Investigation of Primary School Children's Views of Life During the COVID-19 Pandemic Through Metaphors

Ahu Taneri,
Nigde Omer Halisdemir University/Faculty of Education, Department of Primary School Education, Turkey
Dilek Mutlu,
Nigde Omer Halisdemir University/Institute of Educational Sciences/ Graduate Student, Turkey

Abstract:

Global epidemics bring about problems that affect the lives of all individuals to a great extent. Although there have been global epidemics at different times, especially in the last two decades, primary school students are faced with such a situation for the first time. In order for students to manage this process in a healthy manner, it is important to see life through their eyes. It is necessary for both decision makers and practitioners to refer to students' own comments and statements in order to see the traces of the effects of the measures taken on behalf of the students on their views. Determining primary school students' views of the concept of life in this process is extremely important in terms of seeing and interpreting the process from their perspective and planning the continuation of the process. In the current study, the metaphors that primary school students developed regarding the concept of life during the pandemic and the explanations they brought to these metaphors were examined. In the study, it was determined that the students were able to explain the concept of life in the COVID-19 period using different metaphors and qualifiers. It was seen that metaphors were gathered under the categories of being restricted, disruption of order, feeling threatened, and despair. It was concluded that primary school students evaluate life predominantly negatively during the COVID-19 period.

Key Words: Primary school, Education, Metaphor, Covid- 19

Introduction

Metaphor is the main mechanism through which we understand abstract concepts and reason in an abstract manner (Lakoff, 1994, p.251). Metaphor is also defined as understanding one conceptual field in terms of another conceptual field from the perspective of cognitive linguistics (Kovecses, 2010, p.4). The suggestion that metaphor is a part of ordinary thought as well as of language has become popular with the definition of conceptual metaphor (Gibbs, 2011). Our ordinary conceptual system, in which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature (Lakoff, & Johnson, 2008, p.3). Metaphors are also constructive in that they facilitate the creation and interpretation of social reality. In fact, metaphors shape how we see and make sense

of the world by guiding our perceptions, conceptualizations, and understanding of one thing in the light of another (Putnam et al., 1999). Metaphors reflect the transfer of knowledge from well-known areas to lesser-known areas, and therefore, serve as important mechanisms for acquiring new knowledge (Vosniadou, 1987). Metaphor allows us to understand a relatively abstract or an inherently unstructured subject in terms of a more concrete or at least a more structured subject. Many topics, from the most ordinary scientific theories to the most complex scientific theories, can only be understood through metaphor (Lakoff, 1994, p.251).

Two domains that are involved in the conceptual metaphor have special names. The conceptual domain in which we draw metaphorical expressions to understand another conceptual domain is called the source area, and the conceptual domain understood in this way is called the target area. Conceptual metaphor consists of two conceptual domains in which one domain is understood in terms of the other. A conceptual domain is any coherent organization of experience (Kovecses, 2010, p.4). According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, metaphors are divided into three according to their functions as structural, ontological and orientational metaphors. Structural metaphors involve structuring one type of experience or activity in terms of another type of experience or activity. Ontological metaphors involve projecting the status of an entity or a matter on something that does not inherently have that status. Orientational metaphors construct concepts linearly, orienting them according to non-metaphorical linear orientations (Lakoff, & Johnson, 1980). Koveceses (2010, pp. 37-40), on the other hand, explains the types of metaphors as follows: 1) The thing which is the source in the structural metaphor provides a relatively rich information structure for the target concept. In other words, the cognitive function of these metaphors is to enable speakers to understand target A through the structure of source B. 2) Ontological metaphors provide much less cognitive construction for target concepts than structural ones. Their cognitive task appears to be "just" to give a new ontological status to general categories of abstract target concepts and to generate new abstract entities. 3) Orientational metaphors provide less conceptual structure for target concepts than ontological ones. Their cognitive job is to make a coherent set of target concepts in our conceptual system. The name "orientational metaphor" derives from the fact that most metaphors that serve this function relate to basic human spatial orientations such as up-down, centre-periphery, and so on.

In the last two decades, three types of coronavirus have emerged in the world, and there have been epidemics that have caused significant global health problems (Guarner, 2020). Two of these epidemics were Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2002-2003 and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2011 (Prompetchara, Ketloy, & Palaga, 2020). The third is COVID-19, a new pneumonic disease first seen in Wuhan, China's Hubei Province, in December 2019 (Park, Thwaites and Openshaw, 2020). The methods of combating this new pandemic include restrictions to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, individual and environmental measures, detecting and isolating cases, contact reduction and quarantine, vaccines and treatments, and social and physical distancing measures (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020).

