



Participatory Educational Research (PER)
Vol.11(6), pp. 39-55, November 2024
Available online at <http://www.perjournal.com>
ISSN: 2148-6123
<http://dx.doi.org/10.17275/per.24.78.11.6>

Id: 1528692

Geography Teachers' Views on Harm De Blij's Book 'Why Geography Is Important'

Ufuk SÖZCÜ

Social Studies Education, Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University, Tokat, Türkiye
ORCID: 0000-0002-6809-4774

Abdullah TÜRKER*

Geography Education, Gazi University, Ankara, Türkiye
ORCID: 0000-0003-3839-2735

Erkan DÜNDAR

Ministry of National Education, Ankara, Türkiye
ORCID: 0000-0003-0807-0030

Article history

Received:
05.06.2024

Received in revised form:
15.08.2024

Accepted:
04.09.2024

Key words:

Book review, geography teacher, importance of geography, Harm De Blij.

Books written for academic purposes have a great impact on the development and progress of science branches. In addition to these, popular books written about the field of science make important effects and contributions. One of the books that affect the recognition and agenda of the science of geography is the book titled "Why Geography is Important" by the famous US geographer Harm De Blij. The data of this study, which was carried out using case study, one of the qualitative research designs, were collected through the Turkish translation written by Blij. The scope of the book on geography subjects, what it tells and its usability in geography teaching were evaluated with 50 geography teachers working in different cities of Türkiye who voluntarily participated in the study. After the volunteer participants read the book, the data of the study were collected through an online focus group interview moderated by the researchers. The data transcribed after the recording with the consent of the participants were subjected to content analysis with MAXQDA software. As a result of the research, it was determined that the physical geography sections of the book were scientifically sufficient. It was concluded that the relevant work contains good examples and definitions in terms of geography education, but the human geography sections are sometimes biased due to ideological approaches but have satisfactory information. It is recommended that geography teachers and individuals receiving geography education should read the book with the idea that it will be useful.

Introduction

Geography is defined in most sources as the branch of science that studies natural and human events or phenomena and their mutual interaction. Blij (2019) defines geography as a science that examines many human actions from city planning to determining country borders, from religious beliefs to economic activities. This situation is also expressed by Blij as the most

* Correspondency: abdullahturker82@gmail.com

beautiful side of geography. Geography also has a current and in-life side due to its field of interest and investigation. For this reason, it is very difficult to carry out an effective and efficient geography teaching by using only curricula and textbooks in the formal teaching process. In addition to the information in the curricula and textbooks, integrating / integrating different materials, events, tools and artefacts into the education-teaching process will increase the success in the geography teaching process. Many materials such as works that are not prepared for academic purposes, literary texts, songs and folk songs or cartoons will contribute to the understanding of the place of geography science in society and to move it to a better point or to ensure the success of the geography teaching process. Scientific studies on the use and effects of these materials in the teaching of geography subjects are found in the literature.

Öztürk (2007) examined the use of literary texts in geography teaching through examples of texts used in geography textbooks. Smiley & Post (2014) concluded in their research that songs strengthen course materials and help students make connections with and understand geographical concepts. Similarly, Bedir & Akkurt (2012) concluded that the use of songs in teaching geography subjects will contribute to making the lesson more fun for students and facilitate learning. Gülüm (2009) analysed Turkish and Turkmen proverbs about nature that can be used in geography teaching. It was concluded that the use of proverbs will contribute to making geography lessons attractive and will help to provide permanent learning. In the study conducted by Gülüm (2010), proverbs that can be used in geography lessons were categorised according to geography subjects. Girgin (2017) revealed that the applications made with GeoGuessr game contributed positively to geography teaching. In the research conducted by Özşahin (2009), it was revealed that the use of cartoons in geography teaching increased success in the learning process.

Geographical elements in works that are not written for academic purposes and studies on their use in geography teaching are also found in the literature. Yakar & Dikmenli (2022) examined the geographical concepts in the storybook named Define Island. 67 geographical concepts were found in the book, and it was concluded that the book would be useful for teaching geographical concepts. Dikmenli, Asal Özkan & Turan (2022) examined the geographical concepts in the storybook Heidi, which is included in the 100 basic works determined by the Ministry of National Education. 41 geographical concepts were identified and it was concluded that the storybook would support the concept teaching process in teaching geography subjects. As a result of the research conducted by Gezer & Dikmenli (2022) on geographical concepts in The Little Prince book, it was stated that the book contains 58 geographical concepts in total and can be used in concept teaching.

The study titled "Book Review: "Prisoners of Geography" by Tim Marshall" prepared by Ahn & Juraev (2023) is among the limited studies prepared in this format in the literature in terms of reviewing a non-academic work that has resonated in the world related to the field of geography. In the study prepared in the format of a book review article, the connections of the book with geography and the world were discussed. The main purpose of this study is to analyse the book, which is an important source in revealing the complex points related to political geography, globalisation and many geographical issues, in order to open a new horizon for geography students and those interested in geography. The results of the research emphasise that the book, which focuses on the strong interaction between geography and global politics, is an important resource for geography students and those who want to see/perceive the world in depth from a geographical perspective thanks to its engaging writing style and comprehensive information content. The researchers state that Prisoners of Geography motivates geography students and geography enthusiasts to analyse geopolitical events from a

critical perspective due to its ability to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical application. The book is recommended by the researchers as an important source of information and inspiration for geography students.

One of the resources that can be used in geography teaching processes is non-academic publications written by geographers in order to emphasise the place and importance of geography in daily life and the changes in this situation. One of the most well-known of these publications is the book titled "Why Geography Matters, more than ever" published in English by Oxford University Press in 2012 by Harm J. de Blij, who worked as a geography professor at Michigan State University for many years and died in 2014. Born in the Netherlands in 1934, Blij was educated in Europe, Africa and America. He taught at Michigan State University between 1960 and 1969 and was Professor of Geography at the University of Miami for many years. He was the founding editor of National Geographic Research magazine and served on the Research and Exploration Council for more than 20 years. Specialising in geopolitics and environmental issues, Blij has published more than 30 books and more than 100 articles in different genres (URL-1). In this study, the 2nd edition of one of Blij's most well-known books, "Why Geography Matters, more than ever" (Why Geography Matters? As Never Before), published in 2012, was translated by Hece Publications and the 4th edition was used in 2022. When the contents of the aforementioned work and the chapters in the book are examined, it is thought that it is intertwined with the research field of geography and can be actively used in the geography teaching process.

