



Examination of Primary School Students' Perceptions About School Through Metaphors

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to determine primary school 4th grade students' perceptions of "school" metaphors. The study group consists of 141 fourth grade students aged 9 and 10, studying in a primary school in the Başiskele district of Kocaeli province. As a data collection tool, a demographic information form and an interview form with six semi-structured questions in line with the sub-problems of the research were used. Descriptive analysis and content analysis were used in the analysis of the data. As a result of the research, it was revealed that the students produced twenty-four different metaphors about the school, and they perceived the school more as 'Home' and 'School as a learning place'. When the results of the research were examined, it was revealed that the students had a mostly positive perception about the school.

Keywords: School perception, primary school, primary school students

1. Introduction:

Education is defined as the process of creating deliberate and desired changes in the behavior of the individual through his/her own experiences (Ertürk, 1972), teaching and learning, and preliminary efforts to provide behavior (Başar, 2003). Most of the education and training activities carried out to create behavior are carried out through schools, which are private circles established for educational purposes (Bursahoğlu, 1991). Schools show the feature of being a social system built with the aim of gaining predetermined target behaviors to students (Özdemir&Kalaycı, 2013). Students perceive school differently from adults with their unique feelings, thoughts and expectations, and due to this difference, they develop different reactions to school than expected (Çalık, 2008). Therefore, a school-bound student can be expected to have a sense of loyalty towards the educational goals of the school and to perceive the school as a positive place in this context (Özdemir&Kalaycı, 2013). Perception is defined as the process of organizing, interpreting, assimilating and making sense of the data reaching the brain through the sense organs (Karaköse, 2006). One of the purposes of using metaphors is to reveal how a concept or phenomenon is perceived (Aydın, 2011). Metaphors are defined as the transfer of meaning from one object with perceptual similarity to another (Semerci, 2007). Metaphors are seen as the most powerful mental tools that structure, direct and control ideas about the occurrence and functioning of events (Saban, 2004). According to Lakoff and Johnson (2005, cited in Eraslan, 2011), metaphor is understanding and experiencing a phenomenon/phenomenon in terms of another phenomenon/phenomenon. Therefore, metaphor is the process of establishing a link between information in the mind that allows to perceive and understand one subject from the perspective of another subject.

2. Importance of the Study:

Due to the Covid-19 epidemic, which has been effective since the second semester of the 2019-2020 academic year and has affected the whole world, students have been away from their schools for about 13 months intermittently, and they have seen their lessons as remote access. It is foreseen by the researchers that this situation may create differences in the perceptions of students about school and school staff. For this reason, the research is also important in terms of revealing the school perceptions of primary school 4th grade students who have been away from their schools for a long time. Therefore, it is thought that the research will contribute to the literature on the subject, and the findings to be obtained will contribute to the process of getting to know the student for the practitioners.

3. Purpose of the study:

The purpose of this research is to determine primary school students' perceptions of the concept of 'School' through metaphors. Therefore, the problem of the research is 'Which metaphors do primary school students explain their perceptions of the concept of 'School'?'

4. Methodology:

In this study, which will examine primary school students' perceptions of the concepts of 'school' and 'school staff', the phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research designs, was used. Phenomenology studies focus on phenomena that we are aware of but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding of. Phenomena can be encountered in various ways such as events, experiences, perceptions, orientations, concepts and situations in our daily life. However, this may not mean that we fully understand the facts. Phenomenology constitutes a suitable research ground for studies that aim to investigate phenomena that are not completely foreign to us and that we cannot fully comprehend (Şimşek&Yıldırım, 2011). In the study, a demographic information form and an interview form consisting of six semi-structured questions created by the researcher and expert opinion was used as data collection tool. In the interview form, 'School is like, because there is a semi-structured data collection statement that includes the statement?'

Content analysis technique was used in the evaluation of the data obtained in the research. The basic process in content analysis is to gather similar data within the framework of certain concepts and themes and to organize and interpret them in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım&Şimşek, 2011). The analysis of the metaphors developed by the participant students was carried out in four stages (Saban, 2009): (1) the coding and sorting stage, (2) the sample metaphor image compilation stage, (3) the category development stage, and (4) the validity and reliability stage.

5. Analysis :

Table 1.

