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Metaphoric Perceptions of Teacher Candidates about COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the metaphors that teacher candidates created for COVID-19. In this study, a phenomenological research design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. The study group consisted of 168 teacher candidates (111 female, 57 male) who attended a state university in the 2019-2020 academic year and volunteered to participate in the study. In this study, metaphors were collected from teacher candidates with a semi-structured form to determine their feelings and thoughts about COVID-19. The first part of the form aimed to collect demographic information. In the second part, to determine the metaphorical perceptions of teacher candidates about COVID-19, they were asked to complete the blanks in the phrase, "COVID-19 is similar to because" In this study, content analysis was employed to analyze the data collected through semi-structured forms. According to the findings regarding the data obtained, teacher candidates came up with 89 valid metaphors about COVID-19. The metaphors that teacher candidates frequently used were "reminder, gossip, warder, foe, ignorant person, atom bomb, love, cigarette, dragon and meteorite/meteor". The metaphors created by the teacher candidates about the COVID-19 pandemic were grouped under seven conceptual categories. These were "items/objects, natural events, animals/plants, actions/behaviors, abstract concepts, people, and professions".

Keywords: Teacher candidate, COVID-19 (coronavirus), metaphor, phenomenology

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Introduction

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and the disease have become known around the world since its outbreak in Wuhan, China in December 2019 (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020a). WHO declared COVID-19 as a pandemic on March 12, 2020 but added that it could be controlled (WHO, 2020b). Following this declaration, to prevent the spread of the disease in Turkey, a list of recommendations of the Ministry of Health about public transport, closed public places, accommodation facilities, restaurants, dormitories, nursing homes, and elderly care centers was published in a circular by the Ministry of National Education (MEB, 2020). Most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions to control the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. These nationwide shutdowns have affected more than 60% of the student population around the world (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2020a). Nearly 1.2 billion students around the world have been forced to receive distance education due to the suspension of face-to-face education (Li and Lalani, 2020). Studies suggest that school closures have been based on evidence that this application reduces the social contact between students and therefore disrupts transmission (Viner, Russell, Croker, Packer, Ward, Stansfield, Mytton, Bonel and Booy, 2020). UNESCO (2020b) has offered digital content and tools to make distance education more efficient and provided support to ensure continuity in education in disadvantaged regions.

Face-to-face education in Turkey as well as many countries has been suspended as a measure to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. All formal and non-formal educational institutions of MEB, regardless of the level and type, were closed between March 16 and 23, 2020 under measures taken for the COVID-19 pandemic, and then the distance education process was launched as of March 23, 2020. In this context, the weekly school schedule was restructured, and the distance education process started at elementary, middle, and high school levels, including a compensatory program, on TV through Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) and on the Internet with the support of the Education and Information Network (EBA) (MEB, 2020). With the statement of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), education in universities was also suspended for three weeks as of March 16, 2020 as a measure (YÖK, 2020a). Meanwhile, the "Road Map for Distance Education Practices during Pandemic", prepared by the "Commission for Digital Transformation of Higher Education" consisting of academicians from different universities within YÖK, was finalized. According to these arrangements of YÖK, universities would use synchronous or asynchronous distance education methods, the theoretical parts of the applied courses would be carried out through distance education, and a brief program would be implemented for the applied part of the courses. Regarding the measurement and the evaluation of the courses to be given on distance education, that is the testing process, universities were authorized to carry out their own evaluation program provided that they complied with a macro level calendar. In addition, the qualification exams, thesis monitoring committees, and thesis defenses in graduate programs would be conducted online, provided that universities have the necessary infrastructure, and these events can be recorded and audited. All these arrangements have been carried out in line with the decisions made by universities within their own academic calendars (YÖK, 2020b).