The book consists of ten chapters. The chapters and their main titles are as follows: The first chapter, Why is Geography Important? More than Ever!, This chapter deals with topics such as; on the way to becoming a geographer, what is geography, spatial specialisation and geographical literacy. The second chapter, Reading Maps and Confronting Threats, includes some sub-headings such as clay tablets to computers, playing with maps, systematic map making, and the uses of maps. In the third section, Geography and Population Science, some topics such as the global population spiral, what awaits us in the future, urban and rural, and Malthus's impossible prediction are discussed. The fourth chapter, Geography and Climate Change, covers topics such as cycles and sudden increases, return to the future, Pleistocene cold and the earth under ice. In the fifth chapter, under the title Climate, Space and Destiny, subheadings such as humanity in the Holocene period, the little ice age, the distant threat and the industrial hot period are included. In the sixth chapter, under the title Geography Behind War and Terror, there are titles such as America in Indochina, global civilisations and geographical basins, Afghanistan and Iraq in the target, and again. In the seventh chapter titled Analysis of Geographical Symptoms of Terrorism, there are titles such as terrorism on the map, the Islamic front in Africa, the savage front and the geographical sources of terrorism. The eighth chapter, The Rising Red Star: China's Geopolitical Challenge, the eighth chapter deals with tectonic intervention, the power of the periphery, China's surprising geography, the contemporary map of the Chinese Empire, and confronting China in the international arena. Some of the sub-headings in the ninth chapter titled Europe: A Superpower in the Making or a Paper Tiger of the Future are as follows. Europe at the centre of the world, Europe at odds, the Truman plan, the governance of Europe and Europe and the Euro. In the tenth part of the book, under the title Russia: Danger on the Natural Front, there are some sub-headings such as Is global warming a hope for Russia?, Putin era, demographic disaster and Putinistan on the horizon. In the last part of the book, under the title Africa in a Globalising World, there are eight structural disasters, China in Africa, Why Africa matters, and More than ever! As can be understood from these titles, it is seen that the book has a scope that can be used in relation to the geography curriculum and textbooks implemented in Turkey.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that there is no comprehensive examination of the use of a non-academic book by geography teachers who are active in the formal education process, both in terms of the situation related to the branch and in teaching processes. This situation increases the importance of the research. This research focuses on the point that works that are not written as academic sources can be used in the teaching processes of science branches. It is thought that the perspective and research approach put forward will serve as a guide for those working in different fields of science in geography.

In this research, geography teachers working in different provinces in Turkey were asked about their views on the book "Why Geography is Important? As Never Before!" in order to reveal the scope of the book on geography subjects, what it tells and its usability in the geography teaching process. It is important to analyse where and how the examples, maps and information in the book can be used in the geography teaching process according to the opinions of geography teachers. From this point of view, the problem statement of the research is to analyse geography teachers' opinions on 'Why Geography is Important? As Never Before!' book was determined as 'How are the views of geography teachers towards the book? Based on the problem statement, answers to the following questions were sought within the scope of the research:

- (1) How are the views of geography teachers on the validity of the book in terms of geography science?
- (2) How are the opinions of geography teachers about the subject distribution of the book for the sub-sections of geography?
- (3) How are the opinions of geography teachers about the practical information content of the book related to daily life?
- (4) What do geography teachers think about the suitability of the book for the level of high school students?
- (5) How are the opinions of geography teachers about using the book in the teaching process of geography course?
- (6) How are the opinions of geography teachers about the effect of the book in the process of applying teaching methods and techniques?
- (7) How are the views of the participants about recommending the book to geography teachers?
- (8) How are the views of geography teachers on the effect of the book on their perspective on geography?

Method

In this study, a case study, which is one of the qualitative research designs, was used. In qualitative case studies, the factors related to this situation are investigated from a holistic perspective in order to understand the changes and processes occurring in one or more situations (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In the literature, there are different types of case studies that vary depending on the situation and research purpose. According to Merriam (1998), case studies are classified in 3 ways as descriptive, interpretative and evaluative case studies according to the purpose. Among these, evaluative case study includes definition, explanation and a judgement based on these definitions and explanations. As it is clearly understood from its name, it is a suitable research design for the evaluation of any dimension or phenomenon in the field of education. In this study, "Why is Geography Important? As Never Before!", the scope of the book on geography subjects, what it tells and its usability in geography teaching were evaluated. The research was carried out with the "Ethics Committee Permission" obtained from



the Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee with the decision numbered 01-36 dated 13.02.2024.

Study Group

Within the scope of the research, Harm De Blij's book 'Why Geography Matters? As Never Before!' by Harm De Blij will be read within one month and an online evaluation will be made about this book. A separate online group was formed with 50 geography teachers who declared that they read the book within the given time and volunteered to participate in the research, and these group members constituted the study group of the research. After the time given for reading the book was over, an online interview was conducted with the participation of the researchers at a common time. In this context, criterion sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used while forming the study group in the research. In the studies created with the criterion sampling method, the study groups consist of people, events or objects with certain characteristics (Büyüköztürk et al., 2011). In this study, 'reading the book in question and working as a geography teacher in secondary education institutions' was accepted as a criterion.

Data Collection

In this study, the interview technique, one of the most widely used techniques in qualitative research, was used. Interviews are conversations between two or more people and are designed to achieve a specific goal (Coşkun, Altunışık, & Yıldırım, 2019). The interview technique can also be characterized as a conversation to collect information from the participants (Punch, 2005; Berg & Lune, 2015). Through the interview technique, participants are expected to convey their feelings and thoughts about their opinions, attitudes, experiences, and complaints about the problematic situation of the research (Sevencan & Çilingiroğlu, 2007; Karataş, 2017). The interview technique is categorized according to different characteristics in the literature. In this study, a group interview was conducted with 50 geography teachers working in different schools in Turkey. In group interviews, an interaction is provided between the group members gathered for the solution of a common problem by seeking answers to the questions posed by the interviewer. In this interview process, the participants first express their own thoughts and then participate in the discussion process on the subject according to the answers given by other participants. In this process, the task of the interview moderator is to initiate this discussion to ensure that the participants do not move away from the focal point and to collect the data that emerges at the end of this process (Karasar, 2013). In this study, one of the authors took on this task. The interview process was designed as semi-structured, and the questions were created by the authors and shared with the participant teachers before reading the book. Thus, while reading the book, an evaluation could be made in terms of the topics centered on the interview questions. This interview, which lasted approximately 3 hours, was recorded and transcribed with the knowledge and permission of the participants.

Analysing the Data

Within the scope of the research, the data obtained from the focus group interviews and transcribed in writing were uploaded to the MAXQDA programme and subjected to content analysis based on coding. The analysed data were visualised using the "Hierarchical code-subcode model" in Maxqda. In these visualisations, codes related to the theme determined in line with the research problems and parts of the participant opinions with their frequency levels are given. In addition, sample participant expressions are also included in the findings section. Codes (P.1, P.2, P.3 etc.) were used to show which participant the direct quotes belonged to.

