çelikkaya and Seyhan, 2017; Kanatlı and Schreglmann, 2017; Kılcan, 2013; Şan and Yılmaz, 2016. As pointed out by Lakoff and Johnson (2003) the age groups of the samples in metaphor studies may be different, but common concepts may stem from similar experiences. Considering the metaphors in this and other similar studies can indicate that participants showed positive emotions for peace. It can also be said that the metaphors friend/friendship, love, happiness, sibling/brotherhood focus on the interpersonal peace (Castro and Galace, 2019), which mean having tolerance and love for other people and cooperating with them. These metaphors may have been produced by the students as they may have a lovely and friendly environment or in contrast, they may be hoping to have such a lovely and friendly environment. A further research should be made with teachers and students of such multinational and/or multicultural classes and observations should done to find out the answer of the question.

Most of the Turkish and Syrian students produced one sentence to give reasons to their metaphors as in the studies by Coughlin, et al 2009; Çapar, 2019; Ummannel, 2018. There may be some reasons for this finding. First, the students participating this study attend schools in suburban area. The classrooms are unfortunately very crowded and there are tens of Syrian students in each class. Teachers of such classes strive to teach the subjects and also Turkish to Syrian students and even to some Turkish students (from different ethnicities) as their mother tongue is different from Turkish.

Therefore, it can be said that the low level of language competency of students may have led them produce short sentences. The students in this study are nine-ten years old; that is to say, they are still at the concrete operational stage, which means that though their thinking becomes more logical children can think concrete events. Cooper (1965) claims that children at these ages can produce fewer ideas about peace than war.

For certain societies collectivism, unity, internal harmony are key features and vital factors to establish and maintain peace (Oppenheimer and Kuipers, 2003). Turkey has been struggling against terrorist movements both in and outside of Turkey for a long time. Just about four years ago, there was a coup attempt by terrorists and this coup was suppressed by the Turkish government and citizens together in a unity. Unity and tranquility are two vital aims of Turkish citizens to be able to live in peace. They believe that they can overcome any problems with unity and live in tranquility as they did in the Independence War and in the recent coup attempt in June 15th, 2016. The Syrians living in Turkey, on the other hand, also saw such events and the success of Turkish citizens and the government to suppress them. The Syrians also know that there many groups in conflict in their country and there is not unity, and thus there is no solution. Therefore, it is not surprising that "unity and solidarity" and "tranquility and happiness" are in the first three conceptual categories for both Turkish and Syrian students. In line with this view, Groff (2002) states that peace means unity, having good relations with each other and tranquility as it does in Turkey. And the children under the age of eleven may perceive peace as the absence of a dispute, and harmony (Galtung, 1969; Umanel, 2018). In this study, The metaphors of friend/friendship, happiness, love, sibling/brotherhood, tranquility, Turkey, sunny/beautiful weather in the conceptual categories of unit/solidarity and tranquility/happiness may all imply that the students in this study live in peace together. To support this implication, the findings of some studies in the south-eastern provinces like Saliurfa, Gaziantep, Kilis, Mardin, Batman, where millions of refugees live, are worth considering. The harmonization process of Syrian refugees living in south-eastern provinces relatively appears to be more comfortable. The main reasons for such a more comfortable process are listed as follows in the researches: the Syrian refugees' having relatives in the region, living their religious beliefs comfortably, having less difficulty in establishing relationships with the people in the region as they can find many people whose mother tongue is Arabic, Kurdish, not having a sense of discrimination or strangeness (Apak, 2014 and 2015; Deniz, Hulus and Ekinci, 2016; Eryaman & Evran, 2019; Kaya, 2015; Kaypak and Bimay, 2016).

Another result of this study is that both the Turkish and Syrian students sees peace as "a valuable thing", which is not a surprising result as we think of the civil war in Syria since 2011. Considering the metaphors of love, mother, water, sun, atmosphere by the students, it can be argued that they saw peace as a vital thing for living. It can also be said that both group are aware of the fact

that in case of absence of peace, they lose their freedom, which another conceptual category in this study, have to leave their countries to avoid devastating results of war. However, a total of five Turkish and Syrian students believe that peace is something impossible and perceive it as the absence of war, as defined in the 17th century. Similarly, Şan and Yılmaz (2016) found two categories on peace as contemporary/short-term and permanent. Bulut and Koca (2017) also found the category of difficulty of establishing peace and the metaphor dream is included in the category of difficulty of establishing peace. Another study by Biton (2006) examining the meaning of peace for Israeli and Palestinian youths, show that while Israeli students regard peace as a negative entity (the absence of violence), Palestinian students regard peace as something stable and associate peace with political independence, freedom and justice. As underlined by some researches (Myers-Bowman, Walker, and Myers-Walls, 2005; Spielmann, 1986; Walls, 2005), children in war environment regard peace as freedom movement, while children who do not experience war see peace as non-violence environment and unity, togetherness. Depending on the findings of these researches together with the ones in this study, it can be concluded that although both the Turkish and Syrian students have been witnessing and experiencing the civil war very closely, majority of them perceive peace as unity, togetherness, tranquility, freedom and valuable thing. However, there are still few students who think that peace is impossible.

In conclusion, it is seen that most of the students participating in this study produced positive metaphors and just a few students mentioned about war. The reason why similar metaphors and categories by Turkish and Syrian students were obtained in this study can be grounded on the following factors. Firstly, the ages of the participants in this study are between nine and ten. This means that Syrians students were either born in Turkey or they moved to Turkey when they were babies. In any cases, they started their education in Turkey and share the same neighborhoods, same schools, same classes and even same desks with Turkish students and they also use same textbooks, study on same topics and subjects under the same teaching programs. Shortly, it can be said that these children have integrated into the Turkish education system even though they are from different cultures. Secondly, it can be claimed that most or almost all of the students in this study are the members of the families who believe in the same religion, which heavily emphasizes on the importance of peace, unity, love, honesty, etc. It can be thought that these children may have been hearing similar religious discourses on the vitality of peace from their families. Thirdly, the students in this study have been witnessing the devastating effects and results of the civil war in Syria very closely. As mentioned before in this paper, the city where the Turkish students live is on the border of Syria. Another remarkable fact about the city is that there are various ethnicities living together in peace and this has not changed even after the arrival of Syrians except some isolated events.

This study focused on the metaphorical perceptions of primary school Turkish and Syrian students living in Sanlıurfa, a city in south-west part of Turkey. There are many Syrians and other people from various foreign countries living in the country. Further researches on peace can be done with the Syrians at different age groups living in the other parts of Turkey and with other foreigners. Comparative studies like this study can be done on other values like honesty, helpfulness, respect for diversity etc. Depending on the results of the studies so far and the future studies, values education programs should be updated and revised.

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