Personal Information of the Research Group

	Status	N	%
Gender	Male	70	49,6
	Female	71	51,4
Age	9	84	59,5
	10	57	40,5

When Table 1 is examined, %49.6 of the students are boys and %51.4 of them are girls. %59.5 of the students are 9 years old and %40.5 of them are 10 years old. It can be said that the age and gender distributions of the students are close to each other.

The answers given by the students in the semi-structured form to determine their perceptions of the 'School' were examined, and the statements of 141 students who filled out the research form during the naming phase were listed in alphabetical order. Then, the second stage, the classification (elimination-purification) stage, was started. At this stage, the student expressions and the metaphors they wrote were examined under the titles of 'the subject of the metaphor', 'the source of the metaphor' and 'the relationship between the source of the metaphor and its subject', and 49 expressions were eliminated due to the inconsistency between the source-subject of the metaphor and the relationship between the two. Papers on which 92 expressions were written were processed, and 24 valid metaphors were obtained from these papers. In the third stage, the category development stage, these 24 metaphors were re-evaluated in terms of their characteristics related to the concept of school and 5 different conceptual categories were revealed. The 24 metaphors developed by the students were assigned to these 5 different conceptual categories according to their relevance. In the fourth stage, the validity and reliability of the research data, coder reliability was carried out in order to verify the thematic coding. For this, conceptual categories and 24 metaphors were given to a classroom teacher who is an expert in his field and he was asked to classify the metaphors according to their relevance under these five conceptual categories. As a result of the expert evaluation, it was revealed that the coder reliability was at a high level with 100%.

Table 2.

Metaphors Formed by Primary School Fourth Grade Students Regarding the Concept of 'School'

Table 2

Sequence	Metaphor's Name	Frequency (f)		
		Male	Female	SUM
1.	Home	17	14	31
2.	Book	6	6	12
3.	Plane	5	5	10
4.	Knowledge House	3	6	9
5.	Car	4	-	4
6.	Knowledge	3	-	3
7.	Park	1	2	3
8.	Bus	-	2	2
9.	Home	-	2	2
10.	Library	1	1	2

11.	Course	1	-	1
12.	Knowledge Book	1	-	1
13.	Precaution House	1	-	1
14.	Hell	1	-	1
15.	Game	1	-	1
16.	Love	1	-	1
17.	Candy	-	1	1
18.	Game Park	-	1	1
19.	World	-	1	1
20.	Cloud	-	1	1
21.	Shelter	-	1	1
22.	Gift	-	1	1
23.	Shopping Center	-	1	1
24.	Teacher	-	1	1
SUM		46	46	92

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that primary school students have developed 24 metaphors for the concept of school. When the frequency values of the metaphors are examined, the most repetitive metaphors are; "House" (f=31), "Book" (f=12), "plane" (f=10), "Knowledge House" (f=9) and "Car" (f=4) are metaphors. When examined according to the gender variable, female students mostly developed the metaphors of "House" (f=14), "Book" (f=6), "Knowledge House" (f=6) and "plane" (f=5). On the other hand, male students developed the metaphors of "House" (f=17), "Book" (f=6), "plane" (f=5) and "Car" (f: 4). When the number of metaphor creation is examined in general, female students (f=46) and male students (f=46) developed the same number of metaphors.

(F:10) (F:4) 6 19 (F:2) (F:1) (F:1) (F:1) (F:31) (F:2) 5 36 (F:1) Shelter (F: 1) Love (F:1) (F: 1) Gift (F:1) 5 7 Shopping Center (F:1) Park (F:3) Playground (F:1 Hell (F:1) 1 1

Table 3.

Categories of Metaphors Formed by Primary School Fourth Grade Students Regarding the Concept of 'School', Type of Metaphor, Number of Metaphors

Categories	Metaphor	Metaphor Type (f)	Metaphor Number (f)
School as a Learning Place	Book (F:12) Knowledge (F:3) Course (F: 1) Knowledge Book (F:1)	Knowledge House (F:9) Library (F:2) Teacher (F:1)	7 29
Shapely School	Plane (F:10) Bus (F:2) Cloud (F:1)	Car (F:4) World (F:1) Sugar (F:1)	6 19
School as an Environment of Love and Trust	Home (F:31) Precaution House (F:1) ove (F:1)	House(F:2) Shelter (F: 1)	5 36
School as a Fun Environment	Play (F: 1) Shopping Center (F:1) Game Park (F:1)	Gift (F:1) Park (F:3)	5 7
School as a Negative Environment	Hell (F:1)		1 1

As seen in Table 3, when the metaphors created by primary school students were categorized according to their similarity aspects, 5 conceptual categories were obtained.