Findings

The findings and interpretations that emerged as a result of the analysis of the data obtained from the focus group interview within the scope of the research are given below.

Opinions on the Validity of the Book in terms of Geography

In Figure 1, the participants' views on the validity of the book in terms of geography science are given with the hierarchical code-subcode model.

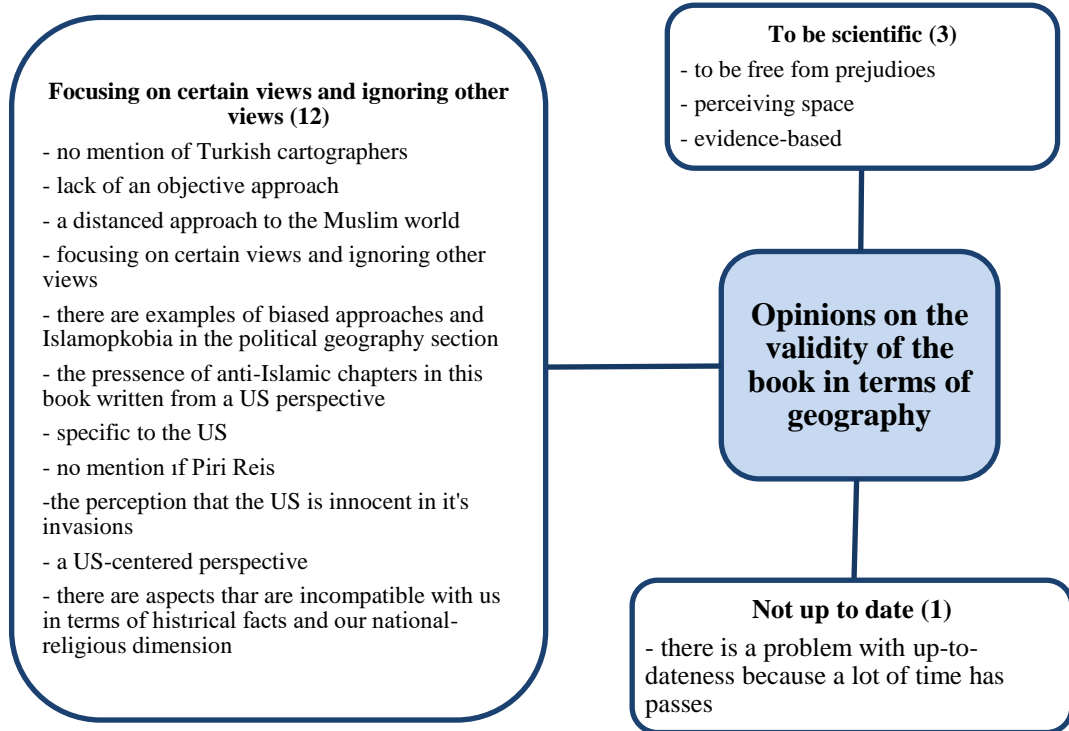


Figure 1: Code-subcode model of the opinions on the validity of the book in terms of geography science

In the focus group interview, the codes formed from the views of the participants to the question asked about the validity of the book in terms of geography science were categorised under the codes of "centring certain views and ignoring other views" (12), "being scientific" (3), and "not being up-to-date" (1). Accordingly, most of the participants find the validity of the book low in terms of geography science, especially because it does not include scientific developments related to the Turkish and Muslim world and exhibits a US-centred perspective. One participant expresses his views on this issue as follows:

"It is a great deficiency that Turkish cartographers are not mentioned. I attribute this situation to the following: I think that Piri Reis may have included Piri Reis because Piri Reis' map was created by making use of the maps of explorers while preparing his map. Even so, it should have been mentioned." (P.43).

A participant who defends the book as scientific in terms of its validity in terms of the science of geography expresses this view as follows:

"The physical geography section of the science centre is a book based on evidence and far from prejudices...." (P.41).

Opinions on the Subject Distribution of the Book for the Sub-Sections of Geography

In Figure 2, the participants' views on the validity of the book in terms of geography science are given with the hierarchical code-subcode model.

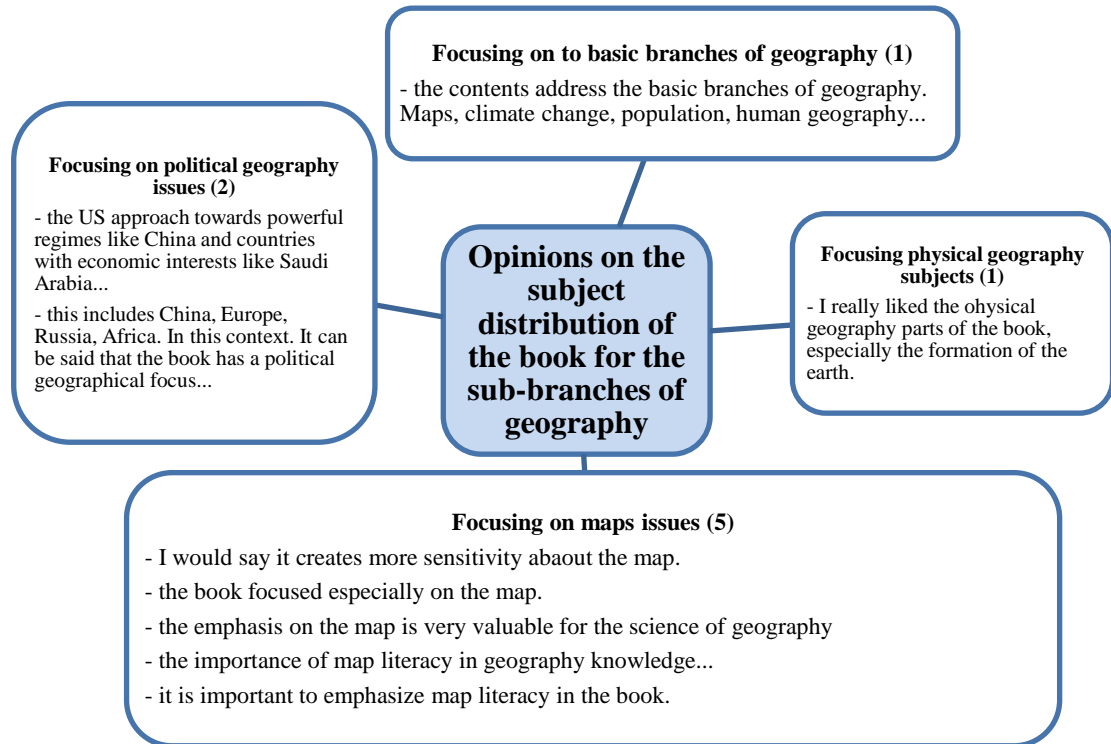


Figure 2: Code-subcode model for the opinions on the subject distribution of the book for the sub-sections of geography

In the focus group interview, the codes formed from the opinions of the participants to the question asked about the subject distribution of the book for the sub-sections of geography were categorised under the codes "Giving weight to map subjects" (5), "Giving weight to political geography subjects" (2), "Giving weight to physical geography subjects" (1) and "Being for the basic branches of geography" (1). Accordingly, most of the participants think that the book generally emphasises map topics for the sub-sections of geography. One participant expresses his views on this issue as follows:

"The book especially emphasises the map. It emphasises map knowledge and the lack of this knowledge in every title it deals with. He expresses it as a deficiency that can be said for the USA in particular but also for the world in general. He emphasises that the map gains importance especially in times of war in the USA, and that the countries where they wage war are not known by US citizens. His emphasis on the map is very valuable in terms of the science of geography." (P.41).

