

Research Article

Perceptions of Secondary School Students towards the Concept of Refugee

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Abstract

This research aimed at examining the perceptions of secondary school students towards the concept of refugee. The research was designed according to the survey model. The study was carried out with a total of 108 students attending the seventh and eighth grades. Research data were collected via word association test. The obtained data were subjected to descriptive analysis. In this research, firstly, a frequency table was created for the key concepts of migration, immigrant, emigration, forced migration, asylum seeker and refugee. Afterwards, concept maps works related to these concepts were drawn. The concept map creation process was carried out in the MaxQuda program and the breakpoint technique was used. In the study, the cut-off point was taken as 5 or above, and the answers below 5 were not included in the concept map. As a result of the research, it has been determined that the students have correct information about the concept of migration and its reasons, as well as the concepts of emigration and forced migration. On the other hand, it has been concluded that students have some misconceptions about the concept of immigrant, asylum seeker and refugee.



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Introduction

When the phenomenon of migration is examined in terms of its effects and causes, it expresses a social mobility on a global scale (Örselli & Bilici, 2018). Migration is defined as a person or group of people cross an international border or move within the borders of a state (Sironi, Bauloz & Emmanuel, 2019). There are various classifications of the concept of migration, which is generally defined as move in and relocating. Most of these classifications were made by considering the distance between the area where the movement takes place. In this respect, immigration is divided into internal and emigration. Internal migration refers to mobility within a country's national borders. Emigration, on the other hand, refers to the movement that goes beyond the political borders of the country, i.e., towards another country. Another classification related to migration is based on whether the movement is

voluntary or not. In this context, the concepts of immigrant and forced migration are emerging. The concept of immigrant generally define to individuals/families who voluntarily go to another country or region in order to improve their economic and social situation independent of the influence of external factors and to meet their future expectations (UNHCR, 2016).

Nowadays, migration has become a necessity rather than a voluntary or a choice (Kaya, İnel & Çetin, 2021). Forced migration is the displacement of individuals against their will as a result of social, economic and societal sanctions of states (Sironi, et al., 2019). The source of this mobility is usually compulsory situations such as war, natural disaster and exile. For this reason, individuals or groups are caught completely unprepared for migration and leave all their possessions behind when migrating (Usta & Ergün, 2020). With the forced migration, refugee and asylum-seeker statuses have occurred. Although the concepts of refugee and asylum seeker are used interchangeably in the literature, public and social media tools, these two concepts actually have different meanings and legal consequences (Örselli & Bilici, 2018). In international law, the terms “refugee” and asylum “seeker” are clearly separated from each other. The concept of refugee is defined as a person who takes refuge in a foreign country (refugee) by leaving his or her own country for fear of being persecuted for certain reasons (cannot or does not want to return) (UNHCR, 2016). In addition, the concept of refugee is used for person who seek asylum and whose asylum claim has been officially approved and gained legal status depended to a state (Usta & Ergün, 2020). However, in public discourse and the media, the concept of refugee is used to emphasize experiences of uprooting, loss of home, and not belonging (Antoniou & Zembylas, 2018). Asylum seeker, on the other hand, is a label using for person who have applied for asylum and whose procedures have not been completed yet. In other words, the concept of asylum seeker is a de facto and short-term accommodation situation rather than gaining a legal status. For this reason, those who have the status of asylum seeker are also called de facto refugees (Usta & Ergün, 2020).

A forced displacement has increasing rapidly worldwide; these displacements include grand numbers of people classified as “refugees” (Malkki, 1995). The movement known as the “Arab Spring” which started in Tunisia and spread rapidly in the Middle East, especially in Egypt, Syria, Yemen and Libya turned into a civil war in many countries and it resulted in the migration of millions of people from their own region/country (Sayın, 2016).

The refugee crisis caused by the Arab spring is considered one of the worst humanitarian crises since the Second World War. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 82.4 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced at the end of 2020 due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events that seriously disrupt public order. These include 20.7 million refugees and 4.1 million asylum seekers. There are also millions of stateless person who are deprived of their citizenship and do not have access to basic rights such as education, health, employment and freedom of movement. Moreover, 48 million people had to move within the country for the reasons listed (UNHCR, 2020). Due to the staggering number of people displaced, the 20th century has been called “the century of refugee” (Ellis & Khan, 2003).

Refugees of all displaced in abroad is known to come from Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar. Shortly after the start of the civil war in Syria, a flow forced migration to Turkey started (UNHCR, 2020). The Southeast region of Turkey has the largest refugee density. There are around one million Syrians in Gaziantep, Adıyaman, Kilis, Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır, Mardin, Batman, Şırnak and Siirt provinces (İçduygu, 2016). So much so that, in some of these provinces (e.g. Kilis), the number of refugees has exceeded the local population (Erdoğan, 2019).

Turkey became a party to the 1951 Geneva Protocol on the Legal Status of Refugees, but made a geographic limitation to the convention with the 1961 regulation. Accordingly, Turkey only accepts immigrants from European countries as refugees. By contrast with, it accepts immigrants coming from outside Europe to its country with conditional refugee (temporary protection) status. Hereunder, it grants temporary residence permit to refugees who took refuge in Turkey from outside Europe until they gain refugee status from another country (Tatlıcıoğlu & Apak, 2018; Usta & Ergün, 2020). As a result, Turkey hosts approximately 3.7 million refugees, the world's largest population (UNHCR, 2020).

