THE WORDS OF COVID-19: Turkey

corona democratic (Demokratik)

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Abstract:

Bu girdi, Türk gazete ve dergi köşe yazılarında kullanılan Corona demokratik metaforunun kullanımını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu incelemeler yoluyla çalışmada demokratik kelimesinin pandemi sürecinde farklı ötekilik biçimlerini (yeniden) üretmek için kullanılıp kullanılmadığı betimlenecektir.

The entry analyses the use of the Corona democratic metaphor used in Turkish newspaper and journal opnion articles. Through the analyses, the entry describes whether the word democratic is used to (re)produce different forms of otherness in the pandemic process.

Etymology:

In the Online Etymology Dictionary, it is stated that the word *"democratic"* is derived circa 1600s from the French *démocratique* , the medieval Latin *democraticus* , the Greek *demokratikos* and *demokratia* words. The meaning of words is presented in the dictionary as the below:

Democratique and *democraticus* " the nature of or characterized by democracy" and "pertaining to democracy"

Demokratikos "of or for democracy and favoring democracy"

Demokratia "popular government".

The word democratic is defined in Turkish Language Institution Dictionary as appropriate for democracy (*demokrasiye uygun*).

Problematization:

Democracy is a form of government in which all individuals who make up society have an equal right to voice in shaping the state policy and in administration. The Greek word *dimokratia* is formed by the combination of the words *dimos* "people" and *kratos* "power". With its most general definition, the word democratic is expressed in many dictionaries as "suitable for democracy". Today, many countries adopt democracy as a form of government. Individuals and views that support equality among citizens as form of government are also defined as democratic.

As known, the Corona crisis emerged in late December 2019 and spread around the globe through the spring months of 2020. With the emergence and spread of the Corona how democratic were the various practices brought by governments to protect the health of their people have become an important agenda topic in many countries, especially in the written and visual media. Therefore, the concept of *democratic* has begun to be rediscussed in the world media and also Turkish media.

This entry analyzes the use of the Corona *democratic* metaphor in newspaper opinion articles and how the word *democratic* was used to (re)produce different forms of otherness.

Communication strategies:

Metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain from the perspective of another conceptual domain

(Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 1989; Kövecess 2010). According to this approach, the conceptual metaphor consists of a source field (more concrete or physical concepts such as journey) and a target field (more abstract concepts such as love).

The selection of source areas depends on human factors that reflect non-real and previously non-existent similarities between a source and a target area (Kövecess 2010). Also, the source-to-target mappings can change according to people's world views, background knowledge, and experiences (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Kövecess 2010). For instance, in some cultures “love” can be seen as dance, lovers can be seen as performers and their goal is to act in aesthically and balanced way; on the other hand in some cultures “love" can be seen as a war, lovers are rival and their goal is to defeat each other.

Moreover, some researchers (e.g. Simon-Vandenbergen 2003; Martin and White 2005) focus on the interpersonal functions of metaphor. According to them, metaphors have a role in reflecting the stance of the text producer and also affecting the attitude of the text receiver. Hence the choice of metaphor involves the context in which the text is produced.

Subversion:

Twenty-two opinion articles published during December 2019 to October 2021 were selected from elite newspapers and journals in Turkey by means of random sampling. The selected articles focused on the topics related to the effects of Corona on governments’ democratic stance all over the world. Data analysis was done based on Lakoff and Johnson’s Event Structure Metaphor Theory (1999).

Since event structure metaphor theory is a subject that requires linguistic expertise, first of all, what this theory is will be explained below.

Event Structure Metaphor Theory characterizes the events including abstract notions like states, changes, processes, actions, causes, purposes, and means via metaphor in terms of space, motion, and force (Lakoff 1992). According to Lakoff and Johnson (1999) event structure metaphor has two important metaphorical systems: The location event structure metaphor and the object event structure metaphor

The metaphorical systems will be explained below. The examples were taken from the internet site “https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Category:Metaphor”

1. The location event structure metaphor: Events are conceptualized in terms of locations

STATES ARE LOCATIONS- Ex: He has a lofty position.

CAUSES ARE FORCES-Ex: That experience pushed him over the edge

CHANGES ARE MOVEMENTS-Ex: He went crazy.

CAUSATION IS FORCED MOVEMENT- Ex: “FDR's leadership brought the country out of the depression”

ACTIONS ARE SELF-PROPELLED MOVEMENTS-Ex: He drank himself out of the promotion

PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS Ex: We've reached the end.

MEANS ARE PATHS Ex. However you want to go about it is fine with me

DIFFICULTIES ARE IMPEDIMENTS TO MOTION Ex: My life is going nowhere - I'm just spinning my wheels.