A participant who thinks that the book emphasises political geography for the sub-sections of geography explains his views as follows:

"....political geography, which includes China, Europe, Russia, Africa. In this context, it can be said that the book is based on political geography (P.31).

Opinions on the Practical Information Content of the Book on Daily Life

In Figure 3, the participants' views on the practical information content of the book related to daily life are given with the hierarchical code-subcode model.

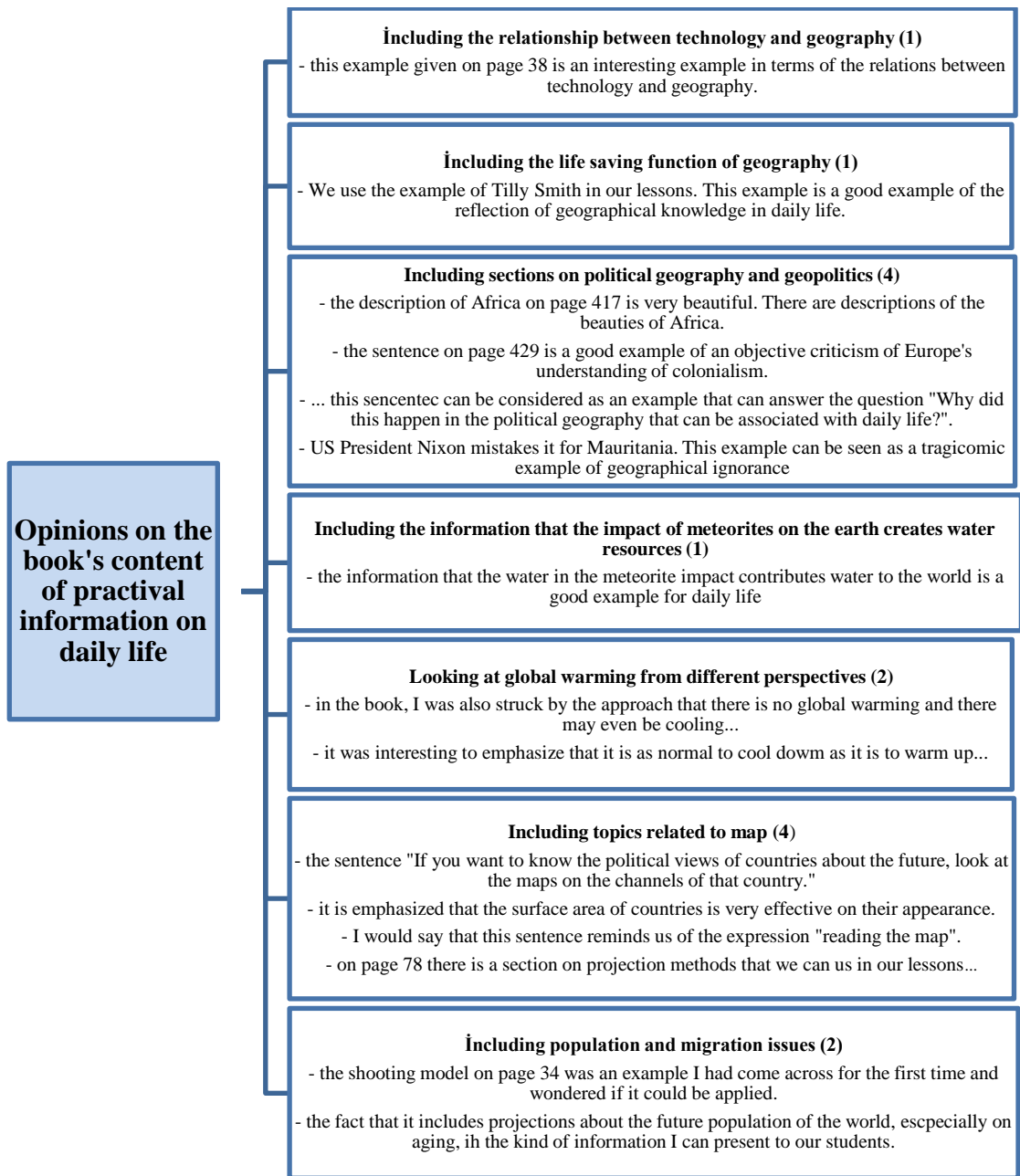


Figure 3: Participants' code-subcode model regarding the practical information content of the book related to daily life

In the focus group interview, the codes generated from the opinions of the participants to the question asked about the practical information content of the book related to daily life show a great variety. However, when we look at the codes generated from the participant views, it is thought that there is information content related to daily life mostly in the use of maps (4) and political geography and geopolitics (4). A participant who thinks that the book has map information content related to daily life expresses these views as follows:

"If we want to learn about the political views of countries about the future, the sentence "If you want to learn about the political views of countries about the future, examine the maps on the channels of that country" brought the following issue to my mind. In my youth, Hatay was shown as Syrian territory on Syrian television. I can give it as a suitable example for the malicious display of maps." (P.55).

A participant who argues that the book has daily information content about political geography and geopolitics conveys his opinion on this issue with the following sentence:

"On page 40, US President Nixon confuses Mauritius with Mauritania, which can be seen as a tragicomic example of geographical ignorance." (P.35).

Opinions on the Suitability of the Book for the Level of High School Students

In Figure 4, the participants' views on the practical information content of the book related to daily life are given with the hierarchical code-subcode model.