Refugee Concept in Social Studies Education

At a time when 1 in 95 people in the world has left their home because of conflict or persecution, perceptions of refugees are more important than ever. Social Studies course has an important place in eliminating stereotypes and xenophobia that develop against refugees in social life (Akdoğan, 2020). Although the concepts of "immigrant, refugee, and asylum seeker" are not directly mentioned in the social studies curriculum (Kılcan & Şimşek, 2021),

migration and many terms related to this concept are included in the curriculum and textbooks. While there is no migration phenomenon at the 5th and 6th grade levels in the 2018 social studies curriculum objectives, it is seen that it is represented by two objectives at the 7th grade level: “Discuss the causes and consequences of migration through case studies” in People, Places and Environments learning area and “Develops ideas and suggestions for the solution of global problems with friends” in Global Connections learning area. In the explanation of the objective given in the area of Global Connections learning emphasis is placed on the concept of migration as “Global climate change, natural disasters, hunger, terrorism and migration will be discussed” (MoNE, 2018). At the same time, it is seen that the subject of migration is mentioned in different units in the 2020 5th, 6th and 7th grade textbooks prepared in line with the 2018 Social Studies Curriculum (Pehlivan-Yılmaz & Günel, 2021). In the 7th grade textbook taught in 2020, the phenomenon of migration was classified as in Figure 1.

| By causes of occurrence | According to the duration | According to the distance | According to the feature of the place where it is made |
|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary Migration: It is people leaving their place on their own will. Education, job, health opportunities... • Forced Migration: It is people leaving their place against their will. War, terrorism, natural disaster, refugees... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent migration: It is the permanent departure of people from their place of residence. Education, job, health opportunities... • Temporary migration: It is the displacement of people due to activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry and tourism. This type of migration is also called seasonal migration. The need for rest, finding pasture, agricultural work... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal migration: It is the migration that takes place within the borders of the country. Education, job, health opportunities... • Emigration: Migration that takes place outside the borders of the country. Education, job, health opportunities... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From rural to urban • Rural from the urban • From rural to rural • Urban to urban • Migration that takes place within the borders of the country. Attractiveness of cities, education, employment, health opportunities, repulsiveness of the city... |

Figure 1. Migration in the 7th grade textbook

In the textbooks of 2020, internal migration (from rural to urban, from urban to rural, from rural to rural and from city to city), emigration (migration to Germany, human capital flight, völkerwanderung, hejira and exchange), forced migration (refugee migration), voluntary migration (Germany' migration and brain drain), temporary migration (seasonal

migration) and permanent migration (six different types of migration) are included. In addition, the causes and consequences of migration are also mentioned. Social and economic rights such as tourism, education, employment, health, and the need for security arising from events such as war, terrorism and natural disasters are shown among the reasons for migration. Consequences of migration, on the other hand, are displayed as unemployment, decrease in production, traffic problems, environmental pollution, unplanned urbanization and slums, and changes in the social environment as a result of migration from rural to urban areas (Pehlivan-Yılmaz & Günel, 2021).

Importance of the Research

Migration, asylum and refugee phenomenons are gaining more importance day by day in both theoretical and applied research in Turkey as well as around the world. Because, Turkey is a country both a receiving migration and a sending migration. Internal conflicts in recent years, especially in its neighboring countries, Iraq and Syria, have made Turkey the center of asylum (Tatlıcioğlu & Apak, 2018). This situation has been the subject of many studies within the scope of social studies education. The following are migration and migration types (Güneş, 2017; Tıkman, Yıldırım & Şentürk, 2017), asylum seeker (Topkaya & Akdağ, 2016) and attitudes towards refugee students (Akdovan, 2020; Antoniou & Zembylas, 2018; Palaz, Çepni & Kılcan, 2019). Besides, there are studies in the literature that examine the concept of refugee in social studies education both in terms of curriculum (Kılcan & Şimşek, 2021; Pehlivan-Yılmaz & Günel, 2021) and textbooks (Pehlivan-Yılmaz & Günel, 2021). In the study conducted by Irmak (2019), secondary school students' perceptions of the concept of refugee were examined through metaphors.

In the literature, the concepts of immigrant, asylum seeker and refugee are often used interchangeably (Gökuş & Çubukçu, 2018). Refugees and asylum seekers are immigrants, but not all immigrants are refugees or asylum seekers (Ziya, 2012). At this point, it is a matter of curiosity to what extent the students are aware of the mentioned distinction. In this context, the purpose of present research was to examine the cognitive structures of secondary school students regarding the concept of refugee via word association test. When the current studies in the literature is scrutinized, it is seen that data collection tools such as questionnaires, interviews, metaphors, scales, knowledge, and achievement tests are generally used to determine students' perceptions, attitudes, knowledge and thoughts. In

this study, unlike the studies in the literature, students' perceptions of the concept of refugee will be examined by means of word association test.

Method

Research Design

This research, which aims to reveal the cognitive structures of secondary school students about the concept of refugee, was designed according to the survey model.

Participants

Convenience sampling method was used to determine the participants. 7th and 8th grade students in a secondary school in the central Kayapınar district of Diyarbakır province were selected as the study group. The research was carried out with the participation of a total of 111 students. However, three forms were excluded from the study, and the coding was done for 108 students. The distribution of the 108 participants included in the analysis by gender and class levels is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of participants by gender and grade level

| | Female | Male | Total |
|------------|--------|------|-------|
| 7th. grade | 25 | 31 | 56 |
| 8th. grade | 28 | 24 | 52 |
| Total | 53 | 55 | 108 |

Data Collection Tool

The word association test was used as a data collection tool in the research. Word association tests are an alternative measurement technique that makes students' cognitive structure about a concept visible and how this structure is formed in the mind, i.e., the connections between concepts, and allows testing the significance of these connections (Bahar, Nartgün, Durmuş & Bıçak, 2015). In this technique, key concepts related to the determined concept/concepts are required to be written within a certain period of time. Thus, it allows examining the connotations that predetermined words remind individuals (Değirmenci, 2020). In this context, a word association test was prepared in order to specify students' perceptions of the concept of refugee. The test includes the key concepts of migration, immigrant, emigration, forced migration, asylum seeker and refugee. In the selection of the aforementioned concepts, their inclusion in the social studies curriculum and their relationship with the cognitive structures attributed to the concept of refugee were decisive. An application instruction and a sample word association test has presented on the

first page of the test. Afterwards, the form was created by writing each concept 10 times under each other on separate pages.

