

## War and Peace Literacy of Social Studies Teacher Candidates: A Metaphorical Research

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to reveal the literacy levels and metaphors of Social Studies teacher candidates regarding the concepts of war and peace taught in secondary school. The research may be important in terms of revealing how Social Studies teacher candidates interpret the concepts of war and peace and how they perceive these concepts metaphorically. Phenomenology, one of the qualitative research designs, was used in the research. The study group of the research consists of 60 teacher candidates studying in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the Social Studies Teaching undergraduate program of two state universities. In the research, it was determined what meanings Social Studies teacher candidates attributed to the concepts of war and peace. The collected metaphors were classified according to the metaphors used by teacher candidates. In addition, the resulting metaphors were grouped around certain common themes. Accordingly, the prospective teachers who participated in the research created 33 metaphors regarding the concept of war and 30 metaphors regarding the concept of peace. According to the research results, the most frequently repeated war metaphor is “massacre”, followed by metaphors such as “murder”, “apocalypse”, “grim reaper” and “virus”. The most frequently repeated peace metaphor is “breathing”, followed by Metaphors such as “peace”, “friendship”, “mother” and “obligation” were followed. Metaphors related to the concepts of war and peace were grouped under two categories: “positive” and “negative”. While metaphors about war were concentrated in the “negative” category, metaphors about peace were observed to be concentrated in the “positive” category. When the participants’ reasons for the decision to go to war were examined, the most recurring answers were “if the future and security of the country is in danger” and “to guarantee peace”. It has been determined that Social Studies teacher candidates who are new to the profession view war as a negative concept and peace as a positive concept. On the other hand, the fact that they create simple and easy justifications for deciding on war can be interpreted as their failure to internalize peace sufficiently.

**Key words:** Peace, War, Teacher Candidates, Social Studies Education, Undergraduate Education

### INTRODUCTION

The wars currently ongoing in the world show humanity how important and valuable peace is. Today, the possibility of war breaking out at any time reveals the importance of war and peace literacy in the teaching process. Education appears to be the most effective tool in eliminating the possibility of war and preserving peace. Peace education arose from the aim of preventing war (Hakvoort, 2010). Before discussing the importance of war and peace in the teaching process, it is necessary to put forward the definitions of these concepts. Peace, in its broadest definition, can be defined as situations and times in which there is no war and violence. In scientific definitions, the concept of peace appears as negative and positive peace. In parallel, according to Galtung’s distinction, which is still valid today, peace does not only mean the absence of war and direct violence (the negative definition of peace), but should also be understood as: the

reduction of structural violence and social justice (the positive definition of peace). According to this understanding of peace, education should not only address war and direct violence between nations and ethnic groups, but also address the underlying conditions of violence in society (Galtung 1973; Wulf, 2013). According to Von Clausewitz’s (2008) definition, war is nothing more than a very long duel. Instead of considering many individual duelists, it would be more useful to visualize two people dueling. Each of them tries to impose his will on the other with his physical strength: the main aim is to defeat the enemy and thus make him unable to resist later.

In Higgs’s (2012) study, it is seen that even those who say that war is “very bad” and “terrible” can only state that war is a guarantee in terms of “ensuring peace”. In other words, with this dogma (Gavriely, 2014), which states that only war must exist to achieve peace, a justified purpose/cause-effect

relationship is created between war and peace. That is why war and peace have been an integral part of humankind since the beginning. Humanity has achieved great success in its struggle with nature and has defeated many deadly diseases. However, it still has not found a solution to killing behavior (Aktas & Safran, 2013). In democratic societies, public opinion appears to play a very important role in making decisions on war and peace issues (Doyle, 1997). With the main goal of raising democratic citizens in these societies, the aim is to ensure that citizens gain democratic consciousness and live together in peace. In the schools of these countries, while wars are taught within the scope of History lessons, on the other hand, they try to teach respect for cultural differences, human rights and peace. Research shows that although most children have concrete ideas about what war is, the concept of peace is often vague for children and peace is seen as the opposite of war. Additionally, peace is often thought of as weak, passive, dull, and boring. Most students have little knowledge of peacemaking processes and often express little hope for lasting peace (Matthews, 2002).