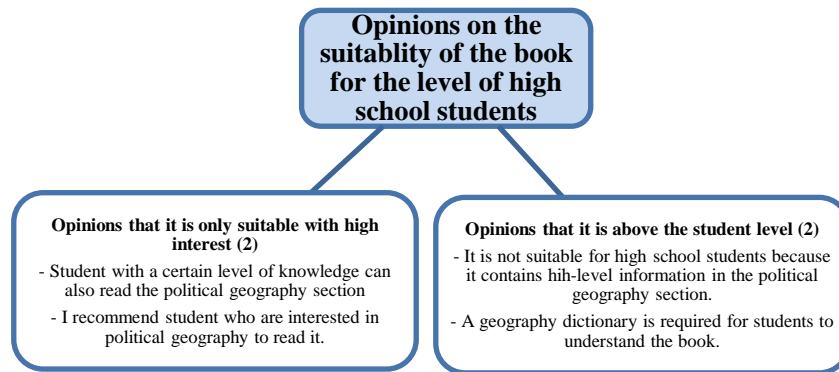


Figure 4: Participants' code-subcode model regarding the suitability of the book for the level of high school students

In the focus group interview, the codes generated from the opinions of the participants to the question asked about the practical information content of the book related to daily life were categorised under the codes "Opinions that the book is suitable only for interested students" (2) and "Opinions that the book is above the student level" (2).

A participant who thinks that the level of the book is only suitable for interested students expresses his views as follows:

"The physical geography part is a resource that can be recommended for students who have basic knowledge about geography and whose level of readiness is appropriate. Students with a certain level of knowledge can also read the political geography part." (P.37).

A participant who argues that the book is generally above the level of the students conveys his opinion on this issue with the following sentence:

"When we look at the book in general, I think that it is not a book suitable for high school students because it focuses too much on geography terminology. A geography dictionary is needed for students to understand the book. Despite all these, some parts of the book can be read to students so that they can benefit from it." (P.42).

Opinions on Making Use of the Book in the Teaching Process of Geography Lesson

In Figure 5, the views of the participants on the use of the book in the teaching process of geography course are given with the hierarchical code-subcode model.

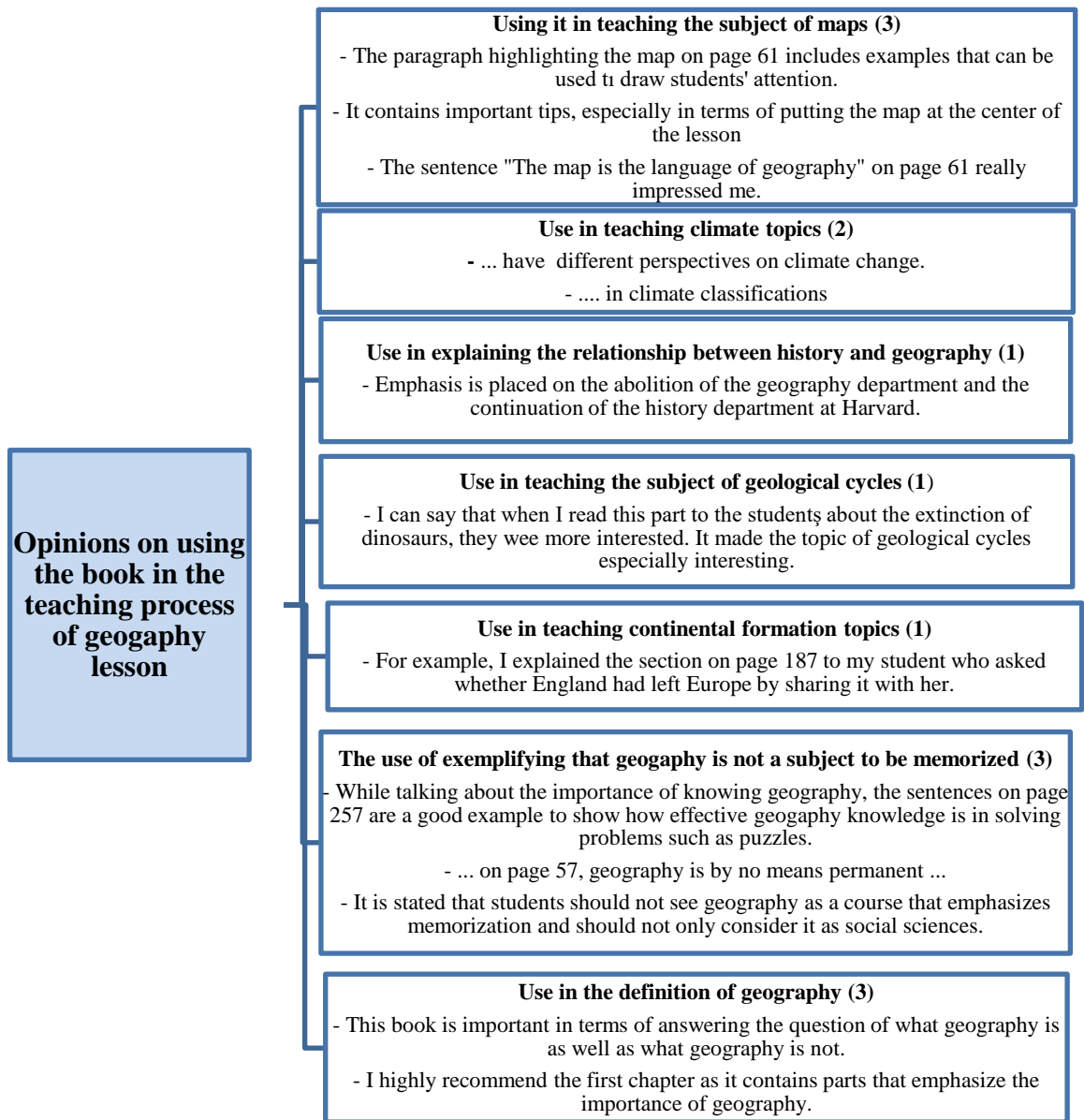


Figure 5: Participants' code-subcode model regarding the use of the book in the teaching process of Geography course

In the focus group interview, quite a lot of codes emerged from the views of the participants to the question asked about the use of the book in the geography teaching process, and the codes with the most opinions were; "Use in teaching the map subject", "Use in exemplifying that geography is not a lesson that needs to be memorised" and "Use in the definition of geography".

A participant who thinks that the book can be used in teaching the map subject expresses his views as follows:

"The paragraph emphasising the map on page 61 contains examples that can be used to attract

students' attention." (P.55).

In the paragraph in question, it is mentioned that the map is the language of geography and that it is the most direct and effective way to convey complex theories. In addition, it is emphasised that the mother of all maps is the world map and that there should definitely be a world map in homes where there is a child, especially at primary school age.

A participant who argues that the book can be used to exemplify that geography is not a lesson to be memorised conveys his thoughts with the following sentences:

"When talking about the importance of knowing geography, the sentences on page 257 are a good example to show how effective geography knowledge is in problems that need to be solved like puzzles. I shared this example with my students and made them think differently." (P.47).

On the page in question, it is emphasised that the steps taken without planning without mastering the historical or cultural geography of Iraq cannot be successful.