Data Collection and Analysis

Before collecting the research data, an application was made to the ethics committee about whether the study was in accordance with scientific ethics and ethics committee approval was obtained. Afterwards, the data collection tool was given to the students and an explanation was given about the purpose of the research and it was stating that the participation was based on the principle of voluntariness. Further, the students were reminded that the collected tests would not be shared with third parties or institutions, and their names would be kept confidential. Subsequently the necessary reminders were made, the students were asked to read the instructions on the first page of the form, they were told to mark the information about the class and gender variables and examine the first example below. One minute was given for each key concept. During this period, they were reminded that they should quickly write down the connotations of the related concept in the spaces given and complete the test within a total of six minutes. Thus, research data were collected.

After collecting the research data, then the data analysis stage started. Descriptive analysis technique was used in coding the obtained data. Data analysis was carried out by the researcher. In order to ensure the reliability of the coding made in qualitative research, it was recommended that the coding process be done by more than one person. However, in the absence of such an opportunity, the same person repeating the coding several times at different times also helps to achieve correct results (Batdı, 2021). In this context, the codings made were reviewed by the researcher twice in 15 days.

As a result of the analysis, frequency tables related to key concepts were created and concept maps were prepared based on frequency tables. The concept map creation process was carried out in the MaxQuda program and the cut-off point technique was used (Bahar, et al., 2015). The concept map is created which it is starting 3 or 5 words below the highest answer given for any key concept. Later, the cut-off point is pulled down at certain intervals and the process continues until all keywords appear on the map (Bahar & Özatlı, 2003). In this study, the cut-off point was 5 or above, and the answers below 5 were not included in the concept map.

Findings

Firstly, a frequency table was created for the key concepts of migration, immigrant, emigration, forced migration, asylum seeker and refugee. The frequency table for key concepts is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency table for key concepts

| MIGRATION | IMMIGRANT | EMIGRANT | FORCED MIGRATION | ASYLUM SEEKER | REFUGEE |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move in (f=95) • War (f=42) • Bird (f=38) • Economic issues (f=23) • Country (f=22) • Journey (f=21) • Climate fetatures (f=21) • Escape (f=20) • Human capital flight (f=20) • Völkerwanderung (f=18) • Tent (f=15) • Refugee (f=15) • Syrians (f=14) • Tourism (f=14) • Afghan (f=13) • City (f=11) • Politic (f=10) • Earthquake (f=7) • Immigrant (f=7) • Appointment (f=6) • Nomadise (f=6) • Camel (f=6) • Natural disasters (f=6) • Seperation (f=5) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syrians (f=35) • Afghan (f=34) • People (f=33) • Transmigrat e (f=30) • Bird (f=22) • Economic issues (f=20) • Health (f=19) • Immigrants to Turkey (f=18) • Fugitive (f=15) • Refugee (f=14) • War (f=13) • Civil war (f=10) • Asylum seeker (f=8) • Climate fetatures (f=6) • Tribes (f=5) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International (f=56) • Civil war (f=39) • Syrians (f=35) • Tourism (f=35) • Education (f=19) • Health (f=18) • Unemployment (f=15) • Natural disaster (f=12) • Migration (f=11) • Turkey (f=10) • Border (f=10) • Climate fetatures (f=9) • Germans (f=9) • Travel (f=8) • Afghan (f=7) • Airplane (f=7) • Europe (f=6) • Journey (f=6) • America (f=5) • Foreigner (f=5) • Refugee (f=5) • Homeland (f=5) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • War (f=78) • Compulsion (f=49) • Obligation (f=49) • Natural disasters (f=47) • Illness (f=32) • Racism (f=17) • Fear (f=15) • Homelessness (f=14) • Desperation (f=11) • Education (f=11) • Religios identity (f=11) • Syrians (f=11) • Afghan (f=8) • Other contries (f=7) • Escape (f=7) • Weapon (f=7) • Missile (f=5) • Climate (f=5) • Drouhtiness (f=5) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syrians (f=44) • Take refugee (f=37) • Afghan (f=33) • War (f=29) • Protection (f=21) • Obligatory (f=20) • Fear (f=13) • Tent (f=12) • Refugee (f=12) • Natural disasters (f=11) • Help (f=9) • Wait (f=8) • Turkey (f=8) • The United Nations (f=7) • Homelessness (f=7) • Beggar (f=7) • Persecution (f=7) • Africans (f=6) • Hide (f=6) • Settle (f=6) • Camp (f=5) • Fugitive (f=5) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection (f=33) • Asylum (f=32) • Afghan (f=27) • Approval of refugee protection (f=26) • Syrians (f=26) • War (f=21) • Compulsion (f=16) • Escape (f=12) • Permanent resident (f=12) • Help (f=12) • Terror (f=10) • Fear (f=9) • Tranquility (f=8) • Turkey (f=8) • Foreigners (f=7) • Camp (f=7) • Torture (f=6) • Country (f=5) |

After the frequency table was constituted for the key concepts of migration, immigrant, emigration, forced migration, asylum seeker and refugee; concept maps were created using the cut-off point technique. While creating the concept maps, words that are related to the subject were chosen.