Schools are one of the important environments where the right attitudes and behaviours can be taught to children during the pandemic (Högberg et al., 2019). Health and education are closely related (Yamada et al., 2019). Recently, the measures implemented in the management of the pandemic have been on the agenda of our country and of the whole world. This process has directly affected children who have to spend most of their lives at home as schools started to carry out their educational and instructional activities by means of the tools of distance education.

School closures, lack of outdoor activities, isolation, physical distancing, abnormal eating and sleeping habits are likely to disrupt children's usual lifestyles and can potentially promote

monotony, boredom, impatience and a variety of neuropsychiatric symptoms. In addition, the possibility of negative changes in the behaviours of children who cannot interact with peer groups creates anxiety (Ghosh at al., 2020, Gupta, & Jawanda, 2020). Due to the pandemic, primary school students were allowed to go out within certain time limits. In this process, in addition to distance education, primary school students were able to go to school only two days a week for a certain period of time. It is extremely important to be able to determine the experiences of students and their views of life in this process in terms of creating a resource for the healthy management of the process.

The current study aims to investigate primary school students' views of life during COVID-19 period through metaphors. To this end, an answer was sought to the question "What are the metaphors and metaphor explanations of primary school students about the concept of life in the COVID-19 period?". The research question is attempted to be explained with the following sub-problems:

1. Through which metaphors do primary school students define the concept of life in the COVID-19 period?

2. What are the metaphor explanations of primary school students regarding the concept of life in the COVID-19 period?

3. Under which conceptual categories are the metaphors that primary school students use to describe the concept of life in the COVID-19 period are gathered?

Method:
Research Design
The use of research methods and methodologies is extremely important in research models which are defined as procedures that enable data collection, analysis and interpretation methods to be supported with comprehensive assumptions (Creswell, 2014, p.3). Systematization of research stages (observation, analysis, forming questions, evaluation, etc.) is important for following a controlled way in the research and ensuring that the measurement tools are appropriate and reliable (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012, p. 7). In the current study, qualitative research method was used in order to determine primary school students' views of life in the COVID-19 period.

Study Group
In this study carried out in the province of Van, the data obtained from the Van Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VATSO, 2020) were used while selecting the study group. Considering the number of students at schools and in classrooms throughout the province, priority was given to the five districts with the highest student density. Then using the random sampling method, among these districts, the district of Tusba and the students attending a primary school in this district were selected as the study group of the current study. In the table below, the data obtained from the Van National Education Directorate by VATSO for these five districts are given (VATSO, 2020).

Table 1. Information about the number of students, schools and classrooms in the five districts of the province of Van

District	Number of Students	Number of Schools	Number of Classrooms
İpekyolu	83.822	191	2.327
Erciş	47.445	225	1.880

Tuşba	42.264	163	1.615
Özalp	19.444	118	715
Çaldıran	18.835	119	674

Data Collection

In the current study, qualitative data were collected through metaphor. The data were obtained using a two-stage survey technique. The first stage consisted of a section with personal data prepared to determine the gender and grade level of the students. The second stage was consisted of a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers in a way that requires students to produce metaphors about the concept of life in the **COVID**-19 period and to give reasons. In this semi-structured interview form, there was the following phrase "The life in COVID-19 period is like .... because ...." to be   completed by the students.

Coding and Analysis of Data:
Coding of Data

The stages followed in the coding of the data in the study are as follows:

In the first stage, the data obtained in the study were counted. It was determined that a total of 485 students participated in the study. In the second stage, the data obtained in the study were separated according to the grade levels of the participants. In the third stage, the data which were separated according to grade levels were subjected to preliminary analysis. Forms that did not include   a metaphor or did not state a reason for metaphor were excluded from the study. Thus, a total of 72 invalid forms were discarded from the study and 413 valid forms were obtained.

In the fourth stage, the data were reviewed by the researchers. At this stage, each grade level was handled separately. The connections between the metaphors created by the participants and the reasons for these metaphors were examined. The ones found to be unconnected were excluded from the study. Thus, a total of 85 invalid forms were removed from the study, and the total number of valid forms was determined to be 328.