Distance Education Application and Research Centers are available in many universities in Turkey. During this process, YÖK opened a "Distance Education Application and Research Center" in 20 more universities (YÖK, 2020c). The term "distance education" was first

mentioned in the 1892 Catalog of the University of Wisconsin, and it was used for the first time in an article written in 1906 by the director of the same university (Adıyaman and MEBETG Directorate, 2001). Distance education is important in terms of removing geographical barriers (Ekici, 2003). It offers students the opportunity to participate in education wherever they are. However, the development of this opportunity depends on technological advances. Although technology plays the most determining role in distance education, the instructional outcomes of this type of education should be emphasized rather than the technology which it is based on (Koçer, 2001). Developing technology and globalizing world have brought innovations in education. The changes and differences between the past and the present have led a shift from an educational approach where knowledge is seen as an object transferred from teacher to student to an educational approach where students construct knowledge together under the guidance of the teacher (Keser, 2005). The current COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected the mobility of all human activities, including the activities in education (Surani and Hamidah, 2020). It has made education dependent on technology and distance learning. Some studies on online education emphasize that students should take responsibility for their own learning and learn to control learning processes (Tok, Özgan and Dös, 2010). Although distance education is not a new phenomenon, the distance education process under pandemic conditions is a new experience for the whole world. During the Covid-19 pandemic, there is an increasing dependence on web-based technology (Alhumaid, Ali, Waheed, Zahid, and Habes, 2020). According to Adnan and Anwar (2020) administrations of schools, colleges and universities have opted for online classes as an alternative way of continuing education.

The pandemic process has had many positive and negative effects on all societies. It has changed people's perspectives on life, expectations for the future, and moods. All disciplines have been carrying out studies on the impact of the pandemic process on their fields in an effort to contribute to the process. Studies in the field of education have been investigating the effects of the process at all levels, including students, teachers, school programs, or educational administrators. Among these studies, metaphor studies draw attention (Aykutalp and Karakurt, 2020; Bozkurt, 2020; Craig, 2020; Dönmez and Gürbüz, 2020; Arı, and Arslan, 2020; Özmercan-Eminoğlu, Küçüktepe-Eminoğlu and Küçüktepe, 2020; Toquero, 2020). The Turkish Language Association [TLA] defines metaphor as using a word or concept in a way that means other than its accepted meaning. Arslan and Bayrakçı (2006) defines this concept as a powerful mental mapping-modeling mechanism that individuals use to make sense of their own world, as well as a tool that contributes to the mental concretization and visualization of abstract concepts. According to the definition by Aydoğdu (2008), metaphor is a kind of interpretation using analogies. In addition to these definitions, Yıldırım and Şimşek (2018) emphasize that metaphors facilitate data collection and analysis as well as providing a very robust and enlightening picture about the topic, the phenomenon, the event, and the case under investigation.

There are some metaphor studies on COVID-19 in the literature. Özmercan-Eminoğlu, Küçüktepe-Eminoğlu and Küçüktepe (2020) and Dönmez and Gürbüz (2020) studied COVID-19 metaphors in university students. Arı and Arslan (2020) studied this topic in secondary school students. Aykutalp and Karakurt (2020) emphasized the stigmatizing power of metaphors derived from COVID-19 in their study. Craig (2020) conducted a study on the pandemic and the metaphoric perceptions attributed to it. This study aimed to determine the metaphors that teacher candidates created for COVID-19. To achieve this goal, the following sub-goal was sought.

1. What are the metaphoric perceptions of teacher candidates about COVID-19?

Methods

This section of the study addresses the model and the study group of the study, data collection tools, and the methods of data analysis.

The model of the study

In this study, which was carried out to determine the metaphoric perceptions of teacher candidates, a phenomenological research design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. With qualitative data, rich definitions and explanations can be made, events can be transferred chronologically, a cause-effect relationship can be observed, and efficient explanations can be obtained (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Phenomenology is one of the qualitative research methods used by researchers in the fields of education and social sciences to present realities based on the experiences of participants (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). Metaphors, on the other hand, are cases where the speaker says something but means something else (Bezuidenhout, 2001). According to Saban (2008), metaphors allow a certain phenomenon to be seen as another by enabling a person's mind to move from a certain style of comprehension to another. In this study, metaphors were used to describe an existing situation.

The study group

The study group consisted of 168 teacher candidates who attended a state university in the 2019-2020 academic year and volunteered to participate in the study. Of the participants, 111 (66%) were female and 57 (34%) were male. The distribution of the participants by school year was as follows: 92 (54.8%) juniors, 48 (28.6%) sophomores, and 28 (16.6%) seniors. The distribution of the participants by departments was as follows: 52 (30.9%) from Classroom Teaching, 40 (23.8%) from Mathematics Teaching, 38 (22.6%) from Turkish Language Teaching, 28 (16.7%) from Social Studies Teaching, and 10 (6%) from Physical Education Teaching.

