A Metaphor Analysis on the "School Security" Perceptions of Elementary School Students

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Abstract

The main objective of this research is to determine the perception of elementary school students on school security by means of metaphors. In order to achieve this objective, the participants were asked to write down their metaphor on the "school security". Raw data obtained by completing sentences such as "I think the school security is like... Because..." were studied according to content analysis and interpreted with descriptive analysis approach. Metaphors created were associated with a particular theme depending on the point of view of the participants and 11 (primary school 6, secondary school 5) conceptual categories were found in total. As a result of this process, the school security categories found for the 4th-grade primary school students are as follows: *(1) Observing concept, (2) Safe place, (3) Disciplinary tool, (4) Protective element, (5) Productive concept, and (6) Freedom prohibiter*. The school security categories found for the 8th-grade secondary school students are as follows: *(1) Protective element, (2) Factor increasing safety, (3) Safe place, (4) Place restricting freedom, and (5) Productive concept*. When the distribution of metaphors within each category was analyzed, it was found that the perception on school security is positive while their perception on the safety applications is negative.

1.Introduction

Introduce the problem

Today, school security has gained a characteristic maturing by the social and intellectual development process and being affected by the transformations in the socio-economic structure.   School security aspects and strategic objectives of schools in this regard recall the safe school. Developing a set of actions related to physical, social, and emotional safety in schools by necessity puts forth the need to handle the school security comprehensively (Diaz-Vicario, 2017; Arslan,2018). The concept of "safe" in schools can only be meaningful if the school stakeholders regard the safe school as a

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special environment supporting physical, emotional, and social life both individually and collectively.

A general definition of a safe school is a supportive description aiming to realize the school's educational mission (Butcher & Manning, 2005). Mayer and Cornell (2010) state that the most common and attention-grabbing aspects of school security in the literature are the physical, psychological, environmental, and social aspects. School security is all about the processes and functions pertaining to the school. The school structure, rules, attitude and relations, education process, the school building's structural design are the key elements of creating an effective and safe school environment (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, 2016).

Since a safe environment in schools is a prerequisite for effective education, "safe school" has always been one of the primary themes being an interest and concern for education society. In Turkey, this issue is typically handled within the framework of physical safety and public order concepts organizationally and administratively. When research on school security is considered, this subject has increasingly become of interest in national and international platforms. Research aiming to describe and analyze actions supporting school security in education institutions highlight the fact that each stakeholder within the education administration should get involved to ensure safe environments (Butcher & Manning, 2005; Çetinkaya, 2009; Gül, 2013; Xaba, 2014; Yıldız Akyol, 2015; Diaz-Vicario, 2017).

Within the scope of school security in Turkey, a wide range of tools has been produced for developing school security and furthermore, protective security measure in schools has gained importance. Health, transportation, security systems interacting with the education system and works carried out on this subject by local administrations draw attention. "Cooperation for Building Safer Schools and School Environment" study carried out by the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Ministry of National Education can be given as an example. When the results of national and international research are analyzed, school security measures are brought up to the agenda of education systems.

In the literature and researches conducted, views and perceptions of students at different teaching levels on school security are evaluated. In this sense, metaphoric perceptions of elementary school students on the subject are analyzed with the thought that they may get bored of writing down or giving long speeches to express their view.

Metaphors are everywhere in communication and have meaning for students (Creed & McIlveen, 2018). By metaphor, students associate new information with their knowledge by integrating them into the existing scheme on their mind. As a teaching aid, metaphors create an environment where information can be retained for a long term and form the longest-term knowledge which is committed to the memory. With this aspect, metaphors are a mental tool ensuring interrelation among mental schemes of an individual. They make such interrelation through a series of cognitive processes occurring in the mind (Arslan & Bayrakçı, 2006). Within this framework, metaphorical

thinking and learning can be regarded as an approach aiming to develop students' creative and critical thinking skills.

Considering this fact, the main objective of this research is to reveal the metaphoric perception of elementary school students on school security. In parallel with this purpose, the following questions were raised:

1. What is the metaphoric meaning of *school security* concept for the students?

2. What are the emotional perceptions of the students in terms of metaphors they attribute to the *school security* concept?

3. Which metaphor categories do the metaphors created fall into when their common attributes are considered?

2.Method

The Design of the Research

Utilizing qualitative research methods, this research aiming to determine the perception of elementary school students on the school security through metaphors was carried out in accordance with phenomenological research design. Phenomenological research design aims to determine differences regarding perceptions and phenomena recognized by being handled in their natural environment from a realistic and holistic point of view but not known comprehensively (Yıldırım & Şimşek 2008).