PROGRESS IS FORWARD MOTION Ex. I'm afraid I haven't gotten very far in grading the exams

2. The object event structure metaphor: Events are conceptualized in terms of objects

ATTRIBUTES ARE POSSESSIONS Ex: She has a sunny disposition

CHANGES ARE MOVEMENTS OF POSSESSIONS Ex: I got a headache

CAUSATION IS TRANSFER OF POSSESSION Ex. “The noise gave me a headache

PURPOSES ARE DESIRED OBJECTS/ ACHIEVING A PURPOSE IS ACQUIRING A DESIRED OBJECT Ex. He finally managed to get a smile out of her.

Also, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1999) some metaphors occur in location-object pairs called duals such as causes are forces and changes are movements; states are possessions and attributes are possessions. In the location event structure metaphor, “changes are movements” metaphor denotes the motion of the event-changing from an old location to new location or vice versa; “causes are forces” metaphor shows causation is the forced movement of an affected entity to a new location. On the other hand, in the object event structure metaphor change is the thing changing and it is seen as acquisition or loss of the thing; causation is the transfer of an object to or from an affected entity. In other words, causation is considered as taking or giving an object. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) exemplify this situation as follows:

I got a headache. [Change is acquisition -- motion to]

My headache went away. [Change is loss -- motion from]

The noise gave me a headache. [Causation is giving -- motion to]

The aspirin took away my headache. [Causation is taking -- motion from] (p.225).

The findings obtained from the Turkish opinion articles related with the effects of Corona on governments’ democratic stance will be given below.

Although Corona is a non-human being and inanimate, it has been used as a human being such as a coffin maker, an enemy/opponent, an actor and an animate/living organism such as a plant in data as seen in the examples (1) to (3) and the Table (1) below. Thus journalists try to make corona more understandable for their readers through the conceptual metaphors. Also these metaphors entail that with the spread of the Corona the “equal voice” has been broken by governments around the world with the excuse of the people health protection. Consequently the term *being democratic government* has undergone a change of meaning: being democratic means authority of government over public.

Example 1. *Corona, bilinen liberalizmin tabutuna son çivileri mi çakıyor?* (Is Corona putting the final nails in the coffin of known liberalism?) *(Habertürk, April 2020)*

Example 2. *Bu virüs belki de etrafınıza hangi ulusal duvarları örerseniz örün, o duvarların virüsler tarafından şu ya da bu şekilde aşılabileceğini göstermesi anlamında demokratik olabilir….. Virüs içine girdiği insan bedenleriyle sınırlarda serbestçe hareket ederken, Avrupa politikası virüsü sadece arkadan kovalıyordu. ….. Bu eğer demokratik bir virüs olacaksa, belki de yaşadığımız topluma bakıp kral çıplak diyebilmemizi sağladığı için olacak. Bu salgını izleyecek bir başka varoluşsal kriz gelip çatana kadar. Virüs bize kendi aktörlüğümüzü hatırlatan bir aktör.* (This virus may be democratic in the sense that it shows that no matter what national walls you build around you, those walls can be overcome in one way or another by viruses…. While the virus moved freely across the borders with the human bodies it had penetrated, European politics was merely chasing the virus from behind… If this is going to be a democratic virus, maybe it will be because it allows us to look at the society we live in and say the king is naked. Until another existential crisis arrives that will follow this pandemic. The virus is an actor who reminds us of our own acting) *(Birikim, March 2020)*

Example 3. *Herhangi bir salgın gelişip, serpilmek için bundan daha mümbit bir iklim bulabilir miydi*? (Could any epidemic find a more fertile climate to flourish?) *(Duvar, March 2020)*

Table 1. The conceptual metaphors in the example (1) to (3)

Conceptual Metaphors	Linguistics metaphor	Mappings		Entailment
Corona is a person Corona is a coffin maker Corona is an enemy Corona is an actor	Is Corona **putting** the final nails in the coffin of known liberalism? While the virus **moved freely across the borders** with the human bodies it had penetrated, European politics was merely **chasing the virus from behind**… The virus is **an actor who reminds us of our own acting.**	**Source** Human-being qualities	**Target** Corona	Governments are disrupting the equal voice between themselves and their people with the various practicies they have brought with the Corona as an excuse. Therefore being democratic has gained a new meaning such as being democratic is to have an authority over the public.
Corona is an animate/living organism Corona is a plant	Could any epidemic find a **more fertile climate to flourish**?	**Source** The whole plant A flourish of the plant gowth	**Target** Corona The development and spread of Corona	

From the point of view of event structure metaphor, it was seen that the metaphors “causes are forces” and “changes are movements of possessions” were heavily used in the data.



