

Turkish Education System from the Eyes of Future Teachers: Metaphorical Perceptions

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine preservice teachers' metaphorical perceptions regarding the following concepts: school, school principal, Turkish education system, teacher and student. This qualitative study was designed according to the principles of phenomenological model. The participants of the study are 160 preservice teachers attending the Education Faculty of a state university located in Mid-Anatolia region of Turkey during the Spring semester of 2019-2020 academic year. The data was collected by asking the participants to complete the following sentences "I liken "school" (and others) to because..." The data were analyzed through content analysis. The results of the study revealed 4 themes for school, 5 themes about school principal, 4 themes about Turkish Education System, 4 themes for teacher and 4 themes about student. Teacher candidates generally likened school, school principal, Turkish Education System and student to negative things, while they likened teacher to positive things.

Keywords: Metaphor, School, School principal, Turkish Education System, Teacher, Student

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Introduction

Defined as “a word figuratively used for association and resemblance purposes” or “using a word or concept in a way to mean something else rather than its lateral meaning” (Turkish Language Institution, n.d.), metaphor can be considered a part of our thought system. Derived from the word “metaphora” in Greek language, the word “metaphor” is the combination of two words: “meta” signifying “beyond” and “pherein” meaning “to carry”, so the word means ‘carry over’ together (Lakoff & Johnson, 2005). In addition, metaphors can be used to benefit from other concepts to explain a particular concept, to present different points of view, to provide hints about our thought system by enriching the language and to strengthen the meaning. According to Saban (2004) metaphors, which are one of the most powerful mental tools allowing us to provide a basis for our thoughts regarding manipulation, control and development and continuity of events, are defined as “language of experience” because it sheds light on how we give meaning to our personal experiences (Miller, 1987).

Metaphors, which we can consider as outcomes of our life experiences, mean much more than just similarities and provide clues about our thought process (Martinez et al., 2001). Similarly, Draaisma (2007) suggests that metaphors are reflections of individuals’ actions and thoughts. Accordingly, it can be concluded that metaphors emphasize a creative process in which individuals associate between concepts and try to discover new connections between them (Aydođdu, 2008). This relationship is due to the connection between abstract concepts and the concrete, the more noticeable and the more familiar ones, which in turn reveals new point of views (Oxford et al., 1998).

It is also known that metaphors are a strong mental tool that an individual might use while trying to understand and explain a complex and abstract concept (Yob, 2003) and they have the power to exhibit different dimensions of a situation since it is a product of our perception of life and thought system (Morgan, 1998). Many different metaphors can be stated even for one single situation, because metaphors allow concretization of mental models developed by individuals according to their previous experiences. Saban (2006, 2009), in parallel with this idea, claims that metaphors have many functions in addition to shaping our perceptions, thoughts and, in turn, our actions. It is also pointed out that metaphors are a tool for reflection because it functions like a mirror that helps us to see different and similar dimensions of a situation, and to understand and visualize them in our minds (Morgan, 1998). Another important function of metaphors is that it is used in research and evaluation processes as a meaning discovery tool. Arslan and Bayrakçı (2006) also emphasizes that metaphors can be used as data collection tool in studies conducted in different fields of science.

Thanks to the recent rapid transformation in social sciences, qualitative studies are now believed to considerably contribute to knowledge produced in social sciences because individual experiences and opinions are of great importance in this type of studies (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006).

Yalçın et al. (2016) suggest that the studies focusing on metaphors can be classified under 3 categories: (i) studies dealing with structure and formation of metaphors, (ii) use of metaphors while teaching a subject, (iii) use of metaphors to identify various mental perceptions. Studies in which metaphors are used to identify mental perceptions are considered quite rich sources of qualitative data that are obtained by using qualitative data collection methods (Fennel, 1996).

Providing valuable clues to understand organizational life, metaphors also introduce a wide range of thoughts for educational organizations. In addition, it is highlighted that metaphors can be used in educational research to create an image related to educational activities and to restructure them accordingly (Cerit, 2006); therefore, it is stated that metaphors can be used in educational research to investigate and explain a different phenomena, cases and concepts (Çam-Aktaş & Tunca, 2018). Thus, it is possible to see many studies dealing with education systems and concepts related to education systems with the help of metaphors.

A thorough review of national and international literature has revealed that the metaphors stated for the following concepts were examined in many studies conducted in the field of educational sciences: education (Akbaba-Altun & Apaydın, 2013; Botha, 2009); school, school administration, Turkish education system (Gözler, 2018; Kasapoğlu, 2016; Nalçacı & Bektaş, 2011; Örucü, 2014; Özdemir & Akkaya, 2013; Saban, 2008; Silman & Şimşek, 2006); school principal (Cerit, 2008; Johnson, 2006; Tvnavcevic & Vaupot, 2009, Yalçın & Erginer, 2012); inspector (Töremen & Döş, 2009); teacher (Aslan, 2013; Cerit, 2008; Ekiz & Koçyiğit, 2013; Kalyoncu, 2012; Kasoutas & Katerina, 2009; Marshall, 1990; Ocak & Gündüz, 2006; Pektaş & Kıldan, 2009; Saban, 2004; Yıldırım et al., 2011; Tut et al., 2018); student (Murphy, 2002; Saban, 2009); learning and instruction (Bas & Kuvılcım, 2020); university, academician and research assistant (Koşar, 2016; Oyman & Şentürk, 2015; Yalçın et al., 2016); classroom management (Akar & Yıldırım, 2009), Civil Servant Selection Test (Güven & Dak, 2017; Karadeniz, 2016).

In most of these studies, the data were collected from teachers and preservice teachers, and they were asked to provide metaphors to determine their professional perceptions. The reason lying behind this preference might be that metaphors function like a bridge between theory and practice by allowing teachers and preservice teachers to think about vocational practices and express implicit ideas behind these practices, because such implicit beliefs can largely affect classroom practices (Leavy et al., 2007). Therefore, it is believed that metaphors related to the concepts involved in education systems are important in explaining and interpreting preservice teachers' perceptions about teaching profession and their possible classroom practices in future. The student identity that preservice teachers have as individuals coming from within the education system and the prospective teacher identity they gain due to the fact that they will step into the profession after completing their education at the university make their perceptions of educational concepts important (Örucü, 2014).