The word metaphor comes from the Greek word “metapherein”, which is formed by combining the words “meta” (to change) and “pherein” (to transfer) (Levine, 2005). Metaphor is a method of thinking and seeing that helps us understand the world in general (Çelikten, 2006). Metaphors are seen as tools through which people try to explain events, objects and especially abstract concepts using different analogies (Cerit, 2008). However, it basically means perceiving and comprehending something in the light of something else. Metaphors are considered an important form of expression because they help to clarify something and enable creativity to emerge (Lakoff & Johnson, 2005; Tubin, 2005). Metaphor is the expression of a concept, situation or object indirectly by using another concept or object, rather than directly by itself (Deant-Reed & Szokolszky, 1993). Metaphors in education help visualize information, understand concepts more easily, provide examples, facilitate analytical thinking, effective analysis, and activate emotional and cognitive functions (Akyol, 2017). The use of metaphor generally refers to a way of thinking and seeing that helps us understand the world. Research conducted in various fields has shown that metaphors has a formative effect on the way of thinking, language and science, as well as on the way people express themselves (Morgan, 1980). In the field of education, metaphors are tools in establishing connections between information. Through metaphors, people are enabled to actively structure information in their minds by creating powerful mental mapping and modeling (Arslan & Bayrakçı, 2006). While metaphors enable thinking about the relationship between two concepts, they also contribute to revealing different features of the concept that are not very obvious (Rundgren et al., 2009). Associating difficult-to-understand concepts with better-known concepts by using analogies is encountered in learning (Geçit & Gencer, 2011).

Teachers often use metaphorical expressions involuntarily in both their daily and professional lives. They are frequently used by teachers during the teaching process to ensure that students do not learn concepts they do not know

more easily, and they serve as an important tool in learning. Metaphors are widely used by teachers not only in understanding ideas but also in revealing them and directing activities. Metaphors can serve as tools in training teachers, guiding teaching practices, and determining the place of teacher candidates in the understanding of education (Ortony, 1993; Vadebonceur & Torres, 2003). One of the purposes of using metaphors is to reveal how a concept or phenomenon is perceived (Aydın, 2011). In this respect, metaphors can be used as a tool to reveal how prospective teachers perceive their specific field concepts. The literacy levels of teacher candidates regarding the concepts of War and Peace are important for the war and peace literacy that they will impart to their students in their future professional lives. Teacher candidates are expected to have literacy level knowledge about concepts of war and peace. According to the definition made by OECD (2010), literacy is defined as “the competencies of students to use their knowledge and skills, analyze, make logical inferences and communicate effectively while defining, interpreting and solving the problems they encounter in various situations in the basic subject areas.”

The aim of this research is to examine the metaphors that Social Studies teacher candidates have regarding the concepts of War and Peace. In line with this general purpose, an answer was sought to the following research questions.

1. What are the metaphors that Social Studies teacher candidates have regarding the concept of War?
2. What are the metaphors that Social Studies teacher candidates have regarding the concept of Peace?
3. How are the metaphors that Social Studies teacher candidates have regarding the concept of War and Peace classified according to categories?
4. In what situations do Social Studies teacher candidates give up on peace and decide on war?

## METHOD

### Research Design

The phenomenological research design, which is one of the qualitative research designs, was used in the research. Phenomenology or phenomenology can be defined as “focusing on phenomena that we are aware of but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding” (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In the phenomenological approach, the researcher is essentially interested in the personal experiences of the participants and examines the individuals’ perceptions and the meanings they attribute to the events (Baş & Akturan, 2013). Qualitative research basically tries to find answers to questions about the causes of phenomena and how they occur (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

### Study Group

The study group of the research consists of 60 teacher candidates who are attending the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of the Social Studies Teaching undergraduate program at two state universities in the same academic year. The reason why senior students were preferred in the study is that students at this grade level

have received the education they should receive within the scope of undergraduate education, and it is also assumed that they know special field concepts such as war and peace better. Appropriate sampling method, one of the non-random sampling methods, was used in the selection of the student group included in the research. Appropriate sampling requires the researcher's time, money and labor, etc. It is used when it is not possible to use other sampling methods due to limitations (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). When the participants in the study group are examined in terms of gender, they consist of 34 female (F) and 26 male (M) Social Studies teacher candidates. In terms of the university they studied at, there are 36 participants in University A and 24 participants in University B.