Bye Democracy - Transparency and Accountability Initiative Photo credit: picture-alliance/dpa/J. Carstensen

In the following examples (4) to (5) under the metaphors “changes are movements (loss/acquisition)” and “causes are forces”, it was emphasized that with the spread of the Corona, governments increased their power on people, especially minorities and opponents and thus people lost their “equality” in respect to government. In other words, it was stated in the examples that the governments strengthened and expanded us/them dichotomy together with the pandemic. Thereby in these examples the sub-metaphors emerged: **Corona is not democratic for people and Corona is the thing/device for governments to make someone otherized.** These metaphors show that the term being democratic has undergone a change of meaning during the pandemic: being a democratic government means having a heavier power and authority over public.

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The metaphors in each examples were tabulated to become more clear.

Example 4. *Freedom House*, *Ekim 2020 tarihinde COVID-19 salgınının demokrasi ve insan hakları üzerindeki etkisine ilişkin “Democracy under Lockdown” isimli araştırmasını yayınladı. 192 ülke üzerinde yaptığı araştırmaya, 398 gazeteci, sivil toplum çalışanı, aktivist ve diğer uzmanlar katıldı. Rapora göre, salgının yol açtığı demokrasi krizi 80 ülkede demokrasi ve insan haklarının durumunu daha da kötüleştirdi. Halk sağlığını koruma mazeretiyle yürütme organları sahip oldukları güçleri muhalifleri bastırmak ve kurumları zayıflatmak için kullandılar*. (Freedom House published its research titled “Democracy under Lockdown” on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on democracy and human rights in October 2020. 398 journalists, civil society workers, activists and other experts participated in the research conducted on 192 countries. According to the report, the democracy crisis caused by the epidemic worsened the situation of democracy and human rights in 80 countries. Under the pretext of protecting public health, executive bodies used their powers to suppress opposition and weaken institutions.) *(Doğrulukpayı, October 2020)*

Table 2. The event structure metaphors in the example (4)

Events structure metaphors		Linguistics metaphor	Entailments	Sub-metaphors
Causes are forces [Causation is giving -- motion to] **Changes are movements** [Change is acquisition -- motion to]	**Governments**	Under the pretext of protecting public health, executive bodies **used their powers to suppress opposition and weaken institutions**	Corona has caused governments to increase their pressure on the people or institutions against them. Therefore the change is acquisition for them	Corona is the thing/device for governments to make someone othersized
Causes are forces [Causation is giving -- motion to] **Changes are movements** [Change is loss -- motion from]	**People**	The democracy crisis caused by the epidemic **worsened the situation of democracy and human rights in 80 countries.**	Corona has caused governments to increase their pressure on their people. Thus Many rights of people have been reduced or taken away. The change is loss for them	Corona is not democratic for people

Example 5. *Kriz anlarında gücün kötüye kullanılması marjinal topluluklar üzerinde orantısız bir etki yarattı. Freedom House'un araştırmasına katılan uzmanların %29'u azınlıklar ve savunmasız nüfusların salgından en çok etkilenen olduğunun altını çizdi. Katılımcıların %25'i salgın nedeni ile etnik ve dini azınlıklara yeni veya artan kısıtlamalar getirildiğini ifade etti. Bazı durumlarda etnik ve dini azınlıklar orantısız bir şekilde daha fazla acıya maruz kaldı çünkü sahip oldukları statüleri onları daha büyük risk altına aldı. Zayıflamış bağımsız medya ve kabul gören yasama ve yargı organlarının neden olduğu hesap verilebilirliğin azaltılması hem devletlerin hem de devlet dışı faillerin ayrımcılık yapmasına imkân sağladı. Örneğin, Bulgaristan'da Roman mahallelerinde, romanların çoğunluk oluşturmadığı bölgelere göre daha sert kısıtlamalar uygulandı. Türkiye'den bir katılımcı ise, "COVID-19 denetimleri ve kontrolleri kapsamında polis şiddetinin orantısız bir şekilde azınlıkları hedef aldığını" iddia etti.* (The abuse of power in times of crisis has had a disproportionate impact on marginalized communities. 29% of experts participating in Freedom House's survey highlighted that minorities and vulnerable populations are most affected by the epidemic. 25% of the participants stated that new or increased restrictions were imposed on ethnic and religious minorities due to the epidemic. In some cases, ethnic and religious minorities suffered disproportionately because their status placed them at greater risk. Reduced accountability caused by weakened independent media and recognized legislatures and courts has allowed both states and non-state perpetrators to discriminate. For example, tougher restrictions were imposed in Roma neighborhoods in Bulgaria than in areas where Roma did not form the majority. A participant from Turkey claimed that "police violence disproportionately targets minorities within the scope of COVID-19 inspections and controls") *(Duvar, March 2020)*

