

Full Length Research Paper

Primary school students' metaphors about the concept of 'peace'

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Abstract

The general purpose of this study is to determine the perceptions of primary school 4th and 5th graders about "peace" through use of metaphors. This study has been conducted on voluntary basis and according to the grounded theory, one of the qualitative research designs. Work group of this study contains 79 students studying at İbni Sina Primary School, located in the province of Tokat. This study was conducted as a class activity during the art lesson in the 14th week of the spring term of 2008-2009. When the metaphors students used for peace were analyzed at the end of the study, students were identified to associate positive meanings with peace. Besides, a consistency was recorded between the three things that students mentioned as reminding of peace and the figures they drew to express peace. The first three things associated with peace were "love" (love/joy), "respect for others' opinions", and "reconciliation", respectively. "Happiness", "fraternity", "friendship", "tolerance", "Ataturk", "flowers", and "feelings" were counted among the first ten concepts related with peace.

Keywords: Metaphor, peace, primary school.

INTRODUCTION

Recent scenes of violence, conflict and war throughout the whole world underpins the significance of concepts such as democracy, human rights, freedom, and peace on both national and international grounds. The aim of educational institutions is also to teach these concepts to students and to raise individuals who have internalized these concepts and converted them into values. Apart from educational institutions, there are also other bodies such as means of mass media, families, various governmental and non-governmental organizations, and some religious foundations that exert effort towards the gain of these concepts. All these concepts are interwoven and complementary; therefore, they cannot be separated from each other.

Education is one of the most vital components of the efforts for the reign of social peace. Establishing peace within a society through measures other than education may be successful in the short run; however, such achievements are hardly likely to prevail in the long run (Yılmaz, 2003). The concept of peace and all others in peace education should be taught to both children and

young adults in order to replace increasing acts of violence throughout the entire planet with peace culture, and to foster commonalities rather than discrepancies among societies. Peace can grow in such a society that communicates, cooperates, and values differences (Matthews, 2002:29). Review of literature shows that many children have concrete opinions regarding the concept of war while they hold vague and weak thoughts about peace, and they think that peace is simply the opposite of war. Furthermore, peace is generally thought as weak, passive, boring, and bland (Matthews, 2002: 29).

Establishing and improving peace culture through educational endeavors is one of the things in the to-do list in order to form an educational understanding furnished with peace and negotiation; to improve and maintain both economic and social growth; to engage in activities of raising individuals that respect human rights; to facilitate democratic involvement and to equalize men and women; and to settle peace. (UNESCO, 2002: 74-76). Peace is both the prerequisite and an indispensable part of the process of putting human rights into practice precisely (Kamarajk; Aktan, 2005). Human rights are the assemble of all rights shared by all humans due to just being a human and requirement of human honor without

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any discrimination based on religion, language, race, gender, economic, or social status. These rights are the common values of and common ideals that need to be grown by all people (Uygun, 1996: 6). Rights and freedoms base themselves on various reasons, and follow a particular pattern of formation. Laws first emerge as a desire, want, or wish, and then become solidified in the system of rights. This holds true almost for every right and freedom that we share today. Conversion of thoughts about freedom into legal laws and the feature of replication of these laws in terms of new rights can be tracked down along the historical course of development. (Kabaoğlu, 1996: 5). Individuals do not become conscious by only learning about their rights, but they also need to use them in their daily lives (Gülmez, 1996: 2). Students should be equipped with the potential of getting actively involved in activities about human rights, peace, and development in their future community lives (Kepenekçi, 2000: 13).

Metaphor is to understand or experience something from the point of something else (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 5). Metaphors help us re-formulate and/or review an object or a concept from different angles by linking it to concepts of other semantic fields (Taylor, 1984: 103). According to the contemporary metaphor theory within cognitive semantics, metaphors are not only observed in language, but also there lies a metaphorical structure under the systems of concepts that we make use of during thinking and acting. In other words, contemporary metaphor analysis does not view metaphor only as a material of thought, a form of human comprehension, or as a figure of speech; but rather, as a "figure of thought" (Lakoff ve Johnson 1980). Recently, the concept of metaphor has been regarded as a strong mental device that one can utilize in understanding or explaining an abstract, complicated, or institutional subject (Yob, 2003). Drawings are not only used as a criterion to learn about a child's psycho-pedagogical wellbeing, but they are also beneficial as a means of expression that reflects a child's intelligence, personality, and features of his/her immediate environment. A child either reflects a part of self or tries to convey his/her opinions, feelings, and attitudes through drawings. Thus, drawing is a projective and ideal technique to get to know the inner world of a child (Yavuzer, 1995).