The opinions of the teacher candidates through their observations and experiences affect the functioning and sustainability of the education system. Noyes (2004) is of the opinion that conducting studies on pre-service teachers' perceptions, attitudes and beliefs will contribute to their professional development. In addition, when the contribution of preservice teachers' in-depth mental models about education and teaching processes to the success of education system (Konaklı & Göğüş, 2013) is considered, the current study is believed to be significant in terms of determining how preservice teachers perceive and give meaning to the most basic education system related concepts that come to mind: school, school principal, Turkish education system, teacher and student. There are many studies dealing with these concepts separately. However, the current study deals with these concepts together and provides a holistic point of view regarding preservice teachers' opinions about education system. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to determine preservice teachers' perceptions about school, school principal, Turkish education system, teacher and student through the use of metaphors.

Method

This section consists of the following subsections: research design, study group, data collection, data analysis and validity and reliability.

Research Design

Qualitative research methods and techniques were used in the design of this study and analysis of the data. Qualitative research is a process of investigation that starts with assumptions, a world view and a possible use of a theoretical paradigm (Creswell, 2007) and uses unique methodological traditions to understand and explain a social or individual problem (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative research involves various designs that reflect various approaches and traditions (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). Phenomenological design was preferred in this study, which aims to identify preservice teachers' perceptions about school, school principal, Turkish education system, teacher and student. Specifically dealing with life experiences, phenomenological design focuses on how people describe their experiences and how they experience them through their senses, how they give world a meaning and finally how they bring together their experiences in order to develop a world view (Husserl, 2012). Therefore, it allows us to obtain an in-depth and detailed understanding of phenomena by describing their basic structures.

Study Group

160 preservice teachers attending Education Faculty of a state university located in Mid-Anatolia region of Turkey participated in the study. Participants were selected by convenience sampling which is one of non-random sampling and Table 1 displays demographic information about the participants.

Table 1. Demographic information about the study group

Variable	Category	%	f
Gender	Female	81.88	131
	Male	18.12	29
	Total	100	160
Department	Primary School Teaching	56.87	91
	Primary School Mathematics Teaching	43.13	69
	Total	100	160
Class Year	Sophomore	64.38	103
	Senior	35.62	57
	Total	100	160

According to Table 1, the percentage of females in the study group is 81.88% while 18.12% of the participants are males. Similarly, 56.87% of the participants attend Department of Primary School Teaching and 43.13% Department of Primary School Mathematics Teaching. Finally, 64.8 % of the participants is sophomore and 35.2% is senior.

Data Collection

Data were collected during the spring semester of 2019-2020 academic year. The printed data collection tool consists of two parts. The first part includes questions aiming to collect demographic information about participants. In the second part, the participants are asked to complete the following semi-structured sentence in order to identify the metaphors they produce for school, school principal, Turkish education system, teacher and student: I liken school (and others) to _____ because _____. The data was collected personally by the researchers by entering the students' classes. The students were requested to fill out the data collection instrument after they were informed about the aim of the study. It took the participants approximately 30 minutes to fill out the tool.

Data Analysis

Each participant was given a code before the data were analyzed. The code consisted of first the order number of the participant, second the gender (F for females and M for males), next the department (P for primary school teaching department, M for primary school mathematics teacher) and finally, class year (2nd or 4rd). For example, 105KS4 means that the participant is 105th participant, a female and a fourth-year student in primary school teaching department. Thus, the codes given at the end of each extract clearly guide readers in finding out the demographic characteristics of the participants.

There are basically three steps in a qualitative study: (i) to prepare and organize data for analysis, (ii) to determine themes after coding, and (iii) to present data in tables, figures or as discussion (Creswell, 2007). Suggesting a more detailed analysis process, Yin (2011) states that analyses in qualitative research are carried out in five circular phases, which are namely compiling a database, disassembling data, reassembling data, interpreting data, and concluding the data. In the compiling phase of the current study, the data were organized for a stronger analysis and conclusion;

7 forms that were not filled out properly were excluded from the analysis. The next phase is disassembling and reassembling data according to Yin's (2011) classification or defining, classifying and interpreting according to Creswell's (2007) classification. The data were disassembled by giving codes to data sets. The codes were classified according to the justification of the metaphors. Therefore, different justifications for the same metaphors may exist. For instance, *factory* metaphor for school takes part in both *theoretical and practical knowledge* and a *place that educates standard stereotypes* categories. Additionally, metaphores in the same category quite a change. For instance, a CEO in a company and prison director metaphores belong to *money* category for school principals. The coding phase was followed by interpretation phase in which the themes were interpreted by the researchers through references to the literature and they are later presented in the discussion section.

Validity and Reliability

The following actions were taken to ensure validity and reliability in the study.

In order to ensure *construct validity* in this study, Yin's (2003) suggestion maintaining proof chain was followed. Accordingly, it is significant to obtain expert opinion except researchers themselves (Creswell, 2007; Denzin, 1970; Merriam, 2009). Another reader who is not involved in the research should provide his/her opinion about whether same proofs might be collected during data collection process when he / she has an overall look at the research (i.e when he/she follows the correct route from research questions to conclusions or from conclusions to research questions (Yin, 2011). An expert opinion was taken in this study from an expert other than the researchers in order to maintain proof chain.

Yin (2011) suggests an explanatory structure to ensure *internal validity*. Researchers can increase internal validity by explaining research procedure in detail. Therefore, the researchers explained how data collection instrument was formed, the participants and data analysis process in detail.

In order to ensure *reliability*, which means consistency or soundness in qualitative studies (Neuman, 2006), Creswell (2007) suggests using "blinding" method in which the data are analyzed by other experts except researchers so that it is possible to increase internal validity. In this study, blinding method was used and the analysis was done without knowing who the replies belong to.