In the category of 'School as a Learning Place', which is the first category in which students produce the most metaphors, students are associated with school as a learning environment. 'Book' (f=12), 'Knowledge' (f=3), 'Course' (f=1), 'Knowledge House' (f=9), 'Knowledge Book' (f=1), Library (f=2), and Teacher (f=1). Below are some statements of the students regarding this category:

Female13. School is like a book because like a book it is full of information.

Male16. School is like a house of knowledge, because it informs us about certain subjects.

Male1. School is like knowledge because it teaches me a lot.

Female35. School is like a library because it is full of information.

In the category of "School as a Form", which is the second category in which students produce metaphors the most, students associated school as a formal environment. 'Airplane' (f=10), 'Car' (f=4), 'Bus' (f=2), 'Earth' (f=1), 'Cloud' (f=1) and 'Candy' (f=1). It is seen that it consists of 6 metaphors (f=1). Below are some statements of the students regarding this category:

Female4. School is like an airplane because it makes us fly as we give information.

Male 43. School is like a car because it takes me to all knowledge.

Female14. School is like a bus because it takes us to knowledge.

In the category of 'School as an Environment of Love and Trust', the third category in which students produced the most metaphors, students associated school as an environment of love and trust. There are 5 categories of this category as 'House' (f=31), 'Home' (f=2), 'Precaution House' (f=1), 'Shelter' (f=1) and 'Love' (f=1). appears to be a metaphor. Below are some statements of the students regarding this category:

Female18. School is like home, because we have fun, we study, we play with friends.

Female8. School is like a home because they take care of you, they love you.

Male35. The school is like a precaution house, because there are all kinds of protection in our school.

Female26. School is like a shelter because it shelters us.

In the fourth category, 'School as an Entertaining Environment', which is the fourth category in which students produce metaphors the most, students associated school as a fun environment. This category includes 'Park' (f=3), 'Game' (f=1), 'Shopping Center' (f=1), 'Park' (f=1) and 'Game Park' (f=1). It is seen that it consists of 5 metaphors. Below are some statements of the students regarding this category:

Male 12. School is like a game because it's fun.

Female27. School is like a gift because it teaches us.

Female 30. School is like a mall because we shop with information.

In the "School as a Negative Environment" category, which is the fifth category in which students produce metaphors the most, students associated school as a negative environment. It is seen that this category consists of 1 metaphor, 'Hell' (f=1). Below is the student's statement regarding this category:

Male 41. School is like hell because it has a problem.

6. Conclusion:

According to the findings obtained in the research, primary school students produced twenty-four different metaphors for the concept of school and as a result of conceptual coding, primary school students' school was 'School as a learning place', 'School as a formal', 'School as an environment of love and trust', 'School as a fun environment'. ' and 'School as a negative environment' in five different categories. Students mostly used the metaphor of 'Home' for school. When the metaphors produced by the students were examined, they produced metaphors such as 'Book', 'Airplane', 'Knowledge House' and 'Car'. Therefore, it can be said that students' school perceptions vary. In Ateş's (2016) research, the students' school is 'Nest'; In the studies of Tut, Kiroğlu, and Bayraktar (2018), and Akan and Yarım (2019), students mostly referred to school as 'Home'. Therefore, the findings of the study are similar to the findings of Tut, Kiroğlu and Bayraktar (2018), Ateş (2016), and Akan and Yarım (2019). As a result of the research, the majority of the students expressed the concept of 'School' under the category of 'School as a Learning Place'. Students see school as a place of learning. Similarly, in the research of Öztapak (2017) and Akan and Yarım (2019), students see school as a teaching and developing living space. Therefore, the findings of the study are similar to the findings of Öztapak (2017) and Akan and Yarım (2019). Students see the concept of school as a warm environment and as an instructive and developing environment. From this result, it can be said that the perceptions of the students towards the school are positive. In this study, primary school fourth grade students' perceptions of school and school staff were examined. Further work can be carried out at other grade levels. Negative expressions are very few in the perceptions of students about school and school staff. Considering the age and mental development period of primary school students, it can be said that school and school staff have an important place in the students' world. Therefore, practitioners can create a more functional education-teaching environment by considering this situation of students.

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