

TEACHING OF WAR AND TREATY TOPICS IN HISTORY CLASSES

Tonguç Başaran, Zerrin Balkaç

Abstract: One of the essential functions of educational programs is to give the sense of history to the young generations that are the future of the countries. The history classes have a great responsibility for determining the goals of the states and nations about their futures and realizing the goals determined and transferring the past experiences to the new generations.

War: while it happens very often between states, nations or even smaller groups, there is a need for treaties to prepare the peace environment and ensure its continuity. Wars and treaties are difficult topics to learn in history classes. Because it is necessary to repeat continuously to learn, and it affects the desire and attitude of the students towards the course negatively. To overcome this situation, teachers should know the appropriate methods and techniques very well. It becomes both helpful to break the prejudices towards the history classes in order to teach the topics such as the names of the wars and treaties, their time, who the sides of the wars are, who the sides of the treaties made are, their justifications, the results using effective methods instead of memorizing the topics in question, and also affects to increase their academic success.

In this study, it is mentioned which methods have been used to teach wars and treaties topics, what benefits provide to the students and what kind of studies should be realized to develop them.

Key Words: Education, History Classes, Methods of teaching history, War, Treaty

INTRODUCTION

The word “War” conveys different meanings. Some think that it is an evil that needs to be eradicated, others view it as a mistake that needs to be repeated. Some others see it as a fate that mankind cannot avoid. (Aktaş, Ö. 2012).

War has existed in every period of history and in all geographies. If biological life does not suffer great destruction due to climate and environmental disasters, war is still confronted as the greatest social problem. Different definitions have been made about war that has

existed since the earliest known times of mankind (Bayat, M. 1985). The relevant definitions of the Turkish Language Association dictionary are as follows; "War is a regular attack of a society using all means and power on another, for the purpose of imposing their demands. It is the clash of two or more states with armed forces by ceasing all diplomatic relations, in order to enforce their demands or refuse to submit to demands of another." War is also associated with concepts of fight, combat, struggle, and battle. (Aktaş, Ö. 2012)

People's struggles with each other, of course, began with the history of mankind and developed in parallel with the development and transformation of societies and civilizations. This development stretches from a fight between two people to the armies in which thousands, even millions, of people are part of. (Erendil, M. 1998) If we scan the memory of mankind, wars take a significant part in history of humanity. Wars have not only determined the fate of humanity but also geographies and have a huge effect on the spread of religions, languages and cultures (Aktaş, Ö. 2012) The most basic definition of war is collective and organized violence. Another definition of war can be made as organized violence that is used to break the will of the enemy forces and make their own will dominate the other side. (Akad, M. T 2011)

Thomas More states that the atrocities of humans committed on each other in war has no match in any other living creature. While being against wars of aggressions, utopians deem the defense of the homeland as the supreme value (More, T. 2000). The purpose of all wars is undoubtedly the defeat of enemy armed forces. ATATURK has given special importance to the war of defense. According to ATATURK, the defense of the homeland is a highly exalted duty. He also stated that wars are only justified when people have to protect their country with these words:

"I am not in favor of dragging the nation into war for this or that reason. War must be mandatory and vital. My true belief is this: I should have no torment in my conscience when I take the nation into war. We can go into war against people who say 'we will kill', saying 'we will survive'. However, if life of the nation is not in danger, war is murder." (ATATURK, 1983).

Commonly, peace means that a state is not in a state of war. In other words, it refers to a state of a state that is pre – war, post – peace treaty. As a legal definition, "international peace is the reestablishment of friendly relations between states." According to Bayat, winning peace is more difficult than winning the war. (Bayat, M. 1985)

Peace not only encompasses the prevention of international violence, but also a

harmonious relationship between mankind and nature. It is a war against war. (Wilson, T. W. 1985)

While peace is different from the self-sacrificial “Altruism”, it is everyone making simultaneous sacrifice for each other. (Aktaş, Ö. 2012)