Data collection tools

Metaphor is a powerful mental tool that an individual can utilize to understand and explain a highly abstract, complex, or theoretical phenomenon (Saban, 2008). In this study, metaphors were collected from students with a semi-structured form to determine their feelings and thoughts about COVID-19. During the development stage, the semi-structured form was submitted to the opinions of three experts, including two from educational programs and instruction and one from the field of measurement and evaluation. The first part of the form aims to collect demographic information. In the second part of the form, to determine the metaphorical perceptions of teacher candidates about COVID-19, they were asked to complete the blanks in the phrase, "COVID-19 is similar to..... because" The form was piloted to five teacher candidates. It was finalized by making necessary arrangements based on the opinions and the responses given to the questions during the pilot study phase.

Analysis of the study data

In this study, the content analysis was employed to analyze the data collected through semi-structured forms. The main purpose of the content analysis is to reach the concepts and relationships that can explain the data collected. The data were organized according to categories and codes, and the findings were interpreted accordingly (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). Miles and Huberman's reliability formula was run to calculate the reliability of the categories created for the data. The researchers, who reached a consensus on the results of the individual analyses,

calculated the inter-rater reliability using the "Agreement/ (Agreement + Disagreement) x100" formula and reached a 92% agreement in the analyses. This rate was accepted as reliable for the study (Miles and Huberman, 1994). As a result of the analysis of the data, seven main categories and various metaphors emerged. The categories and the codes created were presented in tables with frequency and percentage values. Also, direct quotations from teacher candidates' metaphors were presented. The opinions of the teacher candidates were directly reported, and the sex and the order of the person submitting the related opinion were given using a code such as "F, 14; M, 168".

Findings

This section presents the metaphors created by the teacher candidates in the study group about COVID-19, the categories under which these metaphors were grouped in terms of similarities, and direct quotations from the participants' statements about the metaphors they created.

The sub-problem of the study was "What are the metaphoric perceptions of teacher candidates about COVID-19?" Table 1 presents findings regarding the data obtained.

Table 1. Metaphoric perceptions of the teacher candidates about COVID-19

No	Metaphor	f	No	Metaphor	f	No	Metaphor	f
1.	Reminder	10	31.	Mud	1	61.	Hot weather of Urfa city	1
2.	Gossip	8	32.	Darkness	1	62.	Evil	1
3.	Warder	7	33.	Rain	1	63.	Separation	1
4.	Foe	7	34.	Thief	1	64.	Alarm clock	1
5.	Ignorant person	5	35.	Painful experiences	1	65.	Ink	1
6.	Atom bomb	5	36.	Imperialism	1	66.	Hatred	1
7.	Love	5	37.	Acid rain	1	67.	African fly	1
8.	Cigarette	5	38.	Homesickness	1	68.	Virus	1
9.	Dragon	4	39.	Ant	1	69.	Bad friend	1
10.	Meteorite/meteor	4	40.	Snowball	1	70.	Judge	1
11.	Swamp	3	41.	Teacher	1	71.	Consumer	1
12.	Chewing gum	3	42.	Map	1	72.	User manual	1
13.	Domino	3	43.	Searching water in the desert	1	73.	Truck with a brake failure	1
14.	Chemical cleaning material	3	44.	Food chain	1	74.	Black swan	1
15.	Affection	3	45.	Gambling	1	75.	Mirror	1
16.	Regret	3	46.	Scorpion	1	76.	Impact	1
17.	Earthquake	3	47.	Hunter	1	77.	Serial killer	1
18.	Taking the KPSS test	3	48.	Safety belt	1	78.	Ivy	1
19.	War	3	49.	Vulture	1	79.	Terrorist	1
20.	Cruel person	3	50.	Wolf	1	80.	Balloon	1
21.	Natural disaster	2	51.	Cage	1	81.	Corn	1
22.	Time	2	52.	Equality	1	82.	Life coach	1
23.	Glass	2	53.	Hurricane	1	83.	Knowledge	1
24.	Unfriendly ruler	2	54.	Fire	1	84.	Hooliganism	1
25.	Insidious human	2	55.	Happiness	1	85.	Anopheles	1
26.	Dinosaur	2	56.	Bag	1	86.	Chance	1
27.	Living	2	57.	Pomegranate	1	87.	Seeker in hide-and-seek game	1
28.	Torturing	2	58.	Chinese	1	88.	Pollen	1
29.	Treeless world	2	59.	Cat	1	89.	Ray	1
30.	Solar eclipse	1	60.	Superhero	1			