Study Group

Study group of this research consists of 137 students studying in the 4th grade in a primary school and 8th grade in a secondary school in Kırıkkale in the fall semester of the 2018-2019 school year.

Table 1. Personal Information About the Participants

Gender		Grade		Total
Female	**Male**	**Primary School, 4th Grade**	**Secondary School, 8th Grade**	
74	63	75	62	137
54%	46%	55%	45%	100%

Table 1 shows that out of 137 participants, 75 (55%) are female and 62 (45%) are male. 75 (55%) of the participants are the 4th-grade students while 62 (45%) of them are the 8th-grade students. The participants consist of senior students of both school type. In accordance with the research study ethics, instead of their names, a coding system were adopted for the presentation of the data consisting of codes from *İ 1* to *İ 75* for 4th-grade elementary school students and codes from *O 1* to *O 62* for 8th-grade secondary school students

Data Collection and Analysis

For the data collection, a form with incomplete sentences such as "I think the school security is like... Because... " was used to allow students to write down metaphors they attribute to "school security". The forms where the participants were asked to write down the first metaphor they think about and the justification of that metaphor was used as the basic data source. Data collected by means of these forms were analyzed in four stages as follows *(a) Analytical description and coding, (b) Sample metaphor image compilation, (c) Theme (category) development, and (d) Validity reliability* (Bilgin, 2014). Qualitative data obtained from the analysis were studied according to content analysis and interpreted with descriptive analysis approach.

a- Analytical description and coding: First, when the forms were collected, they were reviewed by the researchers one by one and 67 forms with missing data (with metaphor but without justification, with multiple metaphors, telling stories happened in the school, empty forms, etc.) were excluded from the research scope. Thereafter, metaphors and related justification expressions obtained by means of forms were ordered alphabetically. The metaphors were reviewed one more time and ordered again, and the ones with the same meaning (such as "jail", "prison", "police station", "station", etc.) were collected under the title of the outnumbering one. At this stage, it was determined that the participants developed 54 metaphors (26 from the 4th-grade students, 28 from the 8th-grade students).

b- Sample metaphor image compilation: Alphabetically ordered metaphors were evaluated by considering their subject, source, and the relation between the subject and the source. Afterwards, "sample metaphor expressions" were chosen in accordance with each theme. Therefore, a "sample metaphor list" was formed after the metaphors were compiled. Based on this metaphor list, a specific category was created in terms of bringing up the school security concept to the agenda. Information about the individual producing the metaphor image was given in parentheses with coding at the end of the metaphor expression.

c- Theme (category) development: Themes were formed for the metaphors by taking into consideration the relationship between the subject and the source. Each metaphor created by the participants was associated with a theme depending on the point of view of the participants on the "school security" and 11 (primary school 6, secondary school 5) conceptual categories were found in total.

d- Validity reliability: To verify whether the metaphors collected under conceptual categories obtained during the research represent the relevant conceptual category or not, five experts were asked to offer their consideration. Accordingly, the experts were given the list of alphabetically ordered metaphor images and the list of attributes of the conceptual category. The experts were asked to match the two lists to cover each and all metaphors. Afterwards, the matches made by the researcher and the ones made by the experts were compared. In these comparisons, the reliability of the research was put forth with the formula (Reliability = agreement/agreement + disagreement X 100) by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 64) by determining the number of agreements and

disagreements. According to the coding control made to this research to determine internal consistency, a reliability ratio of **.93** was provided within the scope of agreement study among encoders.

3.Findings

Findings of the research carried out to reveal the perception of elementary school student participants (4th-grade primary school students, 8th-grade secondary school students) regarding the "school security" concept by means of metaphors are given below.

Views of 75 students from the 4th-grade primary school on the "school security" were analyzed under two titles: (1) Metaphors Formed by the Participants on the School Security and (2) Metaphor Categories Developed by the Participants. Findings obtained can be revealed as follows:

1. *Metaphors Formed by the Participants on the School Security*

26 metaphors formed by the study group on the school security are alphabetically given in Table 2 with their frequency distributions.