A participant who argues that the book is a material that can be used to define geography conveys this view with the following sentences:

"I can say that this book contributed to me in terms of answering the question of what geography is as well as what geography is not." (P.41).

Opinions on the Effect of the Book on the Application of Teaching Methods and Techniques

In Figure 6, the participants' views on the application of the teaching methods and techniques of the book are given with the hierarchical code-subcode model.

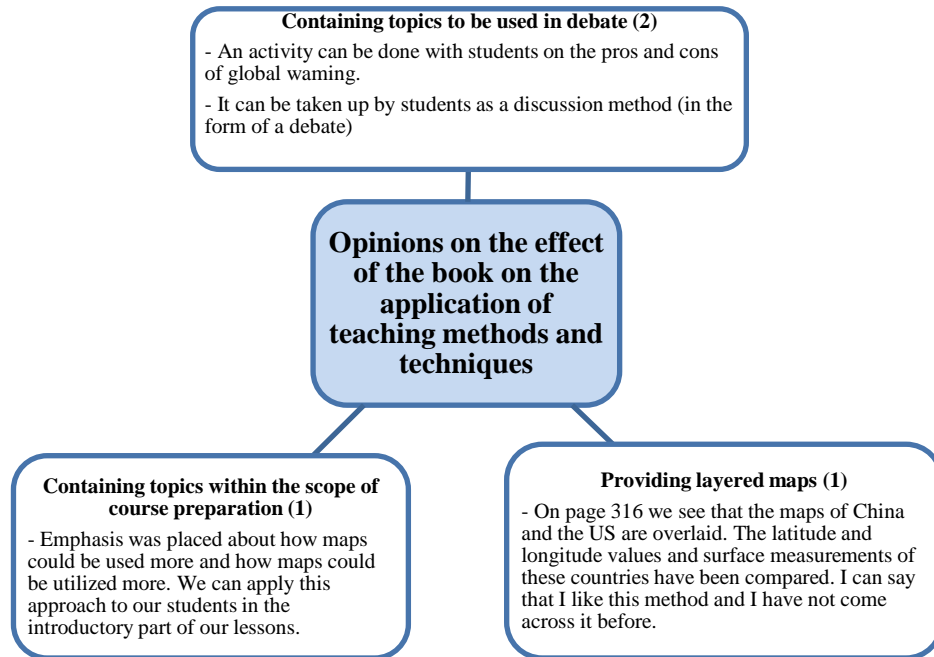


Figure 6: Participants' code-subcode model related to the application of teaching methods and techniques of the book

In the focus group interview, the codes "Containing topics that can be used in the debate", "Containing topics within the scope of lesson preparation" and "Providing maps by layering" were created from the answers given by the participants to the question asked about the effect of the book on the application of teaching methods and techniques.

A participant who argued that the book contains topics that can be used in debate expressed his views on this issue as follows:

"The examples given on page 135 on the question of to whom the world is global are very striking. The 3-page section containing this information can be handled by students using the discussion method as a debate." (P.33).

Opinions on the Recommendation of the Book to Geography Teachers

In Figure 7, the participants' views on the recommendation of the book to geography teachers are given with the hierarchical code-subcode model.

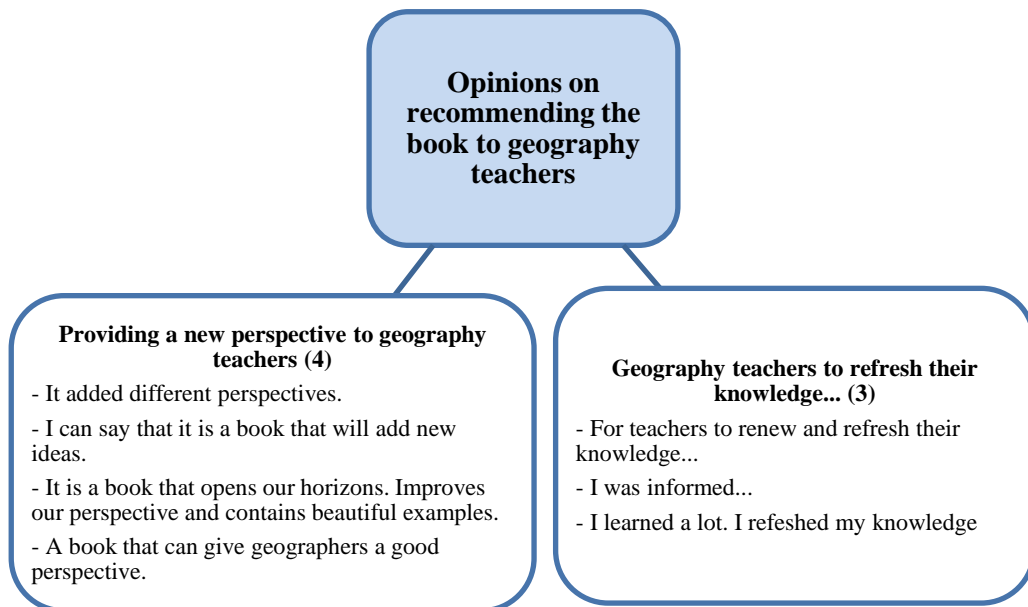


Figure 7: Code-sub-code model for the opinions on the recommendation of the participants to geography teachers

In the focus group interview, the codes "Giving geography teachers a new perspective" and "Refreshing the knowledge of geography teachers" were formed from the answers given by the participants to the question asked about the recommendation of the book to geography teachers.

A participant who argued that the book would give geography teachers a new perspective conveyed these views with the following sentences:

"I can recommend this book to geographers and geography teachers, it is a book that opens our horizons, improves our perspective and contains good examples." (P.37).

One of the participants who argued that the book refreshed the knowledge of geography teachers conveyed this view with the following sentences:

"I recommend this book for teachers to renew and refresh their knowledge." (P.39).

Opinions on the Effect of the Book on the Perspective of Geography

In Figure 8, the participants' views on the effect of the book on their perspective on Geography are given with the hierarchical code-subcode model.