As seen in Table 1, the teacher candidates came up with 89 valid metaphors about COVID-19. These metaphors are listed in the table according to their frequency values. The metaphors that the teacher candidates frequently used were "reminder (f = 10)", "gossip, (f = 8)", "warder, (f = 7)", "foe, (f = 7)", "ignorant person, (f = 5)", "atom bomb, f = 5", "love, (f = 5)", "cigarette, (f = 5)", "dragon, (f = 4)", and "meteorite / meteor, (f = 4)".

According to the findings regarding the data obtained, the metaphors created by the teacher candidates about the COVID-19 pandemic were grouped under seven conceptual categories. These were "items/objects, natural events, animals/plants, actions/behaviors, abstract concepts, people, and professions". The distribution of the valid metaphors created by the candidate teachers by category was as follows: 18 in items/objects conceptual category (f=42), 16 in natural events (f=25), 14 in animals/plants (f=18), 13 in actions/behaviors (f=26), 11 in abstract concepts (f=20), 10 in people (f=24), and 7 in professions (f=13). The metaphor counts of these categories, the frequency values, and the sample description expressions given by the teacher candidates are presented in tables below. The categories are presented in the descending order by the code count.

Table 2. Metaphors for *items/objects* category

Categories	Codes	Teacher candidates	
		f	%
Items/objects	Reminder	10	6
	Cigarette	5	3
	Atom bomb	5	3
	Chemical cleaning material	3	1.7
	Chewing gum	3	1.7
	Dominoes	3	1.7
	Glass	2	1.2
	User manual	1	0.6
	Bag	1	0.6
	Truck with a brake failure	1	0.6
	Safety belt	1	0.6
	Map	1	0.6
	Cage	1	0.6
	Ink	1	0.6
	Balloon	1	0.6
	Mirror	1	0.6
	Snowball	1	0.6
	Alarm clock	1	0.6
Total	42	25	

As seen in Table 2, the majority of the metaphors were in the *items/objects* category (f = 42). The teacher candidates created 18 valid metaphors in this category. Some examples of the teacher candidates' descriptive statements about these metaphors are as follows:

“COVID-19 is similar to chemical cleaning material because it has made some cleaning all around the world. We polluted the world a lot; now it needs cleaning. COVID-19 has killed too many people, but it has also done some cleaning around the world”. (F, 14)

“COVID-19 is similar to a reminder because it has reminded us of the importance of life, our priorities, everything we have ignored or postponed, things we have put aside, books we have delayed reading, or everything we have suspended to take care of later”. (M, 12)

“COVID-19 is similar to dominoes because it kills everyone whom it touches”. (F, 47)

“COVID-19 is similar to dominoes because even one touch will lead to hundreds of deaths”. (F, 49)

“COVID-19 is similar to ink because it disperses and destroys everything in an instant”. (F, 57)

“COVID-19 is similar to a mirror because it has enabled people to confront themselves, their mistakes, faults, and shortcomings”. (F, 147)

“COVID-19 is similar to cigarettes because they both cause you to have difficulty in breathing”. (M, 168)

Table 3. Metaphors for *natural events* category

Categories	Codes	Teacher candidates	
		f	%
Natural events	Meteorite/meteor	4	2.3
	Earthquake	3	1.7
	Swamp	3	1.7
	Natural disasters	2	1.2
	Treeless world	2	1.2
	Rain	1	0.6
	Acid rain	1	0.6
	Fire	1	0.6
	Hurricane	1	0.6
	Darkness	1	0.6
	Solar eclipse	1	0.6
	Food chain	1	0.6
	Hot weather of Urfa city	1	0.6
	Ray	1	0.6
	Mud	1	0.6
	Pollen	1	0.6
Total	25	15	

As seen in Table 3, the teacher candidates created 16 metaphors in the natural events category (f = 25). Some examples of the teacher candidates' descriptive statements about these metaphors are as follows:

“COVID-19 is similar to an earthquake because it also destroys everything and only lucky people can survive, just like the coronavirus patients”. (F, 158)

“COVID-19 is similar to an earthquake because coronavirus has completely ruined our lives similar to an earthquake destroying people”. (F, 103)

“COVID-19 is similar to a meteor because it has brought humanity to the brink of extinction, just like meteors bringing the end of dinosaurs”. (F, 160)

“COVID-19 is similar to acid rains because it has a dissolving, sickening, and lethal effect where it flows. At the same time, its effect spreads over the region where it shows up”. (M, 133)

“COVID-19 is similar to the hot weather of Urfa city because no matter how strong and vigorous you are, it will melt and almost kill you”. (M, 156)

“COVID-19 is similar to a swamp because no country that it swallows can easily get rid of it, the more you struggle, the deeper you sink, it ruins the economies of countries, ruins health systems, and ruins the psychology of people.” (F, 28)

Table 4. Metaphors for *animals/plants* category

Category	Codes	Teacher candidates	
		f	%
Animals/plants	Dragon	4	2.3
	Dinosaur	2	1.2
	Black swan	1	0.6
	Ant	1	0.6
	Vulture	1	0.6
	African fly	1	0.6
	Anopheles	1	0.6
	Scorpion	1	0.6
	Wolf	1	0.6
	Virus	1	0.6
	Ivy	1	0.6
	Corn	1	0.6
	Pomegranate	1	0.6
	Cat	1	0.6
Total	18	11	

As seen in Table 4, the teacher candidates created 14 metaphors in the *animals/plants* category (f = 18). Some examples of the teacher candidates' descriptive statements about these metaphors are as follows:

“COVID-19 is similar to ivy because they both spread disproportionately in environments where they find the opportunity”. (F, 70)

“COVID-19 is similar to anopheles because they both have changed the course of history”. (F, 56)

“COVID-19 is similar to a dragon because the weapon of both is fire. Both of them burn their opponents with this weapon”. (F, 48)

“COVID-19 is similar to a scorpion because you need to escape and to get rid of it. If we do not take our measures, it can kill anyone when it bites”. (M, 7)

Table 5. Metaphors for *actions/behaviors* category

Category	Codes	Teacher candidates	
		f	%
Actions/behaviors	Gossip	8	4.7
	War	3	1.7
	Taking the KPSS test	3	1.7
	Torturing	2	1.2
	Living	2	1.2
	Searching water in the desert	1	0.6
	Separation	1	0.6
	Hooliganism	1	0.6
	Impact	1	0.6
	Consumer	1	0.6
	Gambling	1	0.6
	Evil	1	0.6
	Imperialism	1	0.6
	Total	26	15

As seen in Table 5, the teacher candidates created 13 metaphors in the *actions/behaviors* category (f = 26). Some examples of the teacher candidates' descriptive statements about these metaphors are as follows:

“COVID-19 is similar to a gossip because it spreads very quickly; it multiplies as it spreads and poisons everything which it reaches”. (M, 138)

“COVID-19 is similar to a war because you must fight and take precautions to survive”. (M, 142)

“COVID-19 is similar to a war because we need to fight and to take measures to survive”. (F, 149)

“COVID-19 is similar to imperialism because coronavirus is also invasive, colonial, and deadly”. (M, 55)

“COVID-19 is similar to searching water in the desert because finding a vaccine is like a mirage for now”. (F, 24)

“COVID-19 is similar to gambling because whether you win or lose depends on your next move”. (M, 134)

“COVID-19 is similar to taking the KPSS test because they both ruin my best years”. (F, 40).