### Data Collection Tool

"Metaphor Scale on the Concepts of War and Peace" developed by the researchers was used during the data collection process. The questions in this form, developed in line with the review of the relevant literature, are related to participants' metaphorical perceptions of the concepts of War and Peace and their war decisions. In the first part of the form, the participants stated their demographic information, and in the second part, the teacher candidates who participated in the study asked "War... They were asked to complete the sentences "It is like, because..." and "Peace is like..., because..." (Saban, 2008). Also in this section, "In what situations can a decision be made to abandon peace and go to war?" question was included.

### Data Analysis

Content analysis method was used to analyze the data. Content analysis is a data reduction and meaning-making effort to determine the basic meanings of large amounts of qualitative data and their consistency among themselves (Patton, 2014). Answers for which no justification was provided, metaphors that were illogical or did not contribute to a better understanding of the concept were excluded from the scope of the research. The analysis and interpretation of the metaphors put forward by the participants were carried out in five stages. In the first stage, the naming stage, the metaphors created by the relevant teacher candidates for the concepts of War and Peace were listed and coded. Forms in which the connection between the metaphor and its justification was not understood or in which no connection was established were excluded from the analysis. In the second stage, the classification stage, the metaphors valid within the scope of the research were determined and sample metaphors were compiled. Then, the category development phase, the validity and reliability phase, and the data transfer phase to the computer environment were carried out. When the papers on which nothing was written and left blank, and the papers that did not contain any source of metaphor were removed, the number of participants in the tables in the findings section became 60.

In this study, within the framework of reliability analysis, expert opinion was sought in creating conceptual categories

by bringing together the metaphors with similar content developed by the participants for the concepts of War and Peace. The reliability of the study was tried to be ensured by comparing the classifications of the expert with the classifications made by the researchers. As a result of the reliability analysis conducted in the study using Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula ( $\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{consensus}}{\text{consensus} + \text{disagreement}} \times 100$ ), it was determined that there was a consistency rate of 94 percent. In qualitative studies, ensuring 90% or more consistency between expert and researcher evaluations is sufficient to prove the reliability of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In order to increase consistency, this study used purposeful sampling method, consistency analysis, and direct quotes from participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While presenting these quotations, information about the participant's gender and number was first presented after the university where the participant studied (University A or B, Gender F or M, "Attendant" A8).

### Findings

In this section, the data collected from Social Studies teacher candidates and their findings regarding the research questions with sample quotations are included. In this context, participants' literacy levels of the concepts of War and Peace were determined through metaphors and the data obtained was presented in tables.

#### Findings regarding the first research question

The metaphors produced by the participants regarding the concept of War are shown in Table 1.

Social Studies teacher candidates produced 33 valid metaphors regarding the concept of War. One of these produced metaphors was developed by 8 teacher candidates. The overall total ratio of the metaphors in the top 10 is 61.6%. The overall total rate of the remaining 23 metaphors is 38.4%. The most frequently repeated metaphors regarding the concept of war are "Massacre" (f=8); "Murder" (f=6); "Apocalypse", "Grim reaper" (f=5); "Virus" (f=4); They are also listed as "Earthquake", "Fire-Flame", "Death", "Hell", "Disease" for (f=2).

#### Findings regarding the second research question

The metaphors produced by the participants regarding the concept of Peace are shown in Table 2.

30 valid metaphors regarding the concept of Peace were produced by Social Studies teacher candidates. One of these produced metaphors was developed by 9 teacher candidates. The overall total ratio of the metaphors in the top 10 is 66.6%. The overall total rate of the remaining 20 metaphors is 33.4%. The most frequently repeated metaphors regarding the concept of peace are "Breathing" (f=9); "Tranquility", "Friendship" (f=6); "Mother" (f=5); "Obligation" (f=4); They are also listed as "Peaceful Melody", "Sky", "Brotherhood", "Flower", "Respect" for (f=2).