Purpose

The general purpose of this study is to determine the perceptions of primary school 4th and 5th graders about "peace" through use of metaphors. Answers to the following questions have been sought in order to achieve the general purpose.

1. Through what metaphors, do primary school students reflect their perceptions about "peace"?
2. What aspects of peace do the metaphors developed

by students mainly focus on?

3. Is there a correlation between the ages of students and the metaphors they have developed about peace?
4. Is there a significant relation between the metaphors students produce and the first three things that come to their minds upon hearing the word "peace"?
5. According to students, what are the three factors impeding peace in the world?

METHOD

Work Group

This study has been conducted on voluntary basis and according to the grounded theory, one of the qualitative research designs. In grounded theory, the researcher elicits the theory embedded/grounded in the data set during data collection or analysis, and s/he can reach or develop new concepts and theories until the study has been completed (Aksoy, 2005). Besides, it is also possible to define this method as developing a theory based on the data set collected and analyzed systematically (Savenye WandRobinson, S.)

Work group of this study contains 79 students studying at İbni Sina Primary School, located in the province of Tokat.

Data Collection

This study was conducted as a class activity during the art lesson in the 14th week of the spring term of 2008-. Related art teachers were consulted for permission, and students were given 40 minutes to do the activity. During this period, students were asked to draw whatever comes to their minds upon hearing the word "peace". Each student finished his/her drawing under the supervision of one researcher by using his/her own materials and through any technique they wanted (such as watercolor, gouache, pastel, crayon, etc.). Furthermore, students who volunteered to draw pictures were given a questionnaire to collect some demographic information. The questionnaire included questions about grade, gender, age, family's economic and educational status, and number of siblings. Besides, they were also asked to name three things that they immediately think of upon hearing the word "peace", and three other things that impede peace settlement in the world. The basic data set of this study is the pile of drawings and writings done by students in relation with the concept of peace.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

All data to be evaluated were sequenced according to alphabetical order, and the number and frequency of

Table 1a. *Distribution of Participating Students according to Gender*

Gender Distribution	Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
Male	43	54,4
Female	36	45,6
Total	79	100

Table 1b. *Distribution of Participating Students according to Grade*

Grade Distribution	Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
4 th Grade	37	46,8
5 th Grade	42	53,2
Total	79	100

Table 1c. *Distribution of Participating Students according to Age*

Age Distribution	Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
Age 10	32	40,5
Age 11	27	34,2
Age 12	20	25,3
Total	79	100

Table 1d. *Distribution of Participating Students according to Recognizing the Peace Symbol*

Distribution of Answers	Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	13	16,5
No	66	83,5
Total	79	100

students representing each metaphor were calculated. Subsequently, each metaphor developed by students were examined to figure out if they were helpful to grasp the concept of peace by scrutinizing students' works to see if there was a specific metaphor developed frequently and obviously. Later, metaphors that would serve this aim were included in the study for data analysis.

Assist Prof. Kemal Türker—a professor at Gaziosmanpasa University, Faculty of Education, Department of Fine Arts—supported us with his help during the interpretation of the drawings completed by the students about the concept of peace.

Demographic data set of the study was analyzed by using SPSS 10.0.0. Frequency and percentage analysis were completed for demographic information. For the pictures students had drawn, open coding was carried out according to the concepts elicited from the drawings; and the evaluation schedule was prepared and scored in a table format by using Microsoft Excel 2003. All data

were analyzed through content analysis.

FINDINGS

This part presents demographic information, metaphors developed by students about peace, and findings and interpretation about the pictures that they drew.

Students' Demographic Information

Table 1 below displays information regarding students' gender, age, and grade. 54.4 % of students who participated in the study are male while 45.6% of them are female.