In the fifth stage, forms that use only life-qualifying expressions (adjectives) instead of analogies were separated. In the preliminary analysis, it was noticed that 138 students participating in the study used repetitive qualifiers. For this reason, the relevant data were coded according to grade levels to be examined under a separate heading without being excluded from the study. These coded data are also discussed in the findings section. The data were entered into the Excel software program by following the order of grade level, gender, qualifier and explanation for this qualifier. Accordingly, the first letter of the word "Adjective" was used together with a number as "A1, A2, A3… A138" to represent each student and thus, the data were made ready for the analysis. Among the data coded according to grade levels, the range of "A1, A2…, A41" represents the second grade level, "A42, A43,…, A87" represents the third grade level and "A88, A89,…, A138" represents the fourth grade level.

In the sixth stage, 190 data containing metaphors were coded according to grade levels and then numbered. The data were entered into the Excel software program by following the order of grade level, gender, metaphor and explanation for the metaphor. Accordingly, the first letter of the word "Student" was used together with a number as "S1, S2, S3… S192" to represent each student and thus, the data were made ready for the analysis. Among the data coded according to grade levels, the range of "S1, S2…, S40" represents the second grade level, "S41, S42,…, S110" represents the third grade level and "S111, S112,…, S190" represents the fourth grade level.

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Data Analysis

The content analysis technique was used in the current study. In content analysis, which provides the opportunity to work indirectly on the determination of human behaviour and nature (Büyüköztürk et. al., 2018, p.259), the units of measurement are focused on communication (such as the number of repetitions of a certain speech pattern or phrase) (Merriam, p.195). While analyzing the qualitative data, the students in the study group were coded as S1, S2, S3,..., S190 and the data obtained from the study group were analyzed by naming them with these numbers in the findings section.

Results:

The gender distribution of the students participating in the study according to their grade levels was analyzed with Crosstab in the SPSS22 program package.

Table 2. Crosstab showing the gender distribution of the students across the grade levels

Gender	Grade Level						Total	
	2nd		3rd		4th			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Male	14	35	35	50	37	46.2	86	45.3
Female	26	65	35	50	43	53.8	104	54.7
Total	40	100	70	100	80	100	190	100

When the table regarding the distribution of the genders of the students participating in the study by grade level is examined, it is seen that 14 male and 26 female students at the second grade level participated in the study. While 35% of the second grade students participating in the study are males, 65% of them are females. At the third grade level, 35 male and 35 female students participated in the study. While 50% of the third grade students participating in the study are males, 50% of them are females. At the fourth grade level, 37 male and 43 female students participated in the study. While 46.2% of the fourth grade students participating in the study are males, 53.8% of them are females. A total of 86 male students participated in the study and they constitute 45.3% of all the participants. A total of 104 female students participated in the study, and they constitute 54.7% of all the participants. A total of 190 students participated in the current study.

Table 3. Metaphors developed by the students about the concept of "Life in the COVID-19 period"

No.	Metaphor	f	%	No.	Metaphor	f	%	No.	Metaphor	f	%
1.	Tree	1	0.53	**23.**	Home is enough	2	1.05	**45.**	Scissors	1	0.53
2.	Octopus	1	0.53	**24.**	Mouse hole	1	0.53	**46.**	Death	8	4.21
3.	Lion	1	0.53	**25.**	Disaster	1	0.53	**47.**	Close to death	1	0.53
4.	A dump	1	0.53	**26.**	Prison	70	36.84	**48.**	Longing	1	0.53
5.	A pit	1	0.5	**27.**	Patient	1	0.53	**49.**	Disgrace	1	0.5

No.	Metaphor	f	%	No.	Metaphor	f	%	No.	Metaphor	f	%
			3								3
6.	A bird's misery	1	0.53	28.	Disease	2	1.05	50.	Dream	1	0.53
7.	A virus	1	0.53	29.	Hospital	1	0.53	51.	Clock	1	0.53
8.	Emptiness	1	0.53	30.	A poisonous gas in the air	1	0.53	52.	Epidemic	1	0.53
9.	Monster	2	1.05	31.	Everywhere surrounded	1	0.53	53.	Ivy	1	0.53
10.	Hell	11	5.79	32.	Nothing	5	2.63	54.	War	1	0.53
11.	Punishment	1	0.53	33.	Non-running clock	1	0.53	55.	War time	1	0.53
12.	Despair	1	0.53	34.	Nightmare	6	3.16	56.	Unloving	1	0.53
13.	Flower	1	0.53	35.	Bird in the cage	2	1.05	57.	Exam	1	0.53
14.	A person suffering a lot	1	0.53	36.	Darkness	8	4.21	58.	Sugar	1	0.53
15.	Very dangerous	1	0.53	37.	A dark room	1	0.53	59.	Team play	1	0.53
16.	Flat	1	0.53	38.	Quarantine	1	0.53	60.	Danger	1	0.53
17.	Dinosaur	1	0.53	39.	Broken glass	2	1.05	61.	Technology	1	0.53
18.	Wall	1	0.53	40.	Restricted	1	0.53	62.	Poison	8	4.21
19.	World	1	0.53	41.	Lock	1	0.53	63.	Dungeon	6	3.16
20.	House	4	2.11	42.	Fear	1	0.53	64.	Zombie invasion	1	0.53
21.	House arrest	5	2.63	43.	Corona	1	0.53				
22.	Staying at home	1	0.53	44.	Bad time	1	0.53				
Total										190	100