Table 6. Metaphors for *abstract concepts* category

Category	Codes	Teacher candidates	
		f	%
Abstract concepts	Love	5	3
	Affection	3	1.7
	Regret	3	1.7
	Time	2	1.2
	Chance	1	0.6
	Knowledge	1	0.6
	Happiness	1	0.6
	Homesickness	1	0.6
	Equality	1	0.6
	Hatred	1	0.6
	Painful events	1	0.6
Total	20	12	

As seen in Table 6, the teacher candidates created 11 metaphors in the *abstract concepts* category (f = 20). Some examples of the teacher candidates' descriptive statements about these metaphors are as follows:

“COVID-19 is similar to love because they both kill you or make you miserable”. (M, 3)

“COVID-19 is similar to love it does not leave the body it enters before the body collapses”. (M, 4)

“COVID-19 is similar to affection because both proliferate as they are shared”. (F, 59)

“COVID-19 is like hatred; you can't see it but you feel it all over your body”. (F, 11)

“COVID-19 is similar to regret because it makes you realize things you have not been able to appreciate”. (F, 121)

“COVID-19 is similar to time because it shows us whoever laughs last laughs best.” (M, 143)

“COVID-19 is similar to equality because it kills both rich and poor people.” (F, 21)

Table 7. Metaphors for *people* category

Category	Codes	Teacher candidates	
		f	%
People	Foe	7	4.2
	Ignorant person	5	3
	Cruel person	3	1.7
	Insidious person	2	1.2
	Unfriendly ruler	2	1.2
	Chinese	1	0.6
	Serial killer	1	0.6
	Terrorist	1	0.6
	Bad friend	1	0.6
	Seeker in the hide-and-seek game	1	0.6
Total	24	14	

As seen in Table 7, the teacher candidates created 10 metaphors in the *people* category (f = 24). Some examples of the teacher candidates' descriptive statements about these metaphors are as follows:

“COVID-19 is similar to a foe because it aims to kill us”. (F, 16)

” COVID-19 is similar to a foe because it disturbs our peace”. (M, 167)

“COVID-19 is similar to a terrorist because it can separate us from our loved ones by attempting to kill us in an unexpected moment”. (F, 85)

“COVID-19 is similar to a terrorist because it attacks the elderly, children, everyone mercilessly”. (M, 92)

“COVID-19 is similar to an unfriendly ruler because such a ruler wants to take over the world without recognizing any boundaries and having mercy”. (M, 163)

Table 8. Metaphors for *professions* category

Category	Codes	Teacher candidates	
		f	%
Professions	Warder	7	4.2
	Teacher	1	0.6
	Judge	1	0.6
	Superhero	1	0.6
	Hunter	1	0.6
	Thief	1	0.6
	Life coach	1	0.6
	Total	13	8

As seen in Table 8, the teacher candidates created 7 metaphors in the *professions* category (f = 13). Some examples of the teacher candidates' descriptive statements about these metaphors are as follows:

“COVID-19 is similar to a judge because the judge puts criminals in jail. It has locked people who harm nature and living things home”. (F, 64)

“COVID-19 is similar to a hunter because neither of them lets go of what/whom they catch.” (F, 136)

“COVID-19 is similar to a superhero because air pollution in the world has decreased to almost zero thanks to him. Many people are more attentive to hygiene now than ever.” (E, 6)

“COVID-19 is like a thief because it is stealing people's future, dreams and hopes”. (F, 66)

“COVID-19 is similar to a warder because it has locked us up home.” (F, 16)

“COVID-19 is similar to a warder because both of them threaten people to stay where they are. One of them threatens with a truncheon and the other with respiratory illnesses”. (M, 91)

“COVID-19 is similar to a teacher because it, like a teacher, has taken on a kind of instructional role. It has taught people how to live in the world.” (F, 94)

Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

This study aimed to determine the metaphoric perceptions of the teacher candidates about COVID-19. To achieve this goal, 168 volunteer teacher candidates who were attending five different departments were identified as the study group. According to the findings obtained, it was found that the teacher candidates had put forward 89 valid metaphors about COVID-19. The metaphors created by the teacher candidates about COVID-19 were grouped under 7 categories, namely, *“items/objects, natural events, animals/plants, actions/behaviors, people, abstract concepts, and professions.”*

Many studies have investigated the teacher candidates' metaphoric perceptions. These studies have tried to determine their thoughts about various topics through metaphors. Some of these topics, for example, include digital literacy in Dedeali (2020), being good citizens in Dere (2019), biology lesson in Durdukoca and Önel (2020), the concept of curriculum in Gültekin (2013), the concepts of teacher and teaching profession in Koç (2014), and physical education lesson and physical education teachers in Yüksel, Sütçü, and Özdemir (2019).