Findings

The findings about metaphorical perceptions regarding school, school principal, Turkish education system, teacher and student were presented under separate titles and demonstrated in Figure 1.

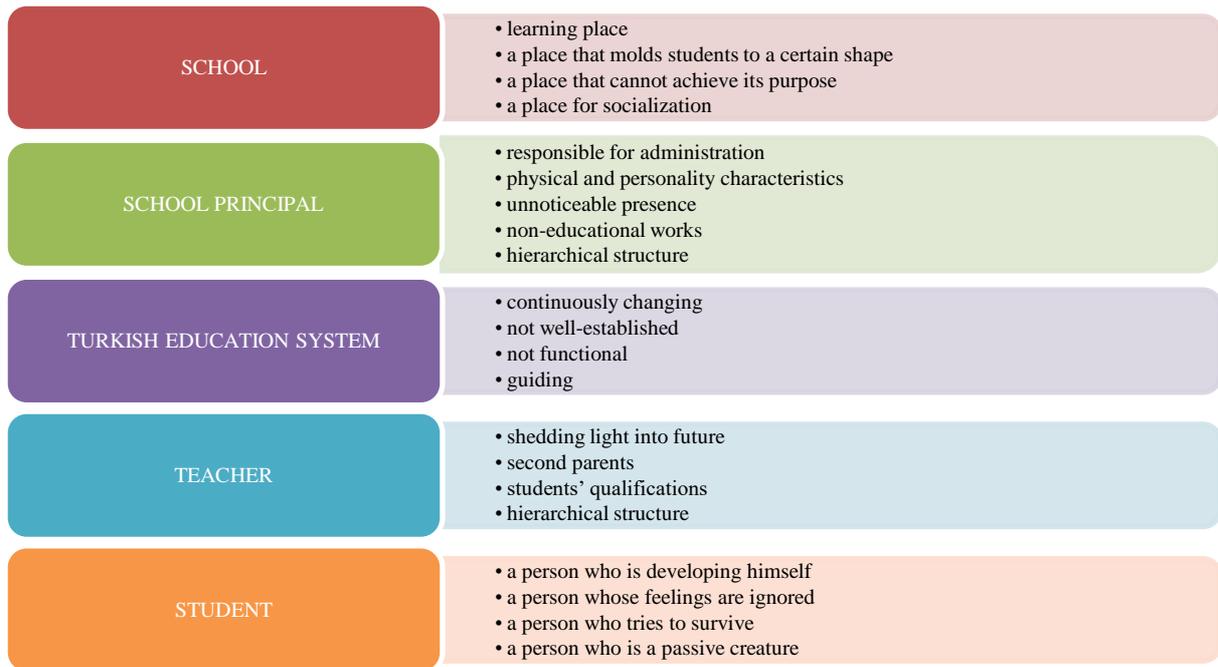


Figure 1. Summary of the Findings

Preservice teachers’ metaphorical perceptions regarding school

According to the findings of the study, 142 preservice teachers stated 120 different metaphors about school and the 13 categories were classified under 4 themes: (i) learning place, (ii) a place that molds students to a certain shape, (iii) a place that cannot achieve its purpose, and (iv) a place for socialization. The results were presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Themes and metaphors regarding school

LEARNING PLACE		
	Categories	Metaphors
1	Theoretical and practical knowledge	Factory Tree Book Four seasons Center of Information Home House the Sun Stone Mine Mine Computer Programming Cocoon A field where you can plant anything
2	Students’ qualifications	Music practice Preview of what to be done when employed or in front of public Question Bank for All Courses Life itself A place where I can improve myself Garden Photo Frame
3	Foundation of education	a missing brick in one corner of a house Foundation of building
A PLACE THAT MOLDS STUDENTS TO A CERTAIN SHAPE		
	Categories	Metaphors

4	Obligation	Prison House Work Someone, who has to go to work to look after his children Being forced to go on a visit Springboard	A door that opens to the world Police Asylum Bell Jar Hospital To drink water Napkin Horror House
5	A place that restricts one's freedom	Prison Open Prison Bell Jar	A Bird in the Cage Simulation Capitalism
6	A place that educates standard stereotypes	Factory Multi-functional factory Closed Box Cube	Farm Plaster Mold Sewing workshop Discipline Institution
7	Struggle	Playground Three-lap rally race Football match	Military Practice Zone Sea
8	A Long Process	Life imprisonment Dungeon Long rope Puzzle Curved road A long and challenging road with many curves	Leech Chewing gum Problems Stair A house without a keyhole Our second home that shapes our lives
A PLACE THAT CANNOT ACHIEVE ITS PURPOSE			
Categories		Metaphors	
9	Lack of Function / Uselessness	Dump Shopping Mall An empty chest An empty place Zoo Mental Hospital Kindergarten	Waiting lounge Mirage in desert Broken microwave oven Broken watch
10	A Place that cannot realize teaching	Question Mark Game Arcade Blank slate A book with 360 pages Blue Voyage	Bazaar Field Flower Waterfall
A PLACE FOR SOCIALIZATION			
Categories		Metaphors	
11	A Cozy Place	Home Family Podium My house	A lovely place A place to socialize with friends Social Media
12	Variety	Forest Four seasons Farm Dairy farm Noah's pudding	Greengrocer Asylum Concentration Camp Taksim (a square in Istanbul, Turkey)
13	Relaxing	Movie Cave	

According to the findings, preservice teachers produced the highest number of metaphors related to theoretical and practical knowledge category under learning place theme. 40MP4, who likened school to a cocoon, explained the reasons behind this situation as follows:

When a person gets education at school, it becomes a different person when he graduates when compared to his first days at school.

In addition, preservice teachers stated certain metaphors which emphasize that if school has high quality, students will also be also qualified in this theme. They also produced some metaphors reflecting that schools are foundation of education because of knowledge provided for students and educating qualified teachers at school.