46.8% of students who took part in the study are 4th graders whereas 53.2% of them are 5th graders. 40,5%, 34, 2%, and 25,3%' of students who contributed to this

Table 2. Metaphors Students Developed about the Concept of Peace

Metaphors		Metaphors	f
Love/Joy	45	Problem free life	1
Respect for others' opinions	31	Comfort	1
To reconcile	25	Nature	1
Happiness	19	White Flag	1
Fraternity	17	To be understanding	1
Friendship	15	Not to upset	1
Tolerance	14	Sincerity	1
Ataturk	13	Not to damage	1
Flower	5	Not to curse	1
Feeling	5	Not to quit in a huff	1
Name	4	A nice day	1
Human/Humanity	4	War free life	1
Solidarity	3	Togetherness	1
Drawing	3	Salvation	1
Not to fight	3	To speak	1
Festival	3	End of war	1
To apologize	2	To simile	1
To help	2	Equality	1
Beauty	2	To get on well	1
Child	2	Order	1

study are 10, 11, and 12 years old, respectively. A majority of students (83.5%) stated that they were unaware of the peace symbol, yet 16.5% of them expressed that they knew the symbol (table 2).

When students were asked to name three things that come to their minds upon hearing the word 'peace', majority of answers (45 students) indicated *love/joy*. *Respect for others' opinions* (36 students) and *to reconcile* (25 students) were the ones that took the second and the third place among the answers, respectively. Other common concepts that students pointed were *happiness*, *fraternity*, *friendship*, *tolerance* and *Ataturk*. What is interesting here is to see that students associated the concept of peace with a person along with others such as concepts, objects, and human relations in general. Results showed that the founder of Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, is a figure that reminds students of peace. We can infer that one the famous sayings of Ataturk, which is "*Peace at home, peace in the world*", has been influential over students. Reardon identified the current field of peace education as cooperation, resolution of conflicts, being violence-free, human rights, social justice, world resources, global environment, and multi-cultural understanding (Brock-Utne, 2000,133). Peace culture is an understanding that endorses living together and sharing based on equality, justice, democracy, human rights, tolerance, and solidarity. Peace culture is against violence; takes precautions by investigating the roots of conflicts; tries to

overcome the problems through dialogue and one-to-one communication; struggles to make sure that every single person is using their rights, and joining the developmental process of the society; and utilizes cultural, artistic and educational means to realize these goals (<http://www.iksev.org>).

Analysis of the drawings done by students to reflect peace indicated that most of the time flowers, world, child, and heart were the figures chosen by students to express peace; besides, they preferred to use warm colors (red, orange, and yellow) that attract people. Another result of the analysis is that almost all the pictures drawn by students were consistent with the three things that came to their minds for the concept of peace.

Figure 1 and 2 display that the artists (age 12 and 11, respectively) chose to use world, child and heart figures to reflect peace on their piece of art. One can easily deduce that the heart figure symbolizes *love*, which is the most common one among the answers provided for the three things occurring in students' minds upon hearing the word peace; and this pinpoints the relation between the answers and the drawings. Furthermore, 35% of students drew the planet earth to reflect peace in their pictures. This proves that students desire peace to be prevalent not only in their homeland, but also throughout the whole planet. It is possible to conclude that although they do not witness any of them, children are well aware of the wars taking place around the world; and since they do not want any person to experience the violence of



Figure 1. Male, 12, class:5



Figure 2. Female; 11 class:4

war, they drew the world in their pictures.

A close-up to the two drawings reveals that flowers, heart, and children are the most eye-catching figures. 37% of drawings have heart figure on them, and 45% and 63% of them have figures of flowers and children, respectively. There seems to be a consistency between the figures expressing peace in these drawings and the three things that remind of peace. Figure 4 is an expression of “to reconcile”, which was counted among the three things reminding of peace by 25 students. To reconcile is verbalized by two little girls in a dialogue format as “*My dear friend, I love you so much. We shall be friends forever and shall never be angry at each other*”, “*You’re right my dear friend. Let’s never get angry at each other, and let’s stay friends forever; I love you*” Again in figure 5, we see that peace is pictured through

a figure of heart and happy children playing around. The size of the heart is directly proportional with the amount of love. What’s more, there is no wall in the picture; one can see the inside of the house that has flowers. Seeing both the inside and outside of the house makes the picture transparent (Türker, 2005, 14). The figure of Ataturk in figure 6 is associated with Ataturk’s saying about peace, “*Peace at home peace in the world*”.