**Table 1.** Metaphors of social studies teacher candidates regarding the concept of war

Number	Metaphor	(f)	%	Number	Metaphor	(f)	%
1	Massacre	8	13.3	18	Torment	1	1.6
2	Murder	6	10	19	Dragon	1	1.6
3	Apocalypse	5	8.3	20	Revenge	1	1.6
4	Grim reaper	5	8.3	21	Unhappiness	1	1.6
5	Virus	3	5	22	Darkness	1	1.6
6	Earthquake	2	3.3	23	Rebel	1	1.6
7	Fire-Flame	2	3.3	24	End of the world	1	1.6
8	Death	2	3.3	25	Natural Disaster	1	1.6
9	Hell	2	3.3	26	Resentment	1	1.6
10	Illness	2	3.3	27	Chess	1	1.6
11	Need	1	1.6	28	Destruction	1	1.6
12	Fight-Duel	1	1.6	29	Scales	1	1.6
13	Evil	1	1.6	30	Water	1	1.6
14	Grind	1	1.6	31	Game	1	1.6
15	Injustice	1	1.6	32	Demolition	1	1.6
16	Horror movie	1	1.6	33	Shadow	1	1.6
17	Hostility	1	1.6				
TOTAL						60	100

**Table 2.** Metaphors of social studies teacher candidates regarding the concept of peace

Number	Metaphor	(f)	%	Number	Metaphor	(f)	%
1	Breathing	9	15	18	Luminous	1	1.6
2	Tranquility	6	10	19	Heaven	1	1.6
3	Friendship	6	10	20	Love	1	1.6
4	Mother	5	8.3	21	Sun	1	1.6
5	Obligation	4	6.6	22	Festival	1	1.6
6	Peaceful Melody	2	3.3	23	Solid Building	1	1.6
7	Sky	2	3.3	24	Rainbow	1	1.6
8	Brotherhood	2	3.3	25	War	1	1.6
9	Flower	2	3.3	26	Lie	1	1.6
10	Respect	2	3.3	27	Utopia	1	1.6
11	Existence	1	1.6	28	Dream world	1	1.6
12	Dream	1	1.6	29	Sun	1	1.6
13	Diamond	1	1.6	30	White Pigeon	1	1.6
14	Welfare	1	1.6				
15	To live	1	1.6				
16	Water	1	1.6				
17	Rebirth	1	1.6				
TOTAL						60	100

**Findings regarding the third research question**

The distribution of Social Studies teacher candidates' metaphors regarding the concept of war and peace by category are shown in Table 3.

The categories created from the metaphors developed by Social Studies teacher candidates regarding the concept of War and Peace are divided into two as "positive" and "negative".

27 metaphors in the "negative" category related to the concept of war were developed by 54 teacher candidates. The most frequently repeated metaphors in this category are "Massacre" (f=8); "Murder" (f=6), "Doomsday", "Grim Reaper" (f=5); "Virus" (f=4). The participants' sentences showing this are as follows: "War is like a massacre. Because innocent people are massacred by people they do not even know. Whatever the cause of war, it will bring death to everyone." (University A, F, A12).



**Table 3.** Distribution of social studies teacher candidates' metaphors regarding the concept of war and peace by category

Concept	Categories	Metaphors	Metaphors' Number	Teacher candidates' Number
War	Negative	Massacre, Murder, Apocalypse, Grim Reaper, Virus, Earthquake, Fire-Flame, Death, Hell, Disease, Fight-Duel, Evil, Grind, Injustice, Horror Movie, Hostility, Torment, Dragon, Revenge, Unhappiness, Darkness, Rebellion, World End, Natural Disaster, Resentment, Destruction, Demolition	27	54
	Positive	Need, Chess, Scales, Water, Game, Shadow	6	6
Total			33	60
Peace	Negative	Obligation, War, Lie, Utopia, Dream world	5	8
	Positive	Breathing, Tranquility, Friendship, Mother, Peaceful Melody, Sky, Brotherhood, Flower, Respect, Existence, Dream, Diamond, Welfare, To live, Water, Rebirth, Luminous, Heaven, Love, Sun, Festival, Solid Building, Rainbow, Sun, White Pigeon	25	52
Total			30	60

“War is like murder. Because there is no war that does not end in death. At the end of wars, soldiers and ordinary people are often killed for reasons they do not know.” (B University, M, A38).