In addition, treaties, which are the seals of war and peace, have always existed in the history. While it only takes one word, one action to start a war; it may take years to sign a treaty that creates and ensures the continuation of a peace environment. Peace theorists point out that there are three ways to achieve peace: First one is to protect peace, second one is to make peace, and the third is to construct peace. Protecting peace relies on power, making peace is possible by finding a solution between parties. The most important aspect of this is treaties. Building peace can be possible by making peace a desirable value in the minds of the students. (Safran, M. -Aktaş Ö. 2013)

This is where the history lesson comes into play. History lesson is one of the most fundamental lessons which prepares the individual to social life, makes them an active member of the society in which they live, and teach them their fundamental rights and responsibilities by teaching them their past. (Yahşi, I.-Keleş, H. 2013)

The Place of Wars in History Textbooks:

When history textbooks are evaluated in our country, they do not differ from history textbooks written in the past years in terms of approaching events. In ideological terms a deviation from past years is not observed. Discussions such as the definition of war or the causes of wars have not been included in the history textbooks. However, it is true that there are great differences in the method and the technique of the expression of the subjects. Various methods, techniques and visuals were used in discussing the wars. Photographs, illustrations, propaganda posters, miniatures, maps, time strips, cartoons, newspaper reports, statistics, figures and graphics, poems were used extensively while discussing wars. Moreover, while the wars were being narrated, many citations were made from academic and literary works. Activities such as using first-hand resources and resorting to the memories of people witnessed the war were used in the narration of wars. (Aktaş, Ö. 2013).

Since the early ages of history, wars have affected our literature, our art, and our architecture “Many words that are in our literature today were woven in the factory of wars. Our materials, our social life, our habits, our industry and our characters have been affected by wars, which means that many elements of wars are inheritors of wars” (Falls, C. 1990).

The relation between history and war have been walking together since the beginning of

mankind. There are reasons for war, types of wars, results of war, and there is the war itself. War is not just the struggle between two armies. It is the struggle between two nations. There are heroes, commanders, soldiers and the people in war. In addition, there is strategy, weapon technology, tactics, time-space skills, and knowledge of psychology. Therefore, wars are important subjects for effective and creative history educations. Students are more interested in learning history after wars. (Oruç, Ş. 2002)

In a study conducted by KöhlerValefi on high school students in Turkey, it was determined that the students were most interested in the military achievements of the Ottoman history among the seven titles recommended to them.(Tekeli, İ. 1998) In the research that Safran made with the university students, more than half of them they gave the answer "I would like to live in the period of Ascension" to the question "If you had the chance to live in the Ottoman State, what time would you like to live"? (Safran, M. Ata, B. 2006).

When wars are told, the history teacher should not discuss them by exaggerating. The clearest example to be given to this is the pre-war period German education system. History was unimportant in the education system before the wars. France was more focused on scientific studies and the social studies were deemed unimportant. With the war, the value of history teachers and students dawned on both the young and old generations. (Aktaş, Ö. 2013)

Russell stated that history must be told together with all the wars. However, the language and style to be used should be considered while discussing the war topics. When wars are taught, there should be no humiliating or elevating remarks on the values, beliefs and attitudes of the societies. (Safran, M. 2006). The advice of Ülken on teaching wars, which are historical facts, without inciting old hostilities and without increasing international tension is: "No nation can destroy historical facts, ignore the present events and deviate from objectivity."(Ülken, H.Z. 1955)

The Place of Peace (Treaties) in History Textbooks:

Peace is, by its essence, the opposite of war and conflict. The meaning and concept of peace will not be known in the social situation in which the concept of war is not practiced in concrete terms, just as the primitive tribes of Africa do not know what the concept of snow and ice means. Peace is an ideal that is desired to be realized by people in every period of time. However, the constant peace that is wished by majority of the people has never been achieved (Veysel Ç. 1998).