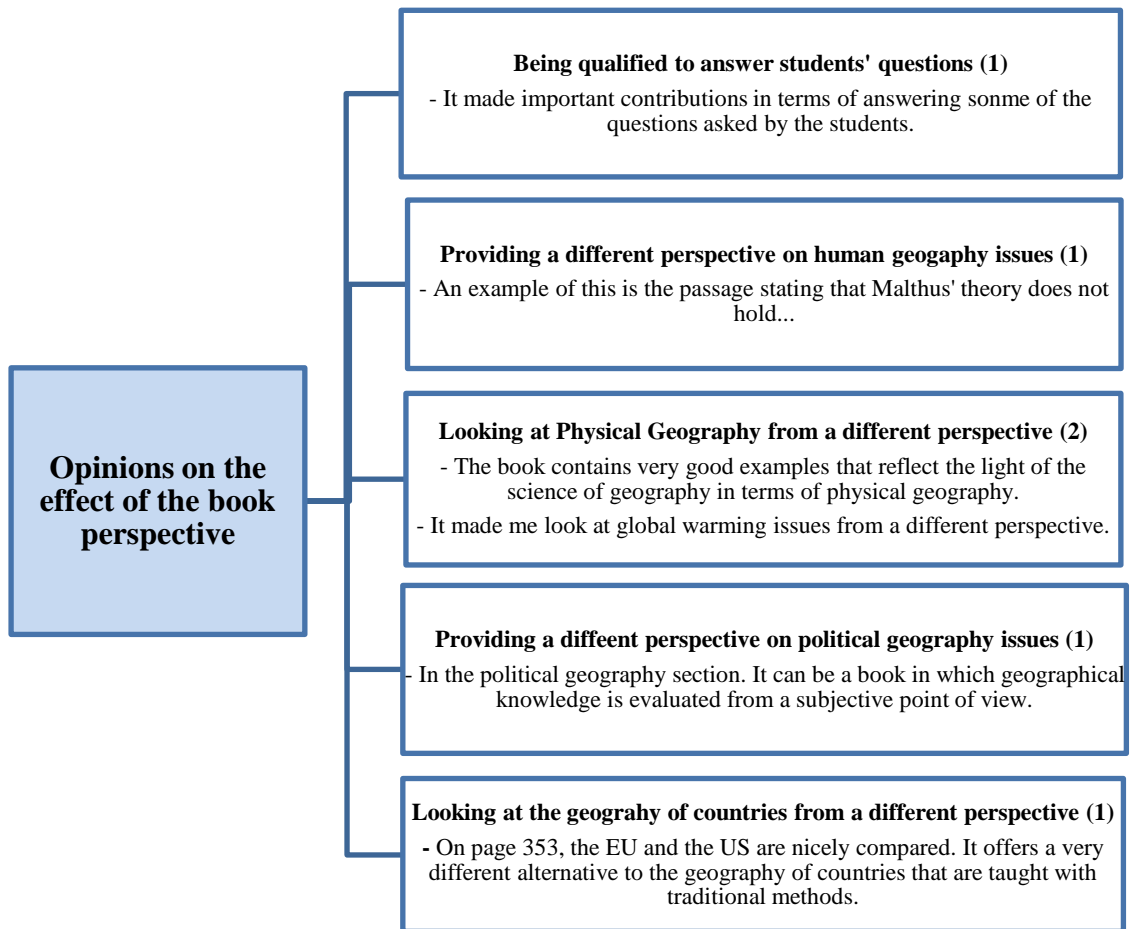


Figure 8: Code-sub-code model for the views of the participants on the effect of the book on the view of Geography

In the focus group interview, the codes "Looking at physical geography from a different perspective", "Presenting a different perspective on human geography topics", "Presenting a different perspective on political geography topics", "Looking at the geography of countries from a different perspective" and "Being able to answer students' questions" were created from the answers given by the participants to the question asked about the effect of the book on the perspective.

A participant who argues that the book provides a different perspective on physical geography expresses his views in this direction as follows:

"The book has a structure that can make a good contribution to our teaching, including very good examples that reflect the light of the science of geography in terms of physical geography." (P.27).

Conclusion

Harm De Blij, as a geographer, has produced a product consisting of his knowledge, skills and experiences in the basic fields of geography. First and foremost, the title of the book is quite striking. It is appropriate that he chose a title that emphasises the importance of geography as it is valid in the USA and relatively in Turkey. Similarly, Passow (2017) found that geography education in the United States generally attracts less attention than many other subjects, and surveys revealed that most students are not proficient in this subject. The topics of the book have satisfactory content in the two main fields of geography, physical and human geography. Map, climate, population, space, global climate change, geopolitics, terrorism, country examples are the main ones.

It is seen that physical geography subjects are included in the book to a significant extent, three of which are directly. As a result of the research, it was determined that the sections of the book on physical geography were the most liked sections by geography teachers. In the emergence of this result, the inclusion of interesting events experienced while addressing physical geography topics in the book and the mention of map display techniques that have not been mentioned before played an important role. The most senior state official's confusion of the names of countries and giving different examples of the language of maps are among the first examples that draw attention. In addition, the fact that it deals with global climate change through the dichotomy of global warming and cooling was one of the sections that attracted the attention of geography teachers. Thanks to this approach, it is a strong aspect of the book that it presents different sides of the subject to the readers with examples. With this approach, the book is a good study to address Day's (2012) criticism that 'Introductory physical geography textbooks have not kept pace with changes in the teaching of the subject, although there have been some promising innovations recently'.

In the book, showing the lack of geographical knowledge for students and the public in the USA with concrete examples provided a useful content. Raento et al. (2010) also expressed the same view as De Blij, stating that the status of geography in the American academy continues to be weak. In addition, it was emphasised by the geography teachers that this lack of knowledge also exists in Turkey. It can be said that the common concern of the participants on this issue is related to the development of map skills. In this context, it is understood that the examples in the book for developing map skills are liked by geography teachers and will be applied in their classes.

Another result of the research is that the book is rich in practical information about daily life. As stated by Çifçi and Dikmenli (2019), geography provides people with the necessary information for a life in harmony with nature. Therefore, all people living in the world should have this knowledge. Geography teachers stated that this practical knowledge includes a wide range of examples such as maps, disasters, population, technology. It can be said that this situation constitutes a good response to the criticism that geography has too much information according to some views by giving concrete and practical examples.

It was concluded that geography teachers had different opinions about whether the book was suitable for high school students. While one group of teachers stated that the sections on physical geography are suitable for students who have basic knowledge about geography, the other group stated that students would need a geography dictionary to understand these parts of the book. For this reason, they suggested that certain parts related to physical geography could be taught. The fact that the student mass addressed by the teachers is different may have been effective in the emergence of this difference. Because the teachers participating in the study

work in different school types. They generally agree that the sections on political geography are above the level of high school students. It can be said that the fact that there are few acquisitions related to political geography in the high school geography curriculum in Turkey and as a result, the low level of students' readiness is effective in the formation of this idea. For this reason, teachers stated that these chapters can appeal to students who are interested in the subject.