The second theme obtained from the metaphors stated by preservice teachers is that school molds students to a certain shape. According to the participants, everybody has to attend a school; otherwise, he cannot survive in this modern world. 153FM2, who likened school to “drinking water” states the reason as follows:

Even if we want or not, we have to drink water regularly to continue our lives healthier. The reason why I liken it to school is that we need to go to school regularly so as to have a better life.

The participants stated that the freedom of students who are obliged to attend a school have been restricted. Although they produced the highest number of metaphors about the belief that school provides information, the most frequently repeated metaphor is prison metaphor, which is classified under the theme a place that restricts freedom. The statements related to this situation are as follows:

High number of class hours despite students’ reluctance, low percentage of absenteeism right; in short, students are forced to attend schools or similar places (80MP2)

Being under surveillance inside a building where everything is restricted between certain hours (154FM2)

School aims to educate stereotype students by restricting their freedom. Using the factory metaphor for this, 19MP4 explained the reason as follows:

Today’s schools provide standard education according to a certain framework. It is clear that this will be true for all students but we are still being mass-produced. Our imagination power is taken away from us.

In addition, it takes a long time to finish school, which might mean longer time of freedom restrictions. The metaphors and extracts related to this belief are as follows:

You study for many years and it never ends (life imprisonment – 43FP4)

Sometimes, the only reason to come to school is obligatory attendance. When you step in a school, you just enter and cannot leave it (a house without keyhole- 125MP2)

The third theme regarding the school is that the school fails to achieve its purpose. There were some metaphors reflecting the ideas that school cannot help students achieve full learning, some schools have more qualified graduates because these schools are more qualified than others, some students learn better while others cannot and some schools do not care about students. 31FP4, who uses question mark metaphor for this theme, provides the following explanations for this situation:

While some schools carry out their educational activities in a quality way and educate their students well enough, others fail to fulfil their mission effectively.

According to some participants, schools fail to fulfil their education function, so they are considered useless and people do not need their existence. The metaphors and the related explanations are as follows:

Designed as recreation places to disguise high unemployment rates (waiting lounge 114FP2)

Students graduate without being equipped with skills, without being mature – not well cooked enough. It is just like taking the cake out of the oven before it is cooked. No matter how well you prepare the cake, you do not have a cake in your hand if the oven is out of order (broken microwave oven- 140FM2)

The fourth theme related to school is about school's function in socializing students. According to the participants, school is a place for socialization in addition to its education function. The explanations about the metaphors provided under this theme are as follows:

There are many magazine-like actions during out of class hours. It helps us socialize (social media -155 FM2)

Quite a few of the participants had a perception of school as a relaxing place. The metaphors and the reasons lying behind these metaphors are as follows:

When you are there, you think about what you will do with your friends. You are far away from the chaos of life in those one or two hours. This makes me feel as if I am in a movie (movie – 81FP2).

Preservice teachers' metaphorical perceptions regarding school principal

According to the findings of the study, 134 preservice teachers stated 116 different metaphors about school principal and the obtained 15 categories were classified under 5 themes: (i) responsible for administration, (ii) physical and personality characteristics, (iii) unnoticeable presence, (iv), non-educational works, and (v) hierarchical structure. The results were presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Themes and metaphors regarding school principal

RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTRATION		
Categories	Metaphors	
1 Decision Maker	Referee Judge Minister of Justice Head Guard Control mechanism Brain	Lion- the king of forest The president of a country President Captain Father
2 Responsible for the process	Administrator Organizer Door Team captain Queen Bee Factory director	Apartment superintendent Father Shepherd Leader A ship captain
3 Backbone of school	Steering Wheel Fishbone Neighborhood representative Pilot pen Remote control battery	Planet Tree Gardener General Onion Tomato Paste – oil trio
4 Helper and Protector	Father Roof Shepherd	
PHYSICAL AND PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS		
Categories	Metaphors	
5 Big ego	Inaccessible man Ward chief Cell nucleus King	Walking ego Babysitter Cactus Class president
6 Dictator	Dictator lion king commander	Respect value a dictator who thinks that he has all the authorities
7 Fearful	Stray dog Fear Scarecrow Door creak shepherd	Angry birds Insect Avocado HULK Time bomb
8 Chatterbox	Technic director Coach Drum	
9 Stereotypes	Old man Boss slave	Bald people Beetle brow
UNNOTICEABLE PRESENCE		
Categories	Metaphors	
10 Invisible	Alien Soul Zero An active ant	An extra that appears in the most important scene in a soap opera
11 Not working	Steering wheel Uncle Mehmet who always goes to the coffee house harvest fly Market owner Flowerpot	A lion in the forest A hatching chicken Oil Carefree Love Broken watch

NON-EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES		
Categories	Metaphors	
12 Money	Money counter Vampire Apartment superintendent	A CEO in a company Revolving fund Head of the family Prison director
13 Paperwork	Trinket An exhausted pen Boss slave	
HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE		
Categories	Metaphors	
14 Controller	Guardian Father	Inspector Control Center
15 Follower of the commands	Old grandfather Photocopy machine Slave Pawn Cast system Guardian	Foreman in the factory A belly forced to slip into the pants

Most of the metaphors preservice teachers produced about school principals were related to their decision-making characteristics, which was listed under responsible for administration theme. In addition, there were some metaphors reflecting the belief that they are responsible for the process. Also, they pointed out that school principal is helper and protector to ensure a more productive process. One of the participants 13FP4 likened school principal to father and explained the reason by stating “He keeps an eye on everybody and sort everything out”

The second theme for school principals is related to similarities in terms of their physical and personality characteristics. In addition, principals talk a lot and have high egos. 96FP2, who thought that most principals display dictator-like characteristics, explained her ideas as follows:

They think that strict rules about clothes, hair and beard are enough for educational goals. When they sit in their warm and comfortable rooms in the mornings, they make students wait outside in cold or hot weather as much as they want (dictator)

In addition to his dictatorship, it was emphasized that the principal created a fearful perception. The related metaphors and some extracts from the participants are presented below:

You flinch as soon as you hear his voice (door creaking – 147FM2)

He looks harmless but very frightening (insect – 156FM2)

The third theme is about school principals’ unnoticeable presence because they emphasize that principals are not visible. The participant 81FP2 likened school principal to an extra acting in soap operas:

His presence or absence are the same. He makes himself visible only in important announcements in ceremonies.

