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“Adventure of Democracy” Seen Through Animal Metaphors Created By 6th Grade Students

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Abstract

A group of 41 students in a 6th grade class of 75. Yıl Secondary School in the province of Demirci in Manisa, Turkey, are asked to create animal metaphors about perception, constitutionalism, secularism, monarchy, oligarchy, freedom and executive for the unit on democracy adventure, a subject discussed in Social Science class. The animals that the students have chosen for the representation are from different habitats but through the different techniques of analysis, it was seen that this choice is not arbitrary. The animal metaphors represent their mental images of the related concepts. At the same time, the animals used by the students are in connection with their own environment and also their knowledge about these animals and their characteristics.

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1. Introduction

The metaphor, which is a linguistic device connecting two objects or notions to each other's, is accepted as being a symbolic linguistic construction putting into relation two different ideas or notions in order to compare them or to make a transition from one field to another. We are confronted to metaphors constructed with noun, verb or adjectives in colloquial speech (Palmquist, 2001). A metaphor enables us to reconceptualise the noun or the fact that we want to understand by connecting it to the network of conceptions that belongs to another lexical field, to see it from different axes and also to enlighten some situations that we failed to notice before (Taylor, 1984).

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The metaphors are one of the strongest mental devices that configure, guide and control our mind on the formation and operation of events (Saban, 2004). Above guiding our daily mind and action consciously or unconsciously, the metaphors are used to show how reality and life are interpreted (Kılıç and Arakan, 2010). The metaphors are seen as constructions which shape what people think about the world and reality. The metaphors enable to configure in a more comprehensive and concrete way the ambiguous concepts in daily life and during this process, play a role of strong mental model (Orücü, 2012). Concerning the bringing out of the affective and cognitive specificities of students who study in primary and high school concerning the Social Sciences lesson, the metaphors constructed by the students will provide important helps to the teachers especially during the teaching process (Güven and Güven 2009). So, in this context, for the concepts present in the “Adventure of Democracy” unit of the Social Sciences Lesson for the 6th grades, the evaluation by analysing the metaphors of animals, developed by the students, may provide beneficial results for the teaching of the Social Sciences lesson.

1.1 The Aim Of This Research

The aim of this research is to put forth the mental images that the students have about the concepts of the “Adventure of Democracy” unit which is a part of the Social Sciences lesson of the 6th grades, thanks to animal metaphors. In the frame of this main goal, we tried to find answers to the following questions:

1. When we considerate the common features of the animal metaphors which are constructed, what are the classification of animal metaphors intended for the concepts in the “Adventure of Democracy” unit of the Social Sciences lesson of the 6th grades?
2. Is there any relationship between the determined classes and the sexes?

1.2 Observation Sample Group

The sample group of the research is constituted of 41 students composed of 21 girls and 20 boys studying at the 6th grade of the 75.Yil Junior High School, in Demirci, a state of the province of Manisa.

1.3 The Limitations

This research is limited

- by the skills of the 6th grade students, to be able to constitute animal metaphor concerning the concepts of “point of view, secularism, constitutionalism, monarchy, oligarchy, freedom and execution” in the unit of “Adventure of Democracy” of the Social Sciences lesson,
- by the 2012-2013 school year,
- by the “Adventure of Democracy” unit of the Social Sciences school book of the 6th grades,
- by only the animal metaphors concerning the explanation of the concepts which are the subject of the research,
- by the 41 students whose data are collected in the frame of the research.

2. Method

In the research, the qualitative method is used to obtain detailed and richer information concerning the skills of a group of students about creating metaphors concerning some concepts present in the Social Sciences Program and the specificities of the animals that they used to illustrate their metaphor. The “content analysis” technique is used to resolve the data obtained. In accordance with the goal of this research, we observed thanks to the quantitative method the frequency and percentage of the data which are analysed with the qualitative method.

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