As can be seen in Table 3, the students developed a total of 64 metaphors. Two of these

metaphors were repeated by more than 10 students. In addition to these two metaphors, it was determined that there are seven different metaphors repeated five or more times. The remaining 55 metaphors were developed by either 4 students, 2 students or 1 student. When the frequency and percentage distributions of the most recurring metaphors are examined, it is seen that the most recurring metaphors are; Prison (f=70, 36.84%), Hell (f=11, 5.79%), House arrest (f=5, 2.63%), Nothing (f=5, 2.63%), Nightmare (f=6, 3.16%), Darkness (f=8, 4.21%), Death (f=8, 4.21%), Poison (f=8, 4.21%), Dungeon (f=6, 3.16%).

Categories and Codes from the Students' Views of the Concept of Life in the Covid-19 Period

When the metaphors developed by the students participating in the current study were analyzed, it was seen that these metaphors were gathered under certain categories. In the table below, there are categories related to metaphors and metaphors developed as codes:

Table 4. Categories and codes related to metaphors

Category	Code	Total
Being restricted	Octopus, a pit, a bird's misery, flat, wall, house, house arrest, staying at home, home is enough, mouse hole, prison, bird in the cage, quarantine, restricted, lock, dungeon	16
Disruption of order	A dump, punishment, flower, everything surrounded, non-running clock, broken glass, fear, bad time, scissors, clock	10
Feeling threatened	Tree, lion, a virus, monster, very dangerous, dinosaur, world, sick, disease, hospital, poisonous gas in the air, corona, epidemic, wartime, exam, sugar, danger, technology, team play, poison, zombie invasion	21
Despair	Emptiness, hell, despair, a person suffering a lot, disaster, nothing, nightmare, darkness, dark room, death, close to death, longing, disgrace, dream, ivy, war, unloving	17
Total		64

Table 5. Distribution of the categories and codes related to metaphors across the grade levels

Grade Level	Category	Code
2nd Grade	Being restricted	House (2), house arrest (1), home is enough (1), prison (18), bird in the cage (1), lock (1)
	Disruption of order	Punishment (1), fear (1), clock (1)
	Feeling threatened	Sugar (1), team play (1), danger (1), poison (1)
	Despair	Hell (6), despair (1), nothing (1), unloving (1)
	Total	40
3rd Grade	Being restricted	Flat (1), house (1), house arrest (4), staying at home (1), home is enough (1), prison (24), dungeon (3)
	Disruption of order	Bad time (1), scissors (1)
	Feeling	A virus (1), monster (2), very dangerous (1), dinosaur (1),

	threatened	sick (1), disease (2), a poisonous gas in the air (1), corona (1), wartime (1), exam (1), poison (3)
	Despair	Hell (1), disaster (1), nightmare (4), darkness (7), a dark room (1), death (3), dream (1)
	Total	70
4th Grade	Being restricted	Octopus (1), house (1), a pit (1), a bird's misery (1), wall (1), mouse hole (1), prison (28), bird in the cage (1), quarantine (1), dungeon (3)
	Disruption of order	A dump (1), flower (1), everything surrounded (1), non-running clock (1), broken glass (2), restricted (1)
	Feeling threatened	Tree (1), lion (1), world (1), hospital (1), epidemic (1), technology (1), poison (4), zombie invasion (1)
	Despair	Emptiness (1), hell (4), a person suffering a lot (1), nothing (4), nightmare (2), darkness (1), death (5), close to death (1), longing (1), disgrace (1), ivy (1), war (1)
	Total	80
General	**Total**	190

When Table 5 was analyzed according to categories, the following findings were obtained:
The Category of Being Restricted

Sixteen different metaphors are gathered under the *Category of Being Restricted*. When this category was examined according to grade level, the following findings were obtained:

At the second grade level, *prison (18)* is the most frequently developed metaphor. The metaphor of *house (2)* was also developed by more than one person. At the third grade level, the metaphors of *prison (24), house arrest (4),* and *dungeon (3)* were the ones most repeated. At the fourth grade level, the metaphors of *prison (28)* and *dungeon (3)* were developed by more than one person.

