

A Comparative Analysis of Conceptual Metaphors for “Natural Disaster”

Öznur YAZICI

Karabük University, Turkey
oznuryazici@karabuk.edu.tr

Özlem ULU KALIN

Artvin Çoruh University, Turkey
ozlemulu@artvin.edu.tr

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Extended Summary

Introduction

Disasters are grouped into two categories as natural and man-made by the reason of formation. A natural disaster is defined as an event of nature, which overwhelms local resources and threatens the function and safety of the community (March, 2002: 1). Underdeveloped and developing countries are not prepared for the effects of natural disasters. Lack of good disaster management, lack of knowledge and consciousness of local community, poor construction of buildings, lack of hygiene, and so on in these countries and regions cause loss of life and property. Turkey is an earthquake and landslide country due to the its geographical features. It is a necessity not to forget this. Disaster issues within the courses and subjects of the universities’ Geography, Geography Teaching and Social Studies Teacher Education programs have an exceptional importance. In this study, it is aimed to compare the students’ metaphors of Geography Department and the Social Studies Teacher Education Program towards the concept of “natural disaster” in order to determine whether there is a difference between them.

In accordance with this purpose, 4 sub-problems have been identified for the study:

1. What metaphors do the students of Geography Department express the perceptions of the concept of “natural disaster”?
2. What metaphors do the students of the Social Studies Teacher Education Program express the perceptions of the concept of “natural disaster”?
3. When the metaphors from the students are categorized in terms of their common characteristics, under what headings can they be grouped?
4. Are there similarities and differences between the students in Geography Department and the Social Studies Teacher Education Program when the categories that emerged from the concept of “natural disaster” are compared?

Method

The phenomenological design of qualitative research methods was deemed suitable because it was intended to reveal the similarities and differences between the students’ metaphors regarding the concept of natural disaster. The population of this research consist of the students who studied in Geography Department of Faculty of Letters of Karabük University and students who studied in Social Studies Teacher Education Program of Faculty of Education Artvin Çoruh University in 2017-2018 academic year. The accessible sample of the research consist of 206 Geography Department students and 110 Social Studies Teacher Education Program students. In this study, the sample group was given a semi-structured form with the words “Natural disaster is like because ...” to determine the thoughts of the concept of natural disasters, and sample group’ concepts which wrote on this form created basic data source of this research. The obtained data were analyzed by the content analysis method. At naming stage, metaphors were listed temporarily in alphabetical order. Ineffective metaphors have been eliminated during the screening and purification phase. Invalid metaphors have been eliminated during the elimination and purification phase. At the end of the elimination stage, it was obtained 194 valid metaphors from Geography Department students and 81 valid metaphors from the Social Studies Teacher Education Program students. Later on, it was completed the stage of category development, and finally the stage of providing validity and reliability. For each category and each metaphor, it was discussed for providing 100% agreement between researchers, and so, categorized metaphor lists were created.

Findings, Discussion and Recommendations

Firstly, it was tabulated findings as lists related to the metaphors that two departments’ students created about the concept of natural disaster. Then, the categories created by the students of both departments were given

comparatively to determine the differences between them. Each category was supported by direct quotations from students.

“Human” metaphor was the most commonly used by the students of Geography Department. Apart from this, “Exam, Cancer, Disease Type, Ghost, Child” are frequently used metaphors. The most common metaphor used by the students in the Social Studies Teacher Education Program was “Doomsday”. Following that the “Punishment” metaphor is the most used concept. Most of the metaphors for both departments are negative words. This is because the consequences of natural disasters are being extremely painful individually and socially. All these metaphors were then grouped under the conceptual category of 11 for Geography Department and 8 for the Social Studies Teacher Education Program. At the end of the research, it was seen that the conceptual categories created for two departments were the same (Natural Disaster as Helplessness, Natural Disaster as a Damaging Element, Natural Disaster as an Action-Reaction, Natural Disaster as an Emotional Status, Natural Disaster as a Kind of Disease, Natural Disaster as a Supernatural Being, Natural Disaster as a Change and Uncertainty, Natural Disaster as a Warning-Message), and that Geography Department students also created different conceptual categories in addition (Natural Disaster as Education-Instruction, Natural Disaster as a Kind of Animal, Natural Disaster as Precautionary). According to this result; the number of same categories is 8 for both departments, and the number of different categories is 3. A total of 194 valid metaphors were obtained from 206 students of Geography Department, and 94% was considered valid according to the total number of participants. A total of 81 valid metaphors were obtained from 110 students of the Social Studies Teacher Education Program, and the validity rate of metaphors initially generated was 74%. In addition, the students of Geography Department have produced more number and more diverse of metaphors; the number of categories that emerged has been 3 more than the Social Studies teacher candidates. It can be said that all these differences are due largely to the contribution of the students to the Geography Department of the 3-credit Disaster Geography course they took during the 2017-2018 Fall semester. As this study was dealt with conceptual framework, metaphors which created the categories of “Natural disasters as helplessness” and “Natural disaster as a damaging element” that come into prominence the destructive aspects predominated when the natural disaster was mentioned. New studies should be undertaken to investigate why the students think disasters as “helplessness” events that can not be prevented. In order for not to perceive natural disasters as a destiny or punishment by the students, and therefore society, more attention should be paid to the awareness that materially and morally damages can be reduced when “a good disaster management” is provided with precautions that can be taken before, during, and after disaster.