“War is like a massacre. Because massacres are crimes against humanity in which innocent people, including children, are killed. “The administrators who decide on war must be aware of the massacres that will occur as a result of the war.” (B University, K, K17).

“War is like a virus. Because, like a virus that causes a bad disease, it spreads quickly among people and finds supporters.” (B University, E, K45).

6 metaphors under the “positive” category related to the concept of war were developed by 6 teacher candidates. In this category, metaphors with the same frequency of repetition are “Need” (f=1), “Chess” (f=1), “Libra” (f=1), “Water” (f=1), “Game” (f= 1) and “Shadow” (f=1). The participants’ sentences showing this are as follows: “War is like a need. Because wars have existed since the beginning of humanity. Apparently, people need this” (University A, M, A8).

War is like chess. Because country leaders try to beat each other by making moves just like in a chess game” (B University, F, A13).

5 metaphors in the “negative” category related to the concept of peace were developed by 8 teacher candidates. The most frequently repeated metaphors in this category are “Obligation” (f=4); “War” (f=1), “Lie” (f=1), “Utopia” (f=1); and “Dream World” (f=1). The participants’ sentences showing this are as follows: “Peace is like an obligation. Because states can only develop in an environment of peace, so it is imperative to stop war and establish peace. (University A, F, A30).

“Peace is like a utopia. Because maintaining peace is a very difficult dream. The countries of the world will start a war anyway.” (B University, M, A5).

“Peace is like a lie. Because peace is just a lie told to the public by the rulers of the countries. Even though they say they are trying to keep the peace, it is inevitable that war will break out.” (B University, F, A21).

25 metaphors under the “positive” category related to the concept of peace were developed by 52 teacher candidates. In this category, metaphors with the same frequency of repetition are “Breathing” (f=9); “Peace”, “Friendship” (f=6); and “Mother” (f=5). The participants’ sentences showing this are as follows: “Peace is like breathing. Because, in an environment where there is no peace, people cannot breathe or continue their lives.” (University A, M, A4).

“Peace is like tranquility. If there is peace in the whole world, there will be peace. So people can live peacefully and happily.” (B University, F, A25).

“Peace is like friendship. Friends should be careful about their relationships with each other, otherwise there will be resentment. Disagreements between states also start wars.” (B University, F, A29).

“Peace is like a mother. Just as a mother protects her children, human rights and freedoms are protected in a peace environment.” (University A, M, A7).

#### *Findings regarding the fourth research question*

In what situations do Social Studies teacher candidates give up on peace and decide on war are shown in Table 4.

In addition to metaphors, the prospective teachers participating in the research were asked the question in which situations they might decide to give up on peace and go to war. When the reasons for their decision to go to war were examined, 15 answers were given by 60 teacher candidates. According to Table 4, the most recurring answers are “If the future and security of the country is in danger” (f=10); “To restore and guarantee peace” (f=8), “To avoid losing land” (f=6), “To ensure the security of the people” (f=5); It is listed as “If the other side declares war or if war is inevitable” (f=4). However, It is significant that the answer of “In no case can a decision be made for war. War is murder” was given by only two participants. Most participants attempt to find logical justifications for their war decisions.

**Table 4.** In what situations do social studies teacher candidates give up on peace and decide on war?

Number	Decisions	(f)	%
1	If the future and security of the country is in danger, a war decision may be taken.	10	16.6
2	A war decision may be taken to restore and guarantee peace.	8	13.3
3	Countries may decide to go to war to avoid losing territory.	6	10
4	A war decision may be taken to ensure the safety of the people.	5	8.3
5	If the other side declares war or if war is inevitable, a war decision may be taken.	4	6.6
6	War may be decided to save oppressed nations.	2	3.3
7	War decisions may be taken to protect the economic and commercial interests of states.	2	3.3
8	In situations that threaten democracy, war may be decided.	2	3.3
9	If human rights and freedoms are in danger, war may be decided.	2	3.3
10	In no case can a decision be made for war. War is murder.	2	3.3
11	When children are killed, war may be decided.	1	1.6
12	When there is an attack on sacred values, a war decision may be taken.	1	1.6
13	If an allied country is under attack, war may be decided.	1	1.6
14	When situations that conflict with the country's interests arise, a war decision may be taken.	1	1.6
15	To stop civil war, the state can decide on war.	1	1.6
	Total	60	100