The participant 146FM2 likened school principles to alien to express his invisibility.

There are some signs for his presence. But he has never been seen, never communicated with a person, you never know how he lives his life.

The second highest number of metaphors are related to the belief that principals do not work. The extracts reflecting this belief are as follows:

Today's principals mostly sit. I mean they just want to sit and earn money (hatching chicken – 39FP4)

Most of them just sit and earn money (harvest fly – 121FP2)

The fourth theme for school principals is about their spending more time on non-education works. Although there are metaphors stating that school principal is the backbone of school, and he is helper and protector, some participants think that principals are mostly interested in money and paper works.

Compulsorily, they are trying to keep people in an inflexible order. Most of principals are unhappy and they do this job for money and the comfort it provides (prison director – 30FP4)

School principals, whose main duty is to be interested in students and their problems as I know, are just dealing with paperwork (trinket – 145FM2)

According to the findings, the last theme is related to hierarchical structure. The participants believe that school principals follow the orders of their seniors. The participant 115FP2 likens principal to photocopy machine:

He just put the rules into practice. He applies what he was ordered by seniors

However, 25FP4 used the metaphor “belly forced to slip into pants” in order to emphasize that school principals sometimes should bend the rules:

School principals should act as if they were shaped into a certain mold, they need to feel relaxed by unbuttoning their pants

Preservice teachers' metaphorical perceptions regarding Turkish Education System

According to the findings, 143 preservice teachers stated 129 metaphors regarding Turkish Education System. A total of 12 categories were classified under 4 main themes; (i) a continuously changing, (ii) not well-established, (iii) not functional, and (iv) guiding. The results are displayed in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Themes and metaphors regarding Turkish Education System

A CONTINUOUSLY CHANGING			
Categories	Metaphors		
1	Changing	Chameleon Harvest Locksmith Incomplete Change Soup Rubber band Monkey Gemini Lego toy Update My mood My hair	Recipe An indecisive person Changing weather Toy Rubbish Seasons Rebooted telephone Waterfall Tumbler The projects initiated with enthusiasm but ends with frustration
2	Inconsistent	Bipolar	Gemini male
3	Ambiguous	Black hole Outer space An unleashed object	An irregularly flowing river bag Wheel of fortune
4	Complicated	Elflock Salad Noah's pudding A not well-cooked ezogelin soup Foreign series	Ultra-lights Unnecessary crowd Something complicated puzzle pieces that are not related to each other
5	Negative effect	An annoying alarm in the morning Mental hospital Black hole	An unpleasing book A cold day Cactus
NOT WELL-ESTABLISHED			
Categories	Metaphors		
6	Lacks a strong foundation	A building that lacks a strong foundation A building that lacks a strong foundation A decayed bridge Rotten apple Trash can Broken watch Coin	Leaf tree without a root A lost train on a circular rail Ottoman Empire
7	Irrelevant	Bloom's Taxonomy Puppet The singer	
8	Needs developing	Stray dog Fear Scarecrow	Computer game Insect Avocado
9	lacks attempts	Old version computer that need updating Electric circuit with plucked cable connections Dried trees Pine tree Cactus Treadmill Turtle	A man trapped in a swamp Swamp Garbage truck A car stuck in the mud Burn mark A patient who knows about his illness but refused to get treatment A crawling baby

NOT FUNCTIONAL			
	Categories	Metaphors	
10	Unnecessary	Redundant good at home Lace on a TV set Buying a star in the space Empty plate Empty notebook	Rubbish Dump coins in the wallet High-heeled shoes Broken machine Kitchen cupboard Watermelon
11	Educates unqualified students	Factory producing chocolate bars Factory producing wrong/faulty products China Dump	Tree that is about to decay Tree without leaves Chicken trying to climb a tree Washing machine Mental illness
GUIDING			
	Categories	Metaphors	
12	Guide	How factory operates Factory Instruction Laws Turkish Football Federation Poem Breath Predetermined route	Institution educating soldiers Martial arts Livestock market Arranges the height and width of the stairs Bourgeoisie Genetic illness

Most of the metaphors used for Turkish education system are about the belief that it continuously changes. Participants 149FM2 thought that this situation is similar to a recipe and explained its reason as follows:

There have been many attempts in our country for many years but success is not achieved. They try it just like a recipe that does not work, the result is frustration.

105FP2, who likened education systems being useless to buying star from space, stated that “It is valid in theory but it is rubbish in practice”. Similarly, 80MP2 stated that the education system is suffering from uncertainties and likened it to an irregularly flowing river: “What will happen in our education system is not clear. An irregular river is also like that. It is not clear what it will carry and where”. According to the participants, some changes and improvements are made in the education system; however they are not sufficient in number and quality. 154FM2 likened Turkish education system to a garbage truck and explained the reason behind his perception as follows:

Turkish education system is like a garbage truck that does not lose its essence in today’s modernizing Turkey. According to my observations, I realize that although they try to use different garbage truck, it still keeps its first original characteristics

Some participants lost their hopes for the improvement of the system despite betterment attempts:

No matter how hard you try, it never gets better (Burn mark – 53FP4)

Highlighting that betterment attempts are not original, 27FP4 likened education system to a wannabe young singer and explained her ideas as follows:

We have a wannabe system. We try to apply whatever we hear and pretend that it is our invention. Fake success rate is the bonus.