Similar studies on metaphoric perceptions about COVID-19 have been found in the literature. In their study conducted to examine university students' perceptions about COVID-19 through metaphors, Özmercan-Eminoğlu, Küçüktepe-Eminoğlu and Küçüktepe (2020) found that the majority of the metaphors were in the *“freedom restriction”* category. This result is similar to the *“warder”* metaphor created by the teacher candidates in the present study. The warder metaphor can also be associated with freedom. In this sense, it can be concluded that COVID-19 evokes similar feelings in the students who attend different universities. Dönmez and Gürbüz (2020) studied the cognitive structures of university students about COVID-19 and found the metaphors, such as *“health”, “living space”, and “nature”*, as the most frequently used ones. Although there are similar metaphors (*natural events category*) in the present study, there are no exactly matching metaphors. Arı and Arslan (2020) studied the metaphoric perceptions of 6th-grade students about COVID-19. The results which they obtained were similar to some of the results of the current study. The teacher candidates in this study used the same metaphors of *“earthquake, gossip, gun, and cigarette”* as 6th grade students did. Also, the metaphors created in both studies were almost entirely negative. This may lead to the conclusion that COVID-19 has devastating effects on individuals regardless of age and education level. Aykurtalp and Karakurt (2020) emphasized the stigmatizing power of the metaphors derived from COVID-19. In the study, COVID-19 was described with a series of metaphors, such as *“mysterious, evil, invisible enemy, insidious danger, a democratic virus”*. Besides, the study highlighted that the metaphors created about the disease caused the struggle against the disease itself to be described with various metaphors. For example, they reported that metaphors, such as *“invisible enemy”, “biological war”*, created about COVID-19 caused the description of the struggle against the disease to involve words of military terminology and that the metaphor of *“a Chinese virus”* directly led to a racist approach to the virus and turned it into a means of social marginalization. Craig (2020) stressed that COVID-19 was described with various metaphors instead of the word

“*disease*” in different areas. He added that especially political leaders defined the fight against this pandemic as a war and that people working in the health and food and beverage sectors were described as people serving in the front line. Similar metaphoric approaches were also encountered in the present study. The metaphors created by the teacher candidates, such as “*enemy, unfriendly ruler, weapon, atom bomb, or terrorist*”, showed that the virus was approached politically and militarily and that the use of the “*Chinese*” metaphor was a form of marginalization. The teacher candidates resembled the quarantine processes to a prison with the “*warder*” metaphor they created. Also, although the metaphors of “*love and affection*” created by the teacher candidates seemed to be positive at first, they used them to emphasize the infectious, destructive, and deadly effect of COVID-19. In the present study, the participants also used positive metaphors, such as “*teacher, life coach, and reminder*”, which meant that COVID-19 was something to remind people of important things in life. With metaphors, such as “*chemical cleaning material, superhero*”, which the candidate teachers attributed a positive meaning, they expressed the increase in the importance given to hygiene and the purification of the world due to having to stay at home. The views of the teacher candidates were further supported by Bourzac (2020), who emphasized that quarantine process and the decrease in traffic significantly reduced air pollution, and Berman and Ebisu (2020), who studied the relationship between the reduction of harmful gases in the air and the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this study, the majority of the metaphors created by the teacher candidates were negative metaphors. The teacher candidates may have felt negative emotions and thoughts because they had to suddenly leave schools, stay home, and continue distance education with the outbreak of the virus. However, it can be said that this process has also provided the teacher candidates with a good opportunity for personal development although it is a difficult and troublesome process. In addition to many challenges, the epidemic has led to some positive changes in habits and mentalities, such as paying attention to personal hygiene, self-care, health of relatives particularly those at risk for diseases (quitting smoking, eating organic food), and spending more time exercising (Aristovnik, Keržič, Ravšelj, Tomažević, and Umek, 2020). Toquero (2020) expressed that higher education institutions faced challenges in planning, implementation, and evaluation systems during the pandemic process, but this also created opportunities to focus attention on new technologies. Moreover, this process has shown that distance education will be permanent all over the world and will be integrated into education even more. Therefore, strategies on distance education, pandemics, and the ways of coping with such situations can be formulated by policymakers and higher education institutions. This study concentrates on only one higher education institution. Metaphoric perceptions of the teacher candidates' about COVID-19 can be studied across Turkey.

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