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, which aims to reveal the literacy levels of Social Studies teacher candidates about the concepts of “war” and “peace”, metaphors were used to support the research findings. Accordingly, the prospective teachers who participated in the research produced 33 metaphors for the concept of war and 30 metaphors for the concept of peace. According to the research results, the most frequently repeated war metaphor is “massacre”, followed by “murder”, “doomsday”, “grim reaper” and “virus” metaphors. The most frequently repeated peace metaphor was “breathing”, followed by metaphors such as “peace”, “friendship”, “mother” and “obligation”. Metaphors regarding the concepts of war and peace were grouped into two categories: positive and negative. While metaphors about war were concentrated in the “negative” category, metaphors about peace were observed to be concentrated in the “positive” category. “In what situations do Social Studies teacher candidates give up on peace and decide on war?” The most common answers to the question

were “If the future and security of the country are in danger” and “To guarantee peace”. It has been determined that Social Studies teacher candidates who are new to the profession see war as a negative concept and peace as a positive concept. On the other hand, the fact that they produce simple and easy reasons to decide on war can be interpreted as their failure to internalize peace sufficiently.

The metaphors created by the participants were examined under two categories, taking into account Galtung’s distinction that remains valid today: positive and negative. According to Galtung, peace should mean not only the absence of war and direct violence (negative definition of peace), but also the reduction of structural violence and the production of social justice (positive definition of peace). According to this understanding of peace, education should not only address war and direct violence between nations and ethnic groups, but also the underlying conditions of violence in society (Galtung, 1973). When the created categories were examined, it was determined that the metaphors regarding the concept of war were concentrated in the negative category, while the metaphors regarding the concept of peace were concentrated in the positive category. Accordingly, it can be concluded that teacher candidates see peace as a much more positive concept.

Keçe (2014), in his research on Social Studies teachers’ metaphors about historical concepts, emphasized the spreadable aspect of “War” and the fact that all parties are definitely harmed in wars; Metaphors have been produced to show that there is a perception that a world where “peace” is established is impossible and that this is perceived as a utopia. According to the findings of the study in which Kanatlı and Schreglmann (2017) examined the metaphors created by primary and secondary school students towards the concepts of war and peace, the participants did not perceive war and peace as concrete events, they gave more place to abstract concepts, and instead of expressing the concept of war with emotional metaphors, students used religious metaphors. It was observed that they preferred to express using symbols. These results are not similar to our research. In this research, the war and peace metaphors put forward by prospective teachers are more concrete. According to the results of their research in which Şan and Yılmaz (2016) examined the metaphors of seventh grade students about the concepts of “war” and “peace”, the metaphors of war and peace were stated as metaphors that were opposite to each other. While war is explained through negative metaphors, peace is explained through positive metaphors. These results are categorically compatible with the results of my research. When Şehirli’s (2018) research on the metaphorical perceptions of Social Studies teacher candidates regarding the concept of peace is examined, it is understood that the metaphors produced by teacher candidates regarding the concept of peace are generally “very positively perceived”. This result is also compatible with the results of my research.

The research results reveal how Social Studies teacher candidates view the concepts of War and Peace and how they decide to give up on peace and go to war. Considering the research results, they should pay attention to the need to

include more activities that criticize war and praise peace in the teaching process. According to the results of this research, it may be recommended to conduct similar studies on different courses. A similar study can be carried out spatially and more deeply with different study groups (teacher, student). The metaphors developed by Social Studies teacher candidates can be compared with other courses. As a result, metaphors can be used by prospective teachers as powerful tools in understanding, revealing and explaining their specific professional concepts.

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