One of the results of the research is that the book synthesises academic knowledge and practical knowledge in a good way. It was concluded that geography teachers expressed mostly positive opinions about the use of the book for teaching activities in lessons. The fact that the book includes examples and explanations that emphasise what geography is as well as what it is not, and that it makes explanations that will break down the perception that geography consists of memorised information is one of the parts of the book appreciated by the teachers. Placing the map at the centre of geography and explaining geological periods in an enjoyable style are seen as other examples that facilitate teaching. One of the striking examples is that while political geography evaluations of World War II are generally centred on Europe and the USA, De Blij makes Africa-oriented evaluations. In addition, the book contains important sources of information and different perspectives on the pros and cons of global warming, which can be the subject of debate for students. The use of a comparative method comparing countries by using map overlaying method is a relatively new activity that can be used as an example.

As a result of the research, it was revealed that geography teachers would recommend the book to geography teachers to read. The reasons for recommending the book were expressed as having a horizon-opening, perspective-developing narrative style, refreshing teachers' knowledge and learning new information. In today's world where academic books are widely available in the market, the fact that it is a book that appeals to the general public by translating academic knowledge into everyday language is a distinctive feature. Another aspect of the book that is appreciated by geography teachers is that it has a narrative style that will offer different perspectives on both physical and human geography. Ahn and Juraev (2023) made similar evaluations for Tim Marshall's book. In addition to these, the fact that it provides detailed answers to the geographical issues that students ask and find complex is seen as one of the positive aspects of the book.

The biggest criticism of the book by geography teachers was its approach to political geography issues. The majority of the teachers state that the author has a US-centred world view, which is also caused by his affiliation. This situation can be shown as the reflection of the moderate approach to the US military interventions in the book, especially when addressing the Muslim world, the presence of expressions containing opposition such as 'Islamic front, Separatist Islam'. However, as Lacoste (2015) states, it is also necessary to take into account the idea that geography offers elements of defining the world within a certain 'neutral' understanding of the culture that is generally called geography.

In summary, De Blij has created an important work by adding his own touches to the world of geography. Although there are negative opinions about the book, especially in the political geography section, it is obvious that the scientific aspect of the book is valid in terms of geography and that it presents academic information to the reader in the form of everyday knowledge with concrete examples. Thanks to these features, the book can be recommended for geography lovers, geographers and students. It should be noted that the book focuses on certain views and ignores others. It should be recommended to students without forgetting that the chapters containing political geography topics may be above the level of high school

students. It can be used in lessons as a study that will contribute to the geography teaching process and support permanent learning in some subjects. However, it would be useful for teachers to mention the bias and political point of view of the book when recommending it to students and to suggest them to read alternative sources.

References

- Ahn, Y. J., & Juraev, Z. (2023). Book review: "Prisoners of Geography" by Tim Marshall. *Preprints*. <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202307.0032.v1>
- Bedir, G., & Akkurt, A. (2012). Geography teaching by songs. *Eastern Geographical Review*, 17(28), 303-316.
- Berg, B. L., & Lune, H. (2015). *Qualitative research methods in social sciences*. (Translation: Aydın H.). Konya: Eğitim Publ.
- Blij, H. (2019). *Why geography is important. More than ever*. Ankara: Hece Publ.
- Büyüköztürk, Ş., Kılıç, Ç. E., Akgün, Ö. E., Karadeniz, Ş., & Demirel, F. (2011). *Bilimsel araştırma yöntemleri [Scientific research methods] (8th edition)*. Ankara: Pegem Akademi Publ.
- Coşkun, R., Altunışık, R., & Yıldırım, E. (2019). *Sosyal bilimlerde araştırma yöntemleri: SPSS uygulamalı [Research methods in social sciences: SPSS applied]*. Sakarya: Sakarya Publ.
- Çifçi, T., & Dikmenli, Y. (2019). Why geography learning: candidate teachers' views for geography course. *Review of International Geographical Education Online (RIGEO)*, 9(3), 557-576.
- Day, T. (2012). Undergraduate teaching and learning in physical geography. *Progress in Physical Geography*, 36(3), 305-332.
- Dikmenli, Y., Asal Özkan R., & Turan, B. N. (2022). Determination of geographical concepts in the Heidi storybook. *Sakarya University Journal of Education Faculty*, 22(1), 83-94. doi: 10.53629/sakaefd.1055792
- Gezer, E., & Dikmenli, Y. (2022). Geographical concepts in the little prince storybook. *The Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(58), 289-306.
- Girgin, M. (2017). Use of games in education: Geoguessr in geography course, *International Technology and Education Journal*, 1(1), 1-6.
- Gülüm, K. (2009). A research on proverbs Turk and Turkmen (Turkmenistan) articulated on nature that can be used in geography teaching. *Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, (1), 51-58. doi:10.20875/sb.63167
- Gülüm, K. (2010). The using of Turkish proverbs in geography teaching. *Turkish World Studies*, 93(184), 205-215.
- Karasar, N. (2013). *Bilimsel araştırma yöntemi [Scientific research method]*. Ankara: Nobel Publ.
- Karataş, Z. (2017). Paradigm transformation in social sciences research: rise of qualitative approach. *Turkish Journal of Social Work Research*, 1(1), 68-86.
- Lacoste, Y. (2015). *Coğrafya herşeyden önce savaş yapmaya yarar [Geography is above all useful for making war]*. İstanbul: Ayrıntı Publ.
- Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. California: Jossey-Bass.
- Özşahin, E. (2009). Caricatures with geography education, *Marmara Geographical Review*, 20, 101-121.
- Öztürk, Ç. (2007). Usage of literary texts in geography teaching, *Ondokuz Mayıs University Journal of Education Faculty*, 24, 70-78.

- Passow, M. J. (2017). What's wrong and what's right with geography education in the USA?. *Revista Espinhaço*, 6(1), 41-49.
- Punch, K. F. (2005). *Sosyal arařtırmalara giriş [Introduction to social research]* (Translation: Bayrak D., Arslan H. B. & Z. Akyüz), Ankara: Siyasal Publ.
- Raento, P., Minghi, J., Cox, K. R., Davidson, F. M., Flint, C., & Herb, G. H. (2010). Interventions in teaching political geography in the USA. *Political Geography*, 29(4), 190-199.
- Sevencan, F., & Çilingirođlu, N. (2007). Qualitative data collection methods used in health research. *Community Medicine Bulletin*, 26(1), 1-6.
- Smiley, S.L., & Post, C.W. (2014) Using popular music to teach the geography of the United States and Canada, *Journal of Geography*, 113(6), 238-246. doi: 10.1080/00221341.2013.877061
- URL-1. Harm Jan de Blij. <https://www.aag.org/memorial/harm-jan-de-blij/> Access date:14.05.2024.
- Yakar, H., & Dikmenli, Y. (2022). Examination of the treasure island story book in terms of geographical concepts. *Journal of Anatolian Cultural Research (JANCR)*, 6(3), 213-226.
- Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2018). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel arařtırma yöntemleri [Qualitative research methods in the social sciences]*. Ankara: Seçkin Publ.