Table 3. The event structure metaphors in the example (5)

Events structure metaphors		Linguistics metaphor	Entailments	Sub-metaphors
Causes are forces [Causation is giving -- motion to] **Changes are movements** [Change is acquisition -- motion to]	**Governments**	Reduced accountability caused by weakened independent media and recognized legislatures and courts has **allowed both states and non-state perpetratorsto discriminate.**	Corona has caused governments to increase their pressure on minorities. Therefore the change is acquisition for them	Corona is the thing/device for governments to make someone othersized
Causes are forces [Causation is giving -- motion to] **Changes are movements** [Change is loss -- motion from]	**People**	29% of experts participating in Freedom House's survey highlighted that minorities and vulnerable populations are **most affected** by the epidemic. 25% of the participants stated that **new or increased restrictions were imposed on ethnic and religious minorities due to the epidemic**. **In some cases, ethnic and religious minorities suffered disproportionately because their status placed them at greater risk...**	Corona has caused governments to increase their pressure on minorities. Many rights of minorities have been reduced or taken away. The change is loss for them	Corona is not democratic for minorities

Example 6. *Pandeminin yarattığı en büyük farklılık da bu noktada karşımıza çıkıyor. Bugün yaşanan pandemi korkusunun güvenlik endişesinden çok daha küresel bir boyutta olması iktidarların işini daha da kolaylaştıran bir etken olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Çünkü, COVID-19 salgını topluma öylesine büyük, yaşamsal bir korku yaydı ki, iktidarların korku yaratmak gibi ekstra bir kurgu yapmalarına gerek kalmadığı gibi bireyler mevcut sosyal şartlar altında virüse yakalanma korkusu ile gözetlenmeye rıza gösterip, istekli oldular. Ne kadar kontrol altında olurlarsa o kadar güvende olacakları düşüncesi ile bireyler hükümetlerin istedikleri online uygulamaları indirdi, çalıştırdı ve bu gözetlenmeyi yaşamlarının güvence altında kalacağının garantisi olarak görmeye başladılar*. (The biggest difference created by the pandemic is at this point. We can say that the fear of the pandemic experienced today is much more global than the security concern, which is a factor that makes the work of the governments easier. Because the COVID-19 epidemic spread such a great and vital fear to the society that the governments did not need to make an extra fiction such as creating fear, and individuals were willing and willing to be watched for fear of catching the virus under the current social conditions. With the thought that the more they are under control, the safer they will be, individuals downloaded and run the online applications that governments wanted, and they began to see this

surveillance as a guarantee that their lives would be safe.) *(Istanpol, July 2020)*

Table 4. The event structure metaphors in the example (6)

Events structure metaphors		**Linguistics metaphor**	**Entailments**	**Sub-metaphors**
Causes are forces [Causation is giving -- motion to] **Changes are movements** [Change is acquisition -- motion to]	**Governments**	The fear of the pandemic experienced today is much more global than the security concern, which is a factor that **makes the work of the governments easier**	The fear of pandemic have caused the governments to have more power on their people therefore the change is acquisition for them	Corona is the thing/device for governments to make someone othersized
Causes are forces [Causation is taking -- motion from] **Changes are movements** [Change is loss -- motion from]	**People**	the COVID-19 epidemic **spread such a great and vital fear to the society** that the governments did not need to make an extra fiction such as creating fear, and **individuals were willing and willing to be watched for fear of catching the virus under the current social conditions.** With the thought that **the more they are under control, the safer they will be, individuals downloaded and run the online applications that governments wanted,** and **they began to see this surveillance as a guarantee that their lives would be safe**	The pandemic have caused the fear on the society. Because of this fear the people have felt that thay have to obey the rules their governments set to protect from the Corona therefore they have lost their freedom in other words the change is loss for them	Corona is not democratic

Discussion:

In the dictionaries, the term democratic is defined as follows: “an attitude or a system that treats everyone equally”. Moreover, the phrase democratic society means that a group of people make decisions together and vote equally. As for the term democratic government, it means that all its citizens have equal rights against the government; it is based on the principle of separation of powers and accordingly having legislative, executive and judicial organs. It is a state model based on the people. In democratic states, the people choose those who will rule the country and change them when the time comes. A democratic state takes into account the interests and preferences of all citizens equally. At the same time, it gives importance to the opinions of the people. Therefore, the people have an equal voice with the government.

The results showed in this entry reveal that with Corona pandemic governments around the world have deviated from the principle of equal voice and they have been far away from their citizens. This way they create us/them dichotomy and produce otherness. The governments use the term democratic for their own benefit during the pandemic. Hence the term has gained the new meaning that being a democratic government means applying power to the citizens and creating otherness.

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