The concept map created based on the answers given about the concepts of migration, forced migration and external migration has presented in Figure 2.

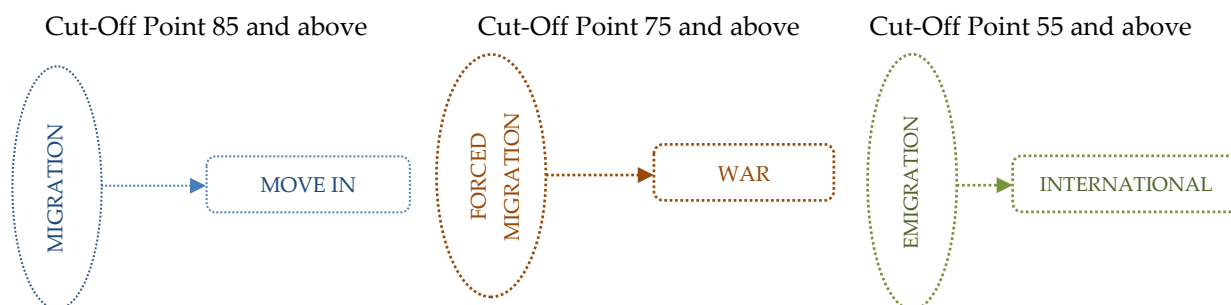


Figure 2. Cut-off point $85 \geq f > 55$ the concept maps

As seen in Figure 2, the key concept with the highest frequency is migration. The students associated the concept of *migration* mostly with the word *move in* the most. After the concept of migration, the concept of *forced migration* is associated with the *war*. In the third place, the concept of *emigration* has associated with the word *international*. The concept map with a cut-off point of 45 or above has presented in Figure 3.

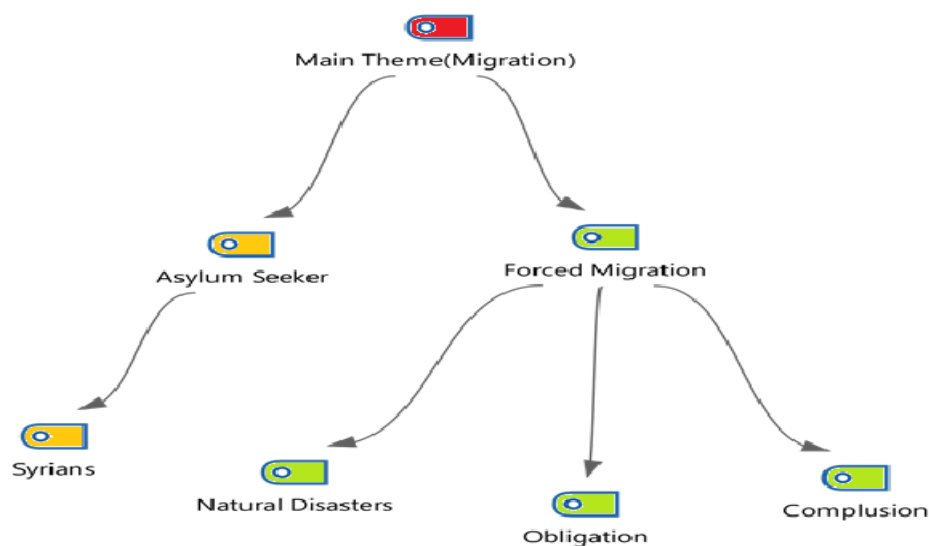


Figure 3. Cut-off point 45 or above the concept map

As can be seen from Figure 3, students mostly associated the concept of *forced migration* with the words *compulsion*, *obligation* and *natural disasters*. The students associated the concept of *asylum seeker* with the word *Syrians*. The concept map with a cut-off point of 35 or above has presented in Figure 4.

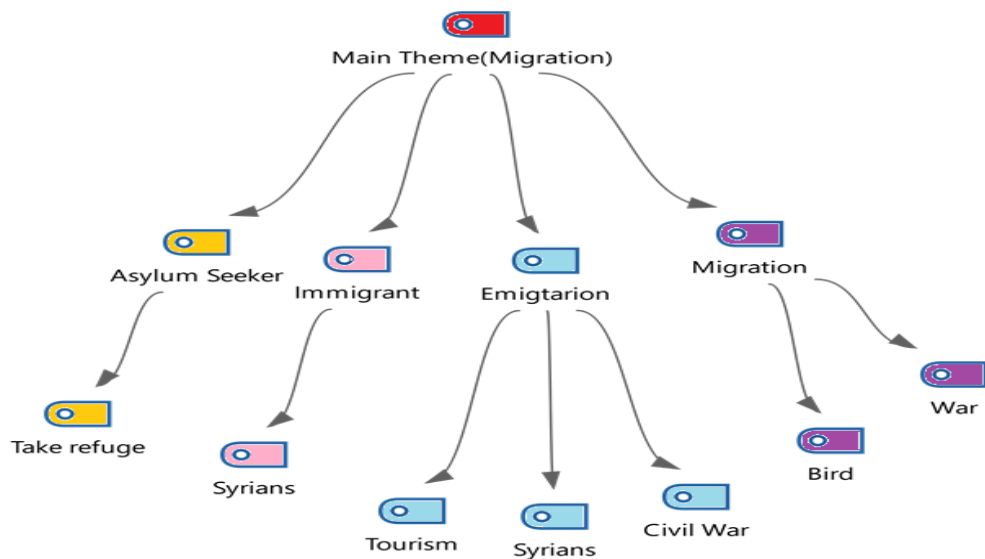


Figure 4. Cut-off point 35 and above concept map

As it is seen in the Figure 4, students associated the *migration* concept with the words of *war* and *bird* and they linked the term of *asylum seeker* with *take refuge* word. The concept of *immigrant* was identified with the word of *Syrians*; and the concept of *emigration* was connected with the words of *tourism*, *civil war* and *Syrians*. The concept map with a cut-off point of 25 or above has demonstrated in Figure 5.