At the fourth grade level, the metaphors of *prison (28)* and *dungeon (3)* were developed by more than one person within the category of "*being restricted*". It is seen that the dungeon metaphor was developed in the same number at the third and fourth grade levels. Below are some of the metaphors and metaphor explanations developed by the students within the scope of the category of "*being restricted*":

*"Life is like a prison in the time of COVID-19 because I never made contact (S17), life is like a prison in the time of COVID-19 **b**ecause there are bans, life is like a prison (S76), life is like a prison in the time of COVID-19 **b**ecause we lose our loved ones. We can't go to school, we can't go anywhere (S153), life is like a dungeon in the time of COVID-19 **b**ecause our life is restricted (S109), life is like a dungeon in the time of COVID-19 **b**ecause it caused us to stay at home and not to go out (S189)".*

The Category of Disruption of Order

When the ten metaphors collected under the category of "*disruption of order*" were analyzed according to grade levels, only the metaphor of *broken glass (2)* was developed by more than one person in this category at the fourth grade level. It was determined that the remaining nine metaphors were developed by only one person at each grade level. Some of the metaphors and metaphor explanations they developed within the context of the "*disruption of order*" category are given below:

"In the time of COVID-19, life is like broken glass because we're stuck at home, our schools are closed, our hearts are broken (S169);   life is like a punishment in the time of COVID-19 b ecause we can't go anywhere. We can't go to school (S8), life is like scissors in the time of COVID-19 because it's tearing us apart (S98)'.

The Category of Feeling Threatened

21 different metaphors were collected under the category of "*Feeling Threatened*". When examined according to grade levels, poison metaphor was seen to be developed at each grade level. This metaphor was developed by one student at the second grade level, three students at the third grade level and four students at the fourth grade level. *Monster (2)* and *disease (2)* are other metaphors developed by more than one student at the third grade level. Other than these three metaphors, 18 metaphors were developed only once at each grade level.

Some of the metaphors and metaphor explanations they developed within the scope of the "*Feeling Threatened*" category are given below:

Life is like poison in the time of COVID-19 because people got sick. Many people died (S40), life is like poison in the time of COVID-19. Because we can't enjoy anything (S105), life is like poison in the time of COVID-19. Because just like a snake having poison, it bites us and kills us, just like the snake, the corona infects us and kills us (S186), life is like a monster in the time of COVID-19. Because everyone gets corona and life gets harder (S42), life is like a dinosaur in the time of COVID-19. Because our life was taken (S47), life is like a zombie invasion in the time of COVID-19. Because everybody's infecting each other (S190)'.

The Category of Despair

When the 17 metaphors gathered under the despair category were analyzed according to grade levels, the following findings were obtained:

The hell metaphor was developed at each grade level.This metaphor was developed by six students at the second grade level, one at the third grade level and four students at the fourth grade level. The metaphors repeated at the third and fourth grade levels are the *nightmare* and *death* metaphors. The nightmare metaphor was developed by four third-grade students and two fourth-grade students. The death metaphor was developed by three third-grade students and five fourth-grade students. The metaphor of *darkness (7)* and the metaphor of *nothing (4)* are other metaphors developed more than once. Other than these metaphors, 12 metaphors were developed by a student at different grade levels.

Some of the metaphors and metaphor explanations they developed within the scope of the category of "*Despair*" are given below:

"Life is like hell in the time of COVID-19. Because it brings death (S2), life is like hell in the time of COVID-19. Because you can't go to school every day and you can't go to your loved ones (S44), life is like hell in the time of COVID-19. Because some of the people die because of the covid, some are stuck at home (S121). Because we couldn't go out and play, the house is like a prison (S91). Because people were passing out and dying outside (S164), in the time of COVID-19, life is like death. Because the more corona virus kills people, the more powerful it gets (S173), life is like nothing in the time of COVID-19. Because things couldn't be done, people were dying (S158)"

The distribution of the genders of the students who explain their perception of life with qualifiers without using metaphors according to their grade levels is given in the table below:

Table 6. The distribution of the genders of the students across the grade levels

Gender	Grade Level	Total

	2ⁿᵈ			3ʳᵈ		4ᵗʰ				