Table 2. Metaphors Created for the School Security Concept of 4th Grade Primary School Students

Metaphor code	Metaphor	f	%	Metaphor code	Metaphor	f	%
1	family	4	5.4	14	protection	3	4
2	mother	3	4	15	Controlled passing	1	1.4
3	owl	3	4	16	protective security	17	22.7
4	home	4	5.4	17	dog	2	2.8
5	Gargamel	1	1.4	18	cave	1	1.4
6	eye	1	1.4	19	watch person	2	2.8
7	jail	2	2.8	20	teacher	2	2.8
8	hospital	2	2.8	21	robot	2	2.8
9	shield	1	1.4	22	policeman	4	5.4
10	camera	4	5.4	23	city wall	1	1.4
11	gate keeper	2	2.8	24	hawk	2	2.8
12	police station	5	6.7	25	traffic security	1	1.4
13	ant	4	5.4	26	aunt Yeliz	1	1.4

When Table 2 is considered, it can be said that the study group developed 26 metaphors in total for the "school security". 22.7% (f=17) of the participants said the

"school security" brings to mind "protective security". This metaphor is followed by "police station" (f=5) with 6.7%. Metaphors of "family", "home", "camera", "ant", and "policeman" have a frequency level of 5.4% (f=4). Other metaphors in Table 2 were developed with low frequency. However, of these metaphors, "owl" (4%), "dog" (2.8%), "robot" (2.8%), and "aunt Yeliz" (1.49%) are very interesting.

2- *Metaphor Categories Developed by the Participants*

Metaphors developed by the 4th-grade primary school student participants were collected under 6 categories (themes) among themselves. Metaphor categories developed by the 4th-grade students and their distribution are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Metaphorical Perception Categories for the School Concept of 4th Grade Primary School Students

Categories		Metaphors	Metaphor	f	%
1-	Observing concept	Owl (3), camera (4), eye (1), hawk (2)	4	10	13.4
2-	Safe place	Home (4), cave (1), city wall (1), police station (5)	4	11	14.6
3-	Disciplinary tool	traffic security (1), controlled passing (1)	2	2	2.6
4-	Protective element	Protection (3), mother (3), gate keeper (2), family (4), teacher (2), watch person (2), dog (2), shield (1), protective security (17), aunt Yeliz (1), policeman (4), hospital (2)	12	41	57.4
5-	Productive concept	Ant (4), robot (2)	2	6	8
6-	Freedom prohibiter	Jail (2), Gargamel (1)	2	3	4
		Total	**26**	**75**	**100**

When Table 3 is considered, it can be said that 26 metaphors developed by the participants were collected under 6 main categories. These are all related to the school security as follows: *(1) Observing concept, (2) Safe place, (3) Disciplinary tool, (4) Protective element, (5) Productive concept, and (6) Freedom prohibiter*. When Table 3 is considered, the school security *as a Protective element* is the category which was developed the most with 43 metaphors (57.4%). Sample expressions by the participants and the distribution of metaphors from each category field are as follows:

Category 1: The category of **"Observing concept"** consists of four metaphors developed by 10 participants. The following metaphors are considered under this category when their common attributes and simile aspects are taken into consideration. Sample expressions by the participants were selected according to their frequency level and the ones with high frequency in this category are given below:

"They watch us like an owl; they see who is trying to skip the school and stop them. Some places in the school are dangerous, just like the places where owls make their nests" (İ 12).

"There are camera systems all around the school. This ensures our safety" **(İ 69).**

Category 2: The category of *"Safe place"* consists of four metaphors developed by 11 participants. In this category, the metaphor samples with high frequency are given below:

"Teachers are like my family. Security staff is the same. The principal and the deputy principal care about us just like their own children" **(İ 7).**

"It has a huge yard just like a police station. Its building is huge. That is why it looks like a police station when you look from outside but it's a school inside. The school has safety bars and cameras" **(İ 38).**

Category 3: The category of ***"Disciplinary tool"*** consist of two metaphors developed by two participants:

"We are controlled while entering the school and crossing the road. If this is not controlled, someone may come to the school with a knife and hurt us during such disorder" **(İ 1)**.

"There are rules in the school just like the traffic rules" **(İ 13).**

Category 4: The category of ***"Protective element"*** consists of 12 metaphors developed by 43 participants. Having the highest frequency level (22.7%) within the research, the metaphor of "protective security" falls into this category. When the justifications of this metaphor are analyzed, similar data is observed. These data bring to mind the "protective security measures" applications in schools.