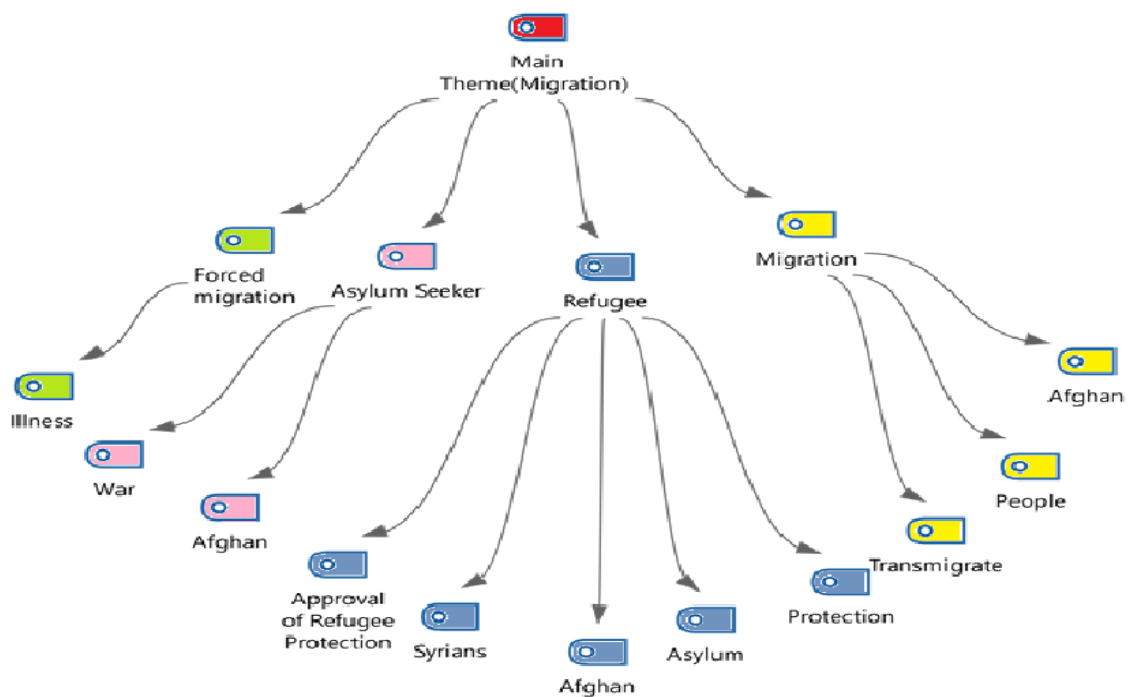


Figure 5. Cut-off point 25 or above concept map

As it is understood in the Figure 5, students associated with the *migration* concept mostly the words of *Afghan*, *people* and *transmigrate*, and the concept *forced migration* with the word *illness*. Besides, they associated the *asylum seeker* concept the words of *war* and *Afghan*, and linked the concept *refugee* with the words of *approval of refugee* and *protection* and *Syrians*. The concept map with a cut-off point of 15 or above has illustrated in Figure 6.