Figures 7 and 8 can be thought of as relating to “not to fight”, which is included among the three things reminding peace. In figure 7, we see soldiers and flags of two countries, and the commanders are sitting around a table and signing the peace treaty. In the first part of figure 8, there are two figures of man fighting with each other with their guns in their hands on a dark ground; which symbolizes the negative feelings that the student has



Figure 3. female:11:class:4



Figure 4. female:11:class:4



Figure 5. Female: 11 class:4



Figure 6. Male: 12 class:5



Figure 7. Male: 11: class:4

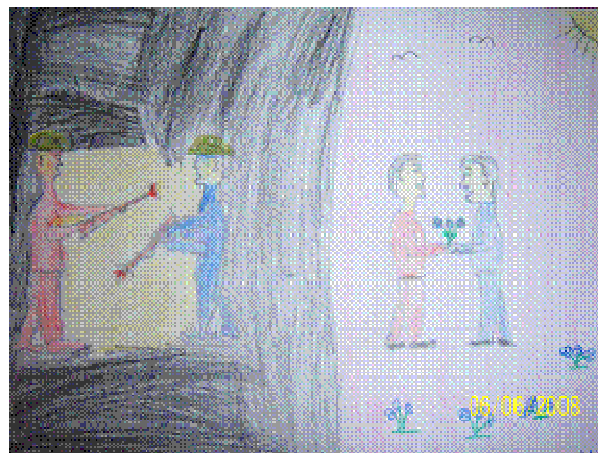


Figure 8. Male: 10: class: 4

Table 3. *Three things that impede peace in the world according to students' opinions*

Metaphors	F	Metaphors	f
Fight	36	Jealousy	2
Evil deeds	26	Rudeness	2
War	24	Polluted World	2
To quit in a huff	15	To be drunk	1
Intolerance	12	Anxiety	1
Disrespectfulness	10	Pessimism	1
Passion	9	Dangerous settings	1
Terrorist	9	Not to speak	1
Lovelessness	7	To murder	1
Hostility	7	Humiliate	1
Theft	5	Hate	1
Money	5	To Damage	1
Curse	4	To drink alcohol	1
Discrimination	4	Indulgence	1
Selfishness	4	To lie	1
Human	4	Illiteracy	1
Insecurity	3	Bad people	1
Ban	3	Division	1
Inability to share	3	Not to draw pictures	1
Inequality	3	Revenge	1
Vendetta	3	Huff	1
Land	2	Calumny	1
Stinginess	2	Pride	1
To break heart	2	Being unhelpful	1
Rage	2		
Unhappiness	2	Lack of Fraternity	1
Chaos	2	Injustice	1

against the war. In the second part of the same drawing, there are figures of two people handing flowers to each other on a beautiful and sunny day, expressed through warm colors; and this, once again, indicates that peace is associated with fraternity and flowers.

Table 3 depicts the answers provided by the students for the three things that impede settlement of peace throughout the whole world.

Three things that students mentioned as impediments before settlement of peace throughout the whole world were *fight* (36 sts), *evil deeds* (26 sts), and *war* (24 sts). Other high frequency factors that students counted as obstacles for world peace were *to quit in huff*, *intolerance*, *disrespectfulness*, *passion*, *terrorist*, *lovelessness*, and *hostility*. Students mainly used the opposite concepts of the ones that they preferred to tell peace when they counted the impediments standing before peace establishment.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

When the metaphors students used for peace were analyzed at the end of the study, students were identified to associate positive meanings with peace. Besides, a consistency was recorded between the three things that students mentioned as reminding of peace and the figures they drew to express peace. The first three things associated with peace were "love" (love/joy), "respect for others' opinions", and "reconciliation", respectively. "Happiness", "fraternity", "friendship", "tolerance", "Ataturk", "flowers", and "feelings" were counted among the first ten concepts related with peace.

When students were asked to name three factors that have adverse effects on peace settlement all over the world, the first three answers were "fight", "evil deeds", and "war" respectively. Among the other high frequency obstacles in front of establishing peace everywhere were

“to quit in huff”, “intolerance”, “disrespectfulness”, “passion”, “lovelessness”, and “hostility”.

Generally, the answers provided by the students were either similar to each other or to peace. Students who took part in the study were 10, 11, and 12 years old.

Considering that ages between 6-12 and 7-11 are the last phases of concrete operations stage (Ulusoy, 2002, 50), there is solid reason to believe that students conveyed the meanings they created in their minds truly.

In conclusion, findings of this study have indicated that metaphors are strong tools that can be used to elicit students' personal perceptions regarding concepts related with education and instruction, just like peace. Furthermore, creating metaphors of their own helps students improve their mental skills.

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