Peace education is of great importance for social studies and history teaching. Today, the

problems in the world have led educators to focus on peace education and conflict resolution (Paykoç, F, 1998). One of the fields suggested to keep up with the change in our world and deal with the problems is peace education or education for peace. The peace education field, which has a significant priority on social studies field or lessons, is closely related to the educational environment in the school. It is expected that in education for peace, especially collaboration, participation, mutual communication and the development of peace in the class, school, and in student-teacher relations. (Paykoç, F. 1995)

Many philosophers like Russell have argued that it is not right to teach the children a distorted history in order to achieve a peaceful future, and such an approach is wrong, and advocated that war topics should be included in history programs. The most important point here is in what way these war topics are included in the textbooks and how these topics are presented to the students by the teachers. (Russel, B. 1984)

In the aftermath of World War I, the change of educational programs and history textbooks came forward, to save history from being a battlefield in the future with the thought medium that the war has brought in. Bilateral agreements have been signed between countries to correct textbooks as the League of Nations has foreseen. In 1919 5 Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, and Denmark) have started to review their history textbooks (Dance, E. H. 1971).

The Cooperation Intellectuelle commission, which is considered to be the forerunner of UNESCO, has recommended that the elements that cause hatred and revenge between the nations to be removed from history textbooks (Safran, M. – Ata, B. 2006).

After the Second World War, the United Nations was set up to solve international disputes through peace, and subject to this organization UNESCO was established on November 16, 1945. Between 1945 and 1965, a total of 146 conferences were held on history textbook revisions (Alkan, T. 1989). Bilateral cultural agreements were signed between England and Germany in 1950 and France and Germany in 1954 in order to overcome the prejudice and revenge sentiment in the history textbooks

UNESCO's views on how history textbooks should be used as instruments of peace have been discussed from two perspectives:

1. In terms of the proportion and content of the topics in the book: History books should not only contain military and political events, but should also be a synthesis covering all aspects of the past of the societies. When discussing wars, it is necessary to talk about the reasons for wars, rather than who is to blame. The history of civilizations and cultures should

emphasize the contribution of each nation to civilization

2. In terms of the language used in the narration of the texts in the book: The history textbooks should not contain words that are humiliating, derogatory statements and words aimed at other nations. The language should be of a scientific nature, free from ethical considerations. The language should be of a scientific nature, free from ethical considerations (Ülken, H. Z. 1956).

When we look at the issue in terms of Turkey's approach to UNESCO's activities related to history textbooks; Turkey became a member of the League of Nations in 1932 and the United Nations in 1945, since its foreign policy was based on an understanding of integration into western political formations. Turkey has participated in the conferences of UNESCO with valuable social scientists and educators such as Hasan Ali Yücel, Afetİnan, Hilmi ZiyaÜlken, İbrahim Kafesoğlu (Kafesoğlu, İ. 1965).

Well, is war always bad and peace always good? While the answer of this question is controversial, it is stated in the field literature that war can be thought as an educational object and the meaning of it can transform according to the context it is addressed in. For example, the Turkish War of Independence is a positive concept in our history. While in our history, the Armistice of Mudros and the Treaty of Sèvres, which marks the conclusion of fighting against the forces in our history, are negative concepts; because the sacred values of Turkish Nation that was taken away by the Armistice of Mudros and the Treaty of Sèvres were taken back by the Turkish War of Independence. (Aktaş, Ö. 2014)

When the Lausanne Peace Treaty, which made a great contribution to peace in the aftermath of the War of Independence, is touched upon; The Lausanne Peace Treaty is a Treaty that has left its mark on history as the most important international legal document that forms the basis of the existence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Turkey. (Özdemir, A.U. 2013)

To conclude, in order to teach wars and treaties more effectively, the teaching of the treaties should preserve its traditional approach. History teachers should remember that while teaching wars and peace, they are responsible to both the nation they belong to and other societies, emphasizing peace, and emphasizing that peace is a highly important value that can be taught to students.