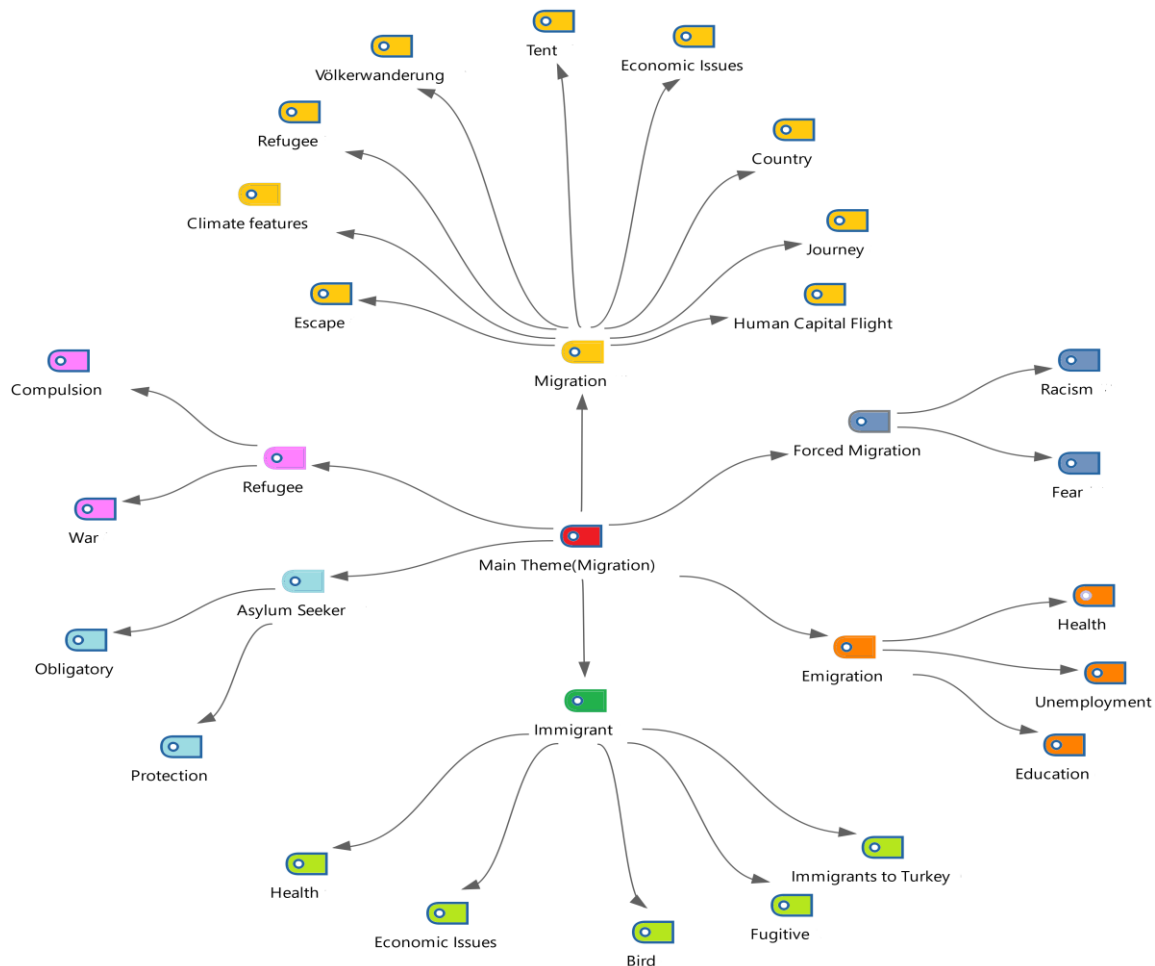


Figure 6. Cut-off point 15 or above concept map

As it is seen in the Figure 6, students associated the *migration* concept with the words of *escape*, *climate features*, *refugee*, *völkerwanderung*, *tent*, *economic issues*, *country*, *journey* and *human capital flight*. They connected the *immigrant* concept with the words of *health*, *economic issues*, *bird*, *fugitive* and *immigrants to Turkey*. Furthermore the *forced migration* concept was linked with the words *racism* and *fear*. The *emigration* concept, on the other hand, was affiliated with the words of *health*, *unemployment* and *education*. Lastly, while the *asylum seeker* concept was identified with the words *obligatory* and *protection*, and the *refugee* concept was linked together the words of *compulsion* and *war*. The concept map with a cut-off point of 5 or above has denotes in Figure 7.