The participants stated that education system affects people’s lives in addition to guiding educational practices:

Unsuccessful individuals in the education system are somewhat isolated from the society (bourgeoisie -70FP2)

When something happens to us, its positive and negative effects continue until we die. It also affects new generations very easily (a genetic illness- 22FP4)

Preservice teachers’ metaphorical perceptions regarding teacher

According to the findings, 142 preservice teachers stated 110 different metaphors regarding teacher. A total of 11 categories were classified under 4 main themes; (i) shedding light into future, (ii) second parents, (iii) students’ qualifications, and (iv) hierarchical structure. The results are displayed in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Themes and metaphors regarding teacher

SHEDDING LIGHT INTO FUTURE			
	Categories	Metaphors	
1	Enlightening	The sun Candle Lamp Star Rainbow Book Online encyclopedia Search engine Wiseman Mr-know-it-all Conductor	River Dripping water A full pool fertile soil A person who waters flowers Pencil Board Swiss pocketknife Blender Mine workers
2	Guide	Light A leading and enlightening person Lighthouse Compass Navigation Lifeguard Leader Pioneer	Key Shelves in the library Conductor Traffic Police Officer Driver Trainers in the factory
3	Shaping	Sculptor Scissors	Mother White color
4	Indispensible	Water The sun Bread	Salt Our country Environmental conditions

SECOND PARENTS			
	Categories	Metaphors	
5	Self-sacrificing	Mother Candle that finishes as it burns everblooming tree Fertile tree	Coach Head commander in the war Puppet
6	Affectionate	Mother Source of love Farmer	
7	Caring	Parent Mother-father	
STUDENTS' QUALIFICATIONS			
	Categories	Metaphors	
8	Taking individual differences into consideration	Gardener Actor	
9	Misleading	Titanic Shepherd Guardian	Challenging parkours Color blind
10	Increasing quality	Cake Melon Noah's pudding Seed	Computer Bulb Fertilizer Artist
HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE			
	Categories	Metaphors	
11	Following the orders	Vice president Monster A person who tries to follow orders	An old lady trying to look at my phone on bus Puppet Prisoner

According to the finding, the participants produced metaphors mostly about teachers' enlightening their students. Among these metaphors are objects that radiate light such as the sun, candle, lamp, star etc. Similarly, teachers' guidance to students was the second category in which the most metaphors were generated. For instance, 60FP2 claimed that teachers resemble to lighthouse and said "He becomes a light for his students, gives them hand. If he is a knowledgeable and self-developed teacher, he is an entity spreading light in an enormous sea. He shows the way in the dark". Another category suggested is that teachers shape their students by educating them. The final category is that they are considered indispensable in the society. One example metaphor for teachers' being considered the backbone of society is as follows:

It is expected that life is impossible without the sun. Just like the sun, which provides light for each creature directly or indirectly, a teacher also sheds light on whole society (the sun – 32MP4)

According to the replies provided by the participants, the second theme for teachers is about the fact that they are secondary parents to students. For instance, teacher is self-sacrificing just like a mother. To exemplify, the participant 30FP4 likened teacher to a puppet by stating "a person who tries to make people happy, being a bridge between students and parents and tries to educate students within the framework of a certain system but is always faulty somehow" Similarly, teachers are interested in students' problems. Finally, the participants opine that teacher is full of love and

affection for their students. The participant 43FP4, who likened teacher to a farmer, stated the following:

“Because she raises each student one by one with love just like a farmer does”

According to the findings, the third theme is about the fact that the quality of students is highly dependent on teacher’s quality. In other words, some teachers take individual differences of their students into consideration. The participant 39FP4 likened teacher to an actor: There are different student types and needs. Since she cannot be a remedy for students when she acts for general public, she uses different methods and techniques for each student”. However, some teachers might mislead students. The participant 7FP4, who likened teacher to Titanic, stated “they sink all the generation while trying to save the ship”. In short, some teachers act based on their students’ needs while others might mislead them. The last category under this theme is increases quality, which means that poor quality teachers raise poor quality students while high quality teachers educate high quality students. The participant 145FM2 used melon metaphor in order to explain the effect of teacher on students and the reason of this metaphor as flows:

When you have a good one (melon), it is amazing, it cools your body, relaxes you and you want to eat more as you eat. But if you have a bad one, it upsets the taste of your mouth as well as the taste of other foods.

According to the findings obtained from the metaphors suggested by the participants for teacher, the last theme is related to hierarchical structure. Accordingly, teachers have to follow the orders of their superiors in order to survive since Turkish education system has a hierarchical structure. The metaphors related to this category are as follows:

He does whatever MNE (Ministry of National Education) and the school principal say (puppet – 78FP2)

He might suffer from mobbing if he refuses to do what the principal and vice-principal says (a person who tries to follow the orders given – 96FP2)

Preservice Teachers’ metaphorical perceptions regarding student

According to the findings, 139 preservice teachers stated 110 different metaphors regarding “student”. A total of 14 categories were classified under 4 main themes; a person (*i*) who is developing himself, (*ii*) whose feelings are ignored (*iii*) who tries to survive, and (*iv*) who is a passive creature. The results are displayed in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Themes and metaphors regarding student

DEVELOPING HIMSELF			
Categories	Metaphors		
1	Environmental conditions	Seed Plant Soil Sapling Sapling about to bloom Branches of a tree Unripe fruit Sunflower Liquid Vegetable soup Dough Play dough	Structured person Environment Iron Diamond Mine Raw material Wood Newly poured cement An empty plate An empty page An empty pen Baby Chick Home
2	Process	Butterfly Water droplets	
WHOSE FEELINGS ARE IGNORED			
Categories	Metaphors		
3	Experiment subject	Worker Slave Guinea pig	Robot
4	Full of unnecessary and redundant information	Fridge Cellar Computer Robot Rotten egg	A person how cannot swim in a pool but dives in oceans Balloon
5	Oppressed	Punching bag Boxing bag Little Emrah (a character in a Turkish film)	Drum Ball Football ball
TRYING TO SURVIVE			
Categories	Metaphors		
6	Gets information	A wolf hungry for information Buds who want to get information	Philosopher An empty bucket A thirsty flower
7	Shows attempts continuously	Factory worker Robots without conscience	Footballer Grasshopper Ant
8	Struggles to survive in life	A thirsty flower in the desert	Villager who has just moved to city Refugee
9	Burns out in time	Pen Ice-cream Battery Criminals Workers	Experiment subject Unfinising walk
A PASSIVE CREATURE			
Categories	Metaphors		
10	Aimless	A person who does not know what to do Cruise passenger	Space Collapse of Ottoman Empire
11	does not question	Slave Robot Flowerpot	Prisoner Puppet Remote control car