REFERENCES

1. Akad, M. T. (2011). *Modern Savaşın Temel Kavramları*. İstanbul: KitapYayınevi.

2. Aktaş, Ö. (2012). Propaganda Posterlerinde Savaş ve Barış Temasının İşlenişi Üzerine Öğrenci Görüşleri. Gazi Üniversitesi Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi Cilt:32 Sayı:32. Ankara.
3. Aktaş, Ö. (2013). Tarih Ders Kitaplarında Savaş Konularının Anlatımı Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme. Adıyaman Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, Adıyaman.
4. Aktaş, Ö. (2014). Tarih Derslerinde Savaş ve Antlaşma Konularının Öğretimi. Tarih Nasıl Öğretilir, II. Baskı, İstanbul.
5. Alkan, T. (1989). Siyasal Bilinç ve Toplumsal Değişim. Gündoğan Yayınları, Ankara.
6. Atatürkçülük. (1983). Genel Kurmay Yayınları, Ankara.
7. Bayat, M. (1985). Harp ve Sulh (III) Belgelerle Türk tarihi Dergisi. sayı: 5.
8. Dance, E. H. (1971). okullarda Tarihin Yeri (Çevrine O. Horasanlı) İstanbul MEB Devlet Kitapları. İstanbul.
9. Erendil, M. (1998). Savaş Stratejisi, Genel Kurmay Basımevi. Ankara.
10. Fulls, C. (1990). The place of war in history. An Inaugural Lecture, Michigan.
11. Kafesoğlu, İ. (1965). Danimarka'da Toplanan Tarih Kongresi. Türk Kültürü, Yıl:III, İstanbul.
12. More, T. (2000). Ütopia, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
13. Oruç, Ş. (2002). Ders Kitaplarında Savaş Olgusu” Türkiye Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi. sayı:10, İstanbul.
14. Özdemir, A.U. (2013). Lozan'da Başarıyı Ölçmek: Konular Bazında Bir Değerlendirme. Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi, Ankara.
15. Paykoç, F. (1995). Sosyal bilgiler Eğitiminde Çağdaş Yaklaşımlar” TED Yayınları, Ankara.
16. Paykoç, F. (1998). tarih Öğretiminde İyileştirmesine Yönelik Düşünceler. Tarih Öğretim ve Ders Kitapları. Dokuz Eylül Yayınları, İzmir.
17. Russell, B. (1984). Eğitim Üzerine. (Çeviren N. Bezel), İstanbul: Say Yayınları, İstanbul.
18. Safran, M. (2006). Tarih Eğitimi Makale ve Bildiriler. Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi, Ankara.
19. Safran, M. Aktaş, Ö. (2013). Ortaöğretim Öğrencilerinin Savaş ve Barış Kavramı ile Düşüncelerinin Çeşitli Değişkenler Açısından Değerlendirilmesi.
20. Safran, M. Ata, B. (2006). Barışçı “Tarih Öğretimi Üzerine Çalışmalar. Gazi Kitabevi, Ankara.
21. Ülken, H.Z. (1955). UNESCO ve Tarih Öğretimi. Yeni Öğretmen Dergisi, Sayı:19,

Ankara.

22. Veysal, Ç. (1998). SavaşveBarışSorununaİnsanFelsefesiAçısındanBirYaklaşım. Felsefe Logos DergisiSayı 4, İstanbul.
23. Wilson, T.W. (1985). The global environment and the quest for peace. A revulation in the scale o Things. Social Education, March, (Houstin-Texas Area)
24. Yahşi, İ. Keleş, H. (2013). TarihÖğretimindeGazeteKullanımınınçokPerspektifliğeEtkisi. KastamonuEğitimDergisi, 21 (2), Kastamonu.

Lect. ***Tonguç BAŞARAN***

Education Faculty, Trakya University
Edirne / TURKEY
E-mail: tongucb@trakya.edu.tr

Asst.Prof. Dr. ***Zerrin BALKAÇ***

Education Faculty, Trakya University
Edirne / TURKEY
E-mail: z_balkac@trakya.edu.tr