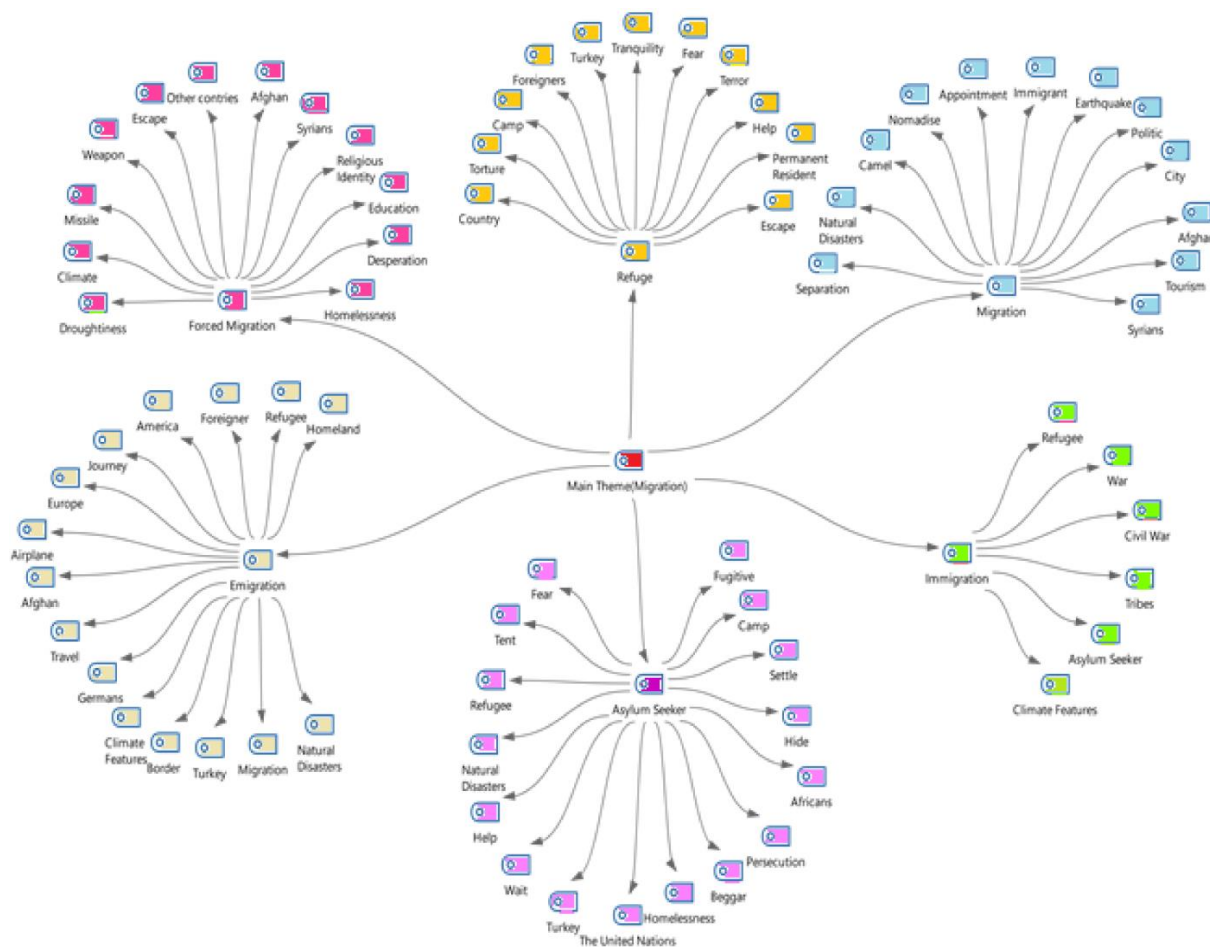


Figure 7. Cut-off point 5 and above concept map

As can be understood in the Figure 7, students associated with the *migration* concept the words *separation, natural disasters, camel, nomadise, appointment, immigrant, earthquake, politic, city, Afghan, tourism* and *Syrians*, and the concept *immigrant* with the words *refugee, war, civil war, tribes, asylum seeker* and *climate features*. Also, students associated with the *emigration* concept the words *homeland, refugee, foreigner, America, journey, Europe, airplane, Afghan, travel, Germans, climate features, border, Turkey, migration, and natural disasters*. Finally, students associated with the *forced migration* concept the words *droughtiness, climate, missile, weapon, escape, other countries, Afghan, Syrians, religious identity, education, desperation* and *homelessness*, and the concept *asylum seeker* with the words *fear, tent, refugee, natural disasters, help, wait, Turkey, The United Nations, homelessness, beggar, persecution, Africans, hide, settle, camp* and *fugitive*, and the *refugee* concept the words *country, torture, camp, foreigners, Turkey, tranquility, fear, terror, help, permanent resident* and *escape*.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, it is aimed to reveal the perceptions of secondary school students towards the concept of refugee. In this direction, students' cognitive structures regarding the concepts of migration, immigrant, emigration, forced migration, asylum seeker and refugee were examined. The students were asked to produce 10 words for each key concept, and it was found that the students produced a total of 120 different words for the presented key concepts. Moreover, students produced 455 words for the concept of *migration*; 282 words for the concept of *immigrant*; 332 words for *emigration*; 389 words for *forced migration*; 313 words for the concept *asylum seeker* and 277 words for the concept of *refugee*. As can be seen, students produced the most words for the concept of *migration* and the least for the concept of *refugee*. This situation can be interpreted as the students know the concept of migration better than the concept of refugee.

The students associated the first key concept, migration, with the word move in the most. In Aydemir's (2014) research the concept of *migration* was mostly associated with the terms such as *going, settling, and move in*. In this study, the word move in was followed by *the war, bird, economic, country, journey, climate features, escape and human capital flight*, respectively. This result is supported by the research of Tıkman, Yıldırım and Şentürk, (2017). They concluded that students mostly expressed the metaphor of moving and bird for the concept of migration. These results show that students structured the concept of migration as a concept for animals as well as humans.

Another remarkable result in this study is that almost all of the words that students produce about the concept of migration are about the causes of migration. Sever and Özmen's (2019) research findings support this result. Sever and Özmen (2019) determined that almost half of the students' statements about the concept of migration are about the reasons for migration. Accordingly, it can be concluded that students have acquired the objective of "*discuss the causes and consequences of migration*" in the social studies curriculum. It is also noteworthy that the climate features have a high frequency. Globally, new concepts such as environmental refugees/ecological migration have emerged. This type of migration, which is also referred to as climate refugees; it refers to within or out of the country the permanent or temporary mobility of people who can no longer obtain a secure livelihood due to drought, soil erosion, desertification, deforestation, food/water problems, increasing temperatures, other environmental problems and related population pressure and deep

poverty (Sironi, et al., 2019). Considering the issues listed, a general assessment can be made that students have various information about the concept of migration and can make sense of the concept of migration in their minds.

Students produced 15 different words for the concept of immigrant. At most, respectively; the words *Syrians, Afghans, people, transmigrate, bird* and *economic issues* were produced. Considering the content of the words produced, it can be said that these words are partially compatible with the content of the immigrant concept. That is to say, students attribute the situation of immigrants to leaving their country mostly to economic reasons. In this context, it is a positive situation that the word economic issues are among the most produced words. On the other hand, the fact that students count Syrians and Afghans in the immigrant category indicates that there are misconceptions in this regard. Because, as emphasized in the introduction part of the research, while immigrants are voluntarily moved mostly due to economic concerns, refugees and asylum seekers are usually displaced for compelling reasons (such as security). Since 2011 in Syria, as a result of the events that have intensified which turned into civil war and conflicts, approximately four million Syrians left their country and took refuge in Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt, especially in Turkey (Çetin & Uzman, 2012). For this reason, it would be more appropriate to use the concepts of asylum seeker and refugee rather than the concept of immigrant for Syrians. Similarly, due to the internal conflicts in Afghanistan, Afghans mostly were entered Turkey illegally and take refuge in many countries around the world. Some of the Afghan immigrants in Turkey are Afghan asylum seekers who have applied for international protection or received protection status. Others are immigrants who come to Turkey mainly for economic reasons and to live a better life (Karakaya & Karakaya, 2021). Nonetheless, there are millions of Syrian and Afghan nationals who have obtained permanent (refugee) or temporary (asylum seeker) legal status in many parts of the world. Therefore, it can be said that Syrian and Afghan nationals are in the status of immigrant, asylum seeker and refugee throughout the world. As stated in the introduction, it is seen that the concepts of migrant, asylum seeker and refugee are used interchangeably, especially in the media and in the public (Zeyhan-Aydın, 2019). Also, in studies on the phenomenon of migration, the concepts of immigrant, asylum seeker and refugee are used interchangeably from time to time. In addition, it is sometimes confused which concept to use to describe the Syrians in Turkey (Örselli & Bilici,

2018). This situation also showed itself in this research findings and it was concluded that the students had confusion when defining Syrian and Afghan nationals.