"The school should be safe. For example, portable stuff should be fixed. First aid kid is a must, any kind of measure should be taken to avoid accidents" **(İ 46).**

"Our family protects and care about us, they discourage us from bad behavior. They help us find the right thing to do. We don't have our family at school, but our teachers are like our family" **(İ 28).**

"The policeman cares about people's security. They protect people's lives in traffic. That is why I think school security is like a policeman" **(İ 49).**

"She is blond, kind and sincere; she likes playing with us and does this duty very well. Our school's security staff looks like my aunt Yeliz" **(İ 58).**

Category 5: The category of ***"Productive concept"*** consist of two metaphors developed by six participants:

"At school, our teachers, the security lady and we as the students work like ants. Just like ants, we are always ready to help with our school's security" **(İ 25).**

She always works to protect us and ensures our safety, that is why I said she is just like a robot" **(İ 45).**

Category 6: The category of ***"Freedom prohibiter"*** consist of two metaphors developed by three participants:

"We get bored because we have a 30-minute break for the lunchtime. During this break, I get anxious and feel like I'm not free" **(İ 42).**

"The school distress us just like the way Gargamel does to the Smurfs. So, we feel unhappy at the school" **(İ 14).**

Table 4. Metaphors Created for the School Security Concept of 8th Grade Secondary School Students

Metaphor code	Metaphor	f	%	Metaphor code	Metaphor	f	%
1	elder sister	1	1.6	15	Sun	1	1.6
2	family	2	3.2	16	safety set	1	1.6
3	gold	1	1.6	17	jail	11	17.7
4	mother	5	8	18	airbag	3	4.9
5	soldier	2	3.2	19	pencil case	1	1.6
6	lion	2	3.2	20	castle	1	1.6
7	father	1	1.6	21	camera	3	4.9
8	roof	1	1.6	22	police station	1	1.6
9	steel door	3	4.9	23	helmet	1	1.6
10	the state	1	1.6	24	army	2	3.2
11	custody	3	4.9	25	policeman	4	6.5
12	safety belt	1	1.6	26	superhero	1	1.6
13	home	4	6.5	27	umbrella	3	4.9
14	mouse	1	1.6	28	theatre	1	1.6

When Table 4 is considered, it can be said that the study group developed 28 metaphors in total for the "school security". 17.7% (f=11) of the participants said the "school security" brings to mind "jail". This metaphor is followed by "mother" (f=5) with 8%. In this table, the metaphor of "home" ranks the third with 6.5% (f=4). When other metaphors in Table 4 is considered, it can be seen that they were developed with low frequency. However, of these metaphors, "superhero" (3.2%), "steel door" (4.9%), "mouse" (1.6%), "theater" (1.6%), "gold" (1.6%), and "Sun" (1.6%) are very interesting.

Table 5. Metaphoric Perception Categories for the School Concept of 4th Grade Primary School Students

Categories	Metaphors	Metaphor	f	%
1-Protective element	elder sister (1), mother (5), family (2), soldier (2), mouse (1), father (1), umbrella (3), army (2), superhero (1), policeman (4), helmet (1), pencil case (1), airbag (3), roof (1), lion (2), castle (1)	16	31	50
2- Factor increasing safety	safety set (1), safety belt (1), custody (3), police station (1), steel door (3), camera (3)	6	12	19,4
3- Safe place	the state (1), home (4)	2	5	8
4- Place restricting freedom	jail (11)	1	11	17,7
5- Productive concept	Theater (1), gold (1), Sun (1)	3	3	4.9
	Total	**28**	**62**	**100**

When Table 5 is considered, it can be said that 28 metaphors developed by the participants were collected under 5 main categories. The school security categories here are as follows: *(1) Protective element, (2) Factor increasing safety, (3) Safe place, (4) Place restricting freedom, and (5) Productive concept.* When Table 5 is considered, the school security *as a Protective element* is the category which was developed the most with 16 metaphors (50%). Sample expressions by the participants and the distribution of metaphors from each category field are as follows:

Category 1: The category of **"Protective element"** consists of 16 metaphors developed by 31 participants. The following metaphors are considered as a protective element when their common attributes and simile aspects are taken into consideration. Sample expressions by the participants were selected according to their frequency level and the ones with high frequency in this category are given below:

"The more a mother loves her child, the more she wants him/her to be safe. Because children are like an angel to their family. That is why it is just like a mother protecting her children **(O 34).**

"Umbrellas protect us from the rain so, we don't get sick. The school security protects us from external factors" **(O 28).**

"The school security protects us just like an airbag protecting us at the moment of an accident" **(O 43).**

"Policemen help the public and ensure our safety. The school security protects and helps us just like a policeman. This is important for us to have a comfortable school environment. That is why the school's security reminds me of a policeman protecting the public" **(O 54).**

"The lion protects the forest to ensure his friends' safety. This is just like our principal responsible from the school security and protecting us" **(O 32).**

Category 2: The category of **"Factor increasing safety"** consists of six metaphors developed by 12 participants.