		Society
12	has restricted freedom	Slave Slave with shackles Prisoner
13	has uncertain future	Traffic Slave

The findings of the study showed that the participants mostly used metaphors related to environmental conditions. In addition, the participants believe that development of students is dependent on many factors such as teacher, family and environment. The following metaphors and extracts can be given as examples to this category:

How dough is leavened, kneaded, and cooked depends on the chef. If the dough is very soft or hard and does not rise, it is the chef's fault. Child is child (Dough – 145FM2)

Development of students depends on environment; water, the sun, food, sound, communication, trust weather conditions. The seed cannot blossom if these are too much or too little (Seed – 27FP4)

The participants likened students to butterfly and water droplets in order to state that development of students takes time in addition to being dependent on environment.

The second theme is related to the belief that students' feelings are ignored. According to the participants, students are a subject on whom various systems are tried. The metaphors and extracts related to this category are presented below:

They test many systems on us, and we are harmed (guinea pigs – 123FP2)

I see it as experiment material. Education system continuously changes and students are actually seen as guinea pig (guinea pig -82FP2)

When different systems are tried on students, they are given redundant and unnecessary knowledge required by each system. Therefore, preservice teachers think that students are always the oppressed ones. With this theme, the participants resemble students to ball, boxing bag and drum by reflecting the idea that "everybody hits". 18MP4, who likened students to a football ball, supported other participants "they are the objects thrown by the administrators and educators from side to side for fun"

The third theme regarding student is about their trying to survive in life by studying. Accordingly, students are always hungry for information and constantly acquire knowledge. In addition, students are non-stop studying creatures. The metaphors and extracts related to this category are presented below:

He tries to learn something from his teacher. He constantly studies lesson as if he were trained all the time (footballer – 54FP4)

They try to adapt to life while learning new information every day, but they are required to do a test all the time (robots without conscience – 30FP4)

According to the participants, students are somehow trying to survive in life by studying. The following metaphors were used to define this category: a thirsty flower in the desert, a villager that has just moved to city and refugee. Finally, students who fail to endure during this long survival attempts burn out in time. The metaphors such as pen, ice-cream and battery clearly reflect this idea.

The final theme regarding student is about students' being a passive creature. Accordingly, students are aimless and they do whatever they are told to do since they do not have any goals. The following metaphors and extracts can be given as examples to this theme.

He is not asked to express his opinions at school, he has to do what the school administration asks him to do (Flowerpot– 72FP2)

In today's education system, students have an active role and they have to do what they are asked to do from them. They are constantly given instructions about what to do (robot – 159FM2)

When students do what they are told to do without questioning, their freedom is also restricted somehow. The participants used several metaphors for students with restricted freedom such as prisoner, slave with shackles, and slave.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aims to identify point of views and perceptions of preservice teachers regarding school, school principal, Turkish education system, teacher and student. Their perceptions expressed through metaphors were examined and the meanings given to each of these metaphors were determined. Metaphors, which offer a wide range of thinking about educational organizations, are one of the most powerful tools that can be used in understanding and explaining a phenomenon (Yob, 2003) as a reflection of our system of thought and our way of perceiving the world (Morgan, 1998). In this respect, the metaphors obtained in the study were divided into different themes: 4 themes for school (i) learning place, (ii) a place that molds students to a certain shape, (iii) a place that cannot achieve its purpose, (iv), a place for socialization; 5 themes for school principal (i) responsible for administration, (ii) physical and personality characteristics, (iii) unnoticeable presence, (iv), non-educational works and (v) hierarchical structure; 4 themes for Turkish education system (i) a continuously changing system, (ii) not well-established, (iii) not functional and (iv) guiding.; 4 themes for teacher (i) shedding light into future, (ii) second parents, (iii) student characteristics and (iv)

hierarchical structure.; and 4 themes for student a person (i) who is improving himself , (ii) whose feelings are ignored (iii) who tries to survive in life and (iv) who is a passive creature.

The analysis of the metaphors expressed by students about school revealed a focus on the idea that schools are a learning place. Various metaphors were suggested to reflect this perception such as factory, book, information center, the sun, home, house, cocoon etc. Information is the first thing that comes to one's mind when school is traditionally seen as an organization that produces services, and school is believed to be a place where information is provided (Şişman, 2011). It is interesting that the preservice teachers in this study also defined school as a place that where students are provided practical and theoretical information. This finding is also consistent with the "information provider" category in Nalçacı and Bektaş's (2012) study and "school as a place to acquire information" category in Kara and Bozbayındır's (2019) study.

One of the metaphors reflecting the preservice teachers' perception about school is prison metaphor, which is the most frequently used metaphor. Preservice teachers believe that school is a place that restricts individuals' freedom. The social and philosophical function of education is to liberate individuals and to equip them with human qualities. However, the current study revealed that future teachers perceive schools as a restriction and control centers and emphasize their uselessness. According to Foucault (2000), prisons have two different dimensions: discipline and control. These two characteristics are observed not only in prisons but also in other institutions and school is one of these institutions. Thus, it is possible to conclude that schools hinder individuals' creativity and restrict their freedom through disciplinary actions and control mechanisms. Prison metaphor reported by the participants is consistent with the "prison of souls" metaphor suggested in Morgan's (1998) study, which presents a different perspective by discussing organizations through different metaphors. Similarly, prison metaphor has often been reported in other studies dealing with metaphor use for schools (Doğan, 2014; Nalçacı & Bektaş, 2012, Örucü, 2014; Özdemir & Akkaya, 2013; Saban, 2008).

Another concept dealt with in this study is school principal. The examination of metaphorical perception of preservice teachers about school principal revealed an emphasis on certain metaphors such as referee, judge, minister of justice and head guardian, which reflect their decision-maker characteristic as the person responsible for administration. School is a hierarchical organization where bureaucratic processes take place at all phases. School principals are those who are responsible for the development and effectiveness of schools (Fullen, 2002). They are expected to have different management skills and lead in goal achievement processes at schools (Bursalıoğlu, 1998). As a result, it is quite logical that they should give final decisions since they are considered school leaders. There are some similar metaphors reported under "being management-focused" category in Yalçın and

Erginer's (2012) study, under "managing" category in Çobanoğlu and Gökalp's (2015) study and under "school principal as an administrator" category in Akan et al.'s (2014) study.

It is suggested that school principals should spend most of their times at school visiting classroom (Sergiovanni, 1984). They assume different responsibilities depending on changing conditions. However, it is striking that following metaphors were stated in the current study such as "apartment superintendent, prison director and trinket" which reflect the belief that school principals spend more time on non-education works. These findings of this study support the findings about the distribution of routine works as revealed by Belenkuyu et al. (2020), Akçay and Başer (2004) and Gümüseli (2009). Belenkuyu et al. (2020) report that school principals deal with bureaucratic correspondences, paperwork and control of school garden rather than necessary routines to ensure effective teaching and learning. On the other hand, the metaphors such as "hatching chicken" and "harvest fly", which imply that school principals do not work, reflect an opposite belief stated in the findings related to roles, tasks and routine works. Accordingly, these metaphors are not consistent with the metaphors (bee, search engine, ant and cow) reported by Dönmez (2008) and Aydoğdu (2008). While preservice teachers believe that school principals do not work, primary school students think that they work a lot. The reason lying behind this difference is believed to be different levels of education. In Aydoğdu's (2008) study, primary school students described school principals as tireless workers; however, it is interesting that their teachers did not produce similar metaphors.

This study deals with Turkish education system as a whole through the perceptions of preservice teachers and focuses on other concepts - teacher, student, school principal and school- as the components of this system. In this respect, the participants produced negative metaphors while expressing their perceptions about Turkish education system such as "changing, inconsistent and uselessness" etc. The use of negative metaphors regarding Turkish education system is consistent with the findings of similar studies (Gedikoğlu, 2005; Kasapoğlu, 2016; Keser-Özmantar & Yalçın-Arslan, 2019; Örucü, 2014; Öztürk-Çalikoğlu & Başar, 2019). It is acknowledged that teachers play a key role in implementing education system in an effective way and educating qualified individuals. Therefore, it is thought-provoking that preservice teachers, as the teachers of near future, have negative perception about the system because it is suggested that preservice teachers' perception, attitude and needs might be reflected on their professional development and personality (Beldağ & Yaylacı, 2014; Noyes, 2004).

When the metaphors reflecting preservice teachers' perceptions on teacher are examined, it can be seen that metaphors regarding their shedding light on future (the sun, candle, lamp and star) and their guidance function (light, lighthouse, compass etc.) outweigh others. In this respect, it is possible to suggest that preservice teachers emphasize knowledge provider role of teachers, which is considered one of the traditional roles. This finding is consistent with those reported by Egüz and

Öntaş (2018), Kırıl (2015), Saban (2004) and Yılmaz et al. (2013). The metasynthesis study focusing on studies dealing with metaphor use for teacher concept revealed that preservice teachers' metaphor production in most of these studies were categorized under the following themes: knowledge provider (book, tree, the sun, candle), shaping / molding (sculptor, construction worker, painter, artist) and guiding (lighthouse, compass, light, the sun, guide). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the findings of both studies support each other. Teacher is the most strategic variable responsible for combining the variables in the system to ensure an effective teaching and learning process (Aydın, 2017). Teachers assume many roles in this process, which were found to be knowledge provider and guiding role in the current study. Çakmak (2011), in her study, pointed out that preservice teachers emphasize the following roles of teachers in teaching and learning process: motivating for learning, providing knowledge, being a role model, self-development and guidance.

Finally, the most common theme in the metaphors stated by preservice teachers about student is development. Accordingly, development of students depends on several variables such as teacher, family and environment. The study conducted by Saban (2009) with preservice teachers showed that metaphors stated for student mainly focused on the following themes: student as a developing individual, student as raw material and student as an empty mind. Similarly, the findings of Sezgin et al.'s (2017) study highlighted "student as a developing individual" category. Thus, the findings of these two studies are consistent with each other. However, "neglecting emotions" was another theme highlighted in the current study. The participants described "student" as "guinea pig" or "oppressed", which is an issue that needs to be examined in detail. In addition, there are few studies focusing on metaphor use for student concept (Saban, 2009; Sezgin et al., 2017). Therefore, conducting more studies focusing on student is quite likely to contribute to field of educational sciences where the dominant approach is student-centered approach suggesting that more permanent and effective learning might occur when students assume responsibility with a more active participation (Mayer, 2004).

This study aimed to adopt a holistic point of view regarding preservice teachers' opinions about the education system through a focus on school, school principal, Turkish education system, teacher and student. Based on the findings, the metaphors used by preservice teachers can be considered as a situation determination. However, metaphors are also known to have the power to unveil different dimensions of a situation (Morgan, 1998). Thus, it is possible to conduct action research focusing on different variables related to teaching and learning process. Moreover, in-depth analyses of the education system can be done by including different dimensions. Just like other research, this study also has some limitations. The study was conducted with students attending the education faculty of a state university. The further studies can be conducted with different groups (such as students attending education faculty of private / foundation universities) so that it can be possible to make comparisons that might reveal some differences in perceptions. Finally, it is essential

to examine the reasons lying behind negative images about the education system in detail as stated by preservice teachers as individuals who will be a part of this system in near future. It should be kept in mind that preservice teachers' mental images about educational organizations have considerable effects on the success of teacher training system. Therefore, taking into consideration the findings of studies conducted with preservice teachers and revealing their perceptions on education system while planning and analyzing educational practices and making decisions will considerably contribute to the success of the system.

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