Students produced 22 different words for the concept of *emigration*. The words *international, civil war, Syrians, tourism, education, health, work, natural disasters, migration, Turkey, border gate* and *climate features* were written respectively. These words produced by the students are compatible with the concept of emigration. The fact that students write the word "international" for emigration at most can be interpreted as knowing the definition of emigration. Again, one of the major reasons pushing people to emigrate today is civil wars, economic concerns, climate change and natural disasters. In this sense, it can be said that students can both distinguish emigration from internal migration and are aware of the reasons that push them to migrate.

Students produced 19 different words for the key concept of *forced migration*. The words *war, compulsion, obligation, natural disasters, illness, racism, fear, homelessness, desperation, education, religious identity, Syrians, Afghans, other countries, escape, weapon, missile, climate* and *droughtiness* were written. The most common words among the words listed are war and compulsion, and the other words written show that the students know the concept of forced migration. Again, considering the written words, it is possible to conclude that the media has an important role in the formation of students' cognitive schemas. Because the wars in the Middle East for a long time has took up a lot of space in the press. There is a lot of news about Syrian and Afghan nationals who took refuge in Turkey and came illegally (illegal), both in traditional media such as newspapers and television, and in social media (Uluk, 2019). In this sense, it can be stated that students are aware of these problems that they frequently encounter in daily life and in the media and that are discussed in society. In other words, it can be said that students acquire the concept of forced migration and the reasons for this type of migration through informal learning in addition to the formal education process.

Students produced 22 different words for the concept of *asylum seeker*: *Syrians, take refugee, Afghan, war, protection, obligatory, fear, tent, refugee, natural disasters, help, wait, Turkey, The United Nations, homelessness, beggar, persecution, Africans, hide, settle, camp* and *fugitive*. When these answers given by the students are examined, it is seen that they are compatible with the concept of asylum seeker. On the other hand, no words were found in the students' answers that could indicate that they had misconceptions about the concept of asylum

seeker. It is a positive situation that the word United Nations is mentioned, albeit a little, among the answers given. Because refugee status is a protection put forward by the UN. In addition, students may have learned the words tent, camp, fugitive and persecution through social media and mass media. Namely, the troubles, refugee tents and difficulties experienced by the refugees who went to various countries illegally for a long time have been the subjected to much news. On the other hand, matching the expression beggar with the concept of asylum seeker shows that there are misperceptions towards foreigners. As a matter of fact, it has been reported that Turkey society have some prejudices about Syrians such as being prone to committing crimes and begging (Özdemir, 2017). Efe (2015) stated that the negative representations in the media affect the views and behaviors towards asylum seekers among the public. Additionally, Uluk (2019) revealed that some of the news reflected in the media was built on inaccurate information about Syrian refugees (e.g. in the last 6 months, 225 thousand Syrians gave birth, raped children, attacked the Atatürk statue, entered universities unconditionally). The news in question has been consumed and shared by tens of thousands of people through social networks and has taken its place in the network streams of different readers (Uluk, 2019). This may explains the students' matching of the words beggar and asylum seeker.

Finally, the students produced 18 different words for the concept of *refugee*: *Protection, asylum, Afghan, approval of refugee protection, Syrians, war, compulsion, escape, permanent resident, help, terror, fear, tranquility, Turkey, foreigners, camp, torture and country*. The frequent use of the words Syrian, war and help for the concept of refugee is supported by the study of Palaz, Çepni and Kılcan, (2019). In their study examining the thoughts and attitudes of secondary school students towards refugee students found that the students most often defined the concept of refugee as “Syrian”, “escaping from war” and “people in need of help”. In the study conducted by Irmak (2019), secondary school students' perceptions of the concept of refugee were examined through metaphors, and it was determined that the majority of students perceived the concept of refugee as “migration due to war”, “escaping Persecution”, and “take refuge somewhere else”. In the study of Antoniou and Zembylas (2018), the majority of students defined this concept as forced leaving the home. Additively, in the study of Irmak (2019), it was detected that the perceptions that refugees are not in our country voluntarily, that they left their country due to necessity, that they take refuge in Turkey and that they need protection and take care of were high. As a matter of fact,

refugees and asylum seekers are people who cross the borders of the countries they live in and apply to other countries because their life safety is in danger. In addition, refugee status refers to obtaining a permanent residence permit as a result of the official approval of the protection demands of individuals who have taken refuge in a country. In this sense, it can be said that the words produced by the students regarding the concept of refugee support the cognitive structure of the concept. More clearly, the answers of the students show that their cognitive structures regarding the concept of refugee are correct.

Considering the results of this research, it can offer some suggestions for the development of students' cognitive structures regarding migration types. First of all, more emphasis should be placed on teaching the concepts of immigrant, asylum seeker and refugee in the teaching of migration phenomenon. For this reason, it can be suggested that teaching strategies (such as concept maps, mind maps, wheel concept diagram) that will develop students' cognitive networks should be used more in the teaching process. Secondly, it is thought that media tools may have an effect on the formation of students' misconceptions. For this reason, media organizations should act more carefully in the use of migration phenomenon and related terms (immigrant, asylum seeker and refugee) in media organizations. Finally, although this research is important in terms of revealing how students understand the term refugee and the level of distinction it is related to, it can be recommended that similar studies be conducted with larger groups and students at different levels in order to test the generalizability of the results obtained.

Ethics Committee Permit Information

Name of the board that carries out the ethical evaluation: Dicle University Ethics Committee

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Author Contribution Statement

Melehat GEZER: *Conceptualization, methodology, implementation, data analysis, review-writing and editing.*

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