"The school is a wall you cannot go beyond. No one can go inside easily; the one who goes inside cannot go out, its doors are locked" **(O 1)**.

"If you put faith in someone, s/he doesn't betray you and keeps your secret and doesn't abuse your faith, then you can call him/her a reliable person. That is why I think we are under the custody of the school security" **(O 40).**

"The school security is all about ensuring our safety. The school is safe thanks to the cameras observing everything all day" **(O 49).**

Category 3: The category of **"Safe place"** consists of two metaphors developed by five participants:

"The school safety and discipline don't allow bad behaviors inside the school. I'm sure smoking, drinking, and use of drugs would become widespread if there was no school security or discipline. The state should take the next generation under its wings. So, I want to thank the officials for the school safety..." **(O 42).**

"The measures taken by our family at home is almost the same as the measures taken for security at the school" **(O 14).**

Category 4: The category of **"Place restricting freedom"** consists of one metaphor developed by 11 participants. This metaphor can be exemplified as follows:

"I think it is like jail because there are strict rules" **(O 6).**

"We cannot do what we like, we cannot go home even if the teacher is absent. We have to be in the school for a certain period, some of the measures taken for security is almost the same as the ones in a jail" **(O 36).**

Category 5: The category of **"Productive concept"** consists of three metaphors developed by three participants:

"Students are valuable just like gold. We are polished just like gold. We are protected and loved just like it is with gold" **(O 8).**

"There is always something going on in the school, either funny or boring, it doesn't matter. Everybody is yelling or laughing at the corridor or in the class. The teachers cannot teach their lessons. It is just like a theater" **(O 38).**

"A safe school is as warm as the Sun and protects us from other bad people. And it embraces us with its brightness and warmth" **(O 56).**

4. Results and Discussion

The school security is an important phenomenon maturing by the social and intellectual development process and becoming a question of debate with its different aspects. The school security aims to minimize risk elements by safety measures and contribute to the development of the school by making it a center of attention (Çankaya, 2009). In this research, the findings related to the school security concept show that the metaphors developed by the students for the perception of security are typically within the framework of physical safety and public order. This research shows that the metaphors developed by the participants for the school security and categorized under the title of *"Protective element"* outnumber other categories and have a higher frequency level. The metaphors developed under this category by the senior students of both school types are as follows: Mother, family, policeman. However, there is a difference in some categories in terms of category distribution of metaphors related to school safety among primary school students and secondary school students. In both groups, many metaphors under the categories defined as a *"Protective element", "Productive concept", and "Freedom prohibiter"* match up. However, the 4th-grade students consider the school safety as an *"Observing concept" and "Disciplinary tool"* while the 8th-grade students stated that it is a *"Factor increasing safety"*. According to these results, it was determined that there is a change in the perceptions of senior students on school security.

When the categories are compared, it is seen that the 4th-grade students consider cameras at their school as an observing concept while the 8th-grade students stated that they are a factor increasing safety. Similarly, the 4th-grade students consider "traffic

security" and "controlled passing" metaphors as a disciplinary tool due to the traffic training they receive while the 8th-grade students consider "safety set" and "safety belt" metaphors as a factor increasing safety. According to these results, it can be stated that the "school security" comes into prominence for the 4th-grade students while "protective security measures" stand out for the 8th-grade students. Consequently, some of the participants think that the protective security measures at schools are somehow prohibiting freedom. This can be exemplified with "jail" metaphor. The4th-grade students used the "jail" metaphor (2) less frequently (2.8%). However, the 8th-grade students used this metaphor (11) more frequently (17.7%). The fact that this group of participants feels themselves like a prisoner can be explained with their mood. This may have a significant effect on their school security perceptions due to their puberty period.

5.Conclusions

When considered in general, it cannot be inferred that the student perceptions on school security processes and functions are positive. Emotional perceptions of the senior students in terms of metaphors they attribute to the *school security* concept include significant messages. Therefore, school administrations should commit to ensuring comprehensive school security for all the stakeholders by being cautious about the physical, emotional, and social aspects. It is seen that most of the research carried out on school security at the national level consider the physical, social and psychological environment problematic. Certain studies should be carried out for school security for the ultimate purpose of highlighting the importance of offering a solution for these problematic environments for the sake of a safe school environment. Within the scope of teacher training, certain objectives and achievements should be included in these programs aiming school security.

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