Analyzing High School Students' Perceptions of Education System through Metaphors

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Education system in Turkey is going through frequent changes which affect not only the system alone but also the students. Although the students are at the center of the education system, decision makers do not take their ideas about the system into account adequately. This research aimed to examine high school students' perceptions of education system through metaphor analysis. In the study, metaphor analysis focused on colors due to the effects of colors on human life both in psychological and physiological terms. In order to determine students' perceptions, the sentence completion technique was used in the forms. The participants were asked to complete the expressions in the format of "If I were asked to identify the education system with a color, it would be....Because....". The data collected from 419 students was first analyzed qualitatively with content analysis. The students identified the education system mostly with the colors of black, grey and brown. Departing from the colors, eight metaphor categories generated by the students for the education system were depressing, hopeless, hurtful, not productive, political, chaotic, robust and fair. Then metaphors were analyzed with quantitative analysis. There was a statistically significant difference among the students' perceptions of education system, the education system impacted upon their lives and their expectations about the education system. The students at the religious high school, perceived the education system to be "robust". Students at other high schools perceived the education system as "disturbing". The results of the study indicated that in order for the education system to function in a robust way, the decision makers should consider the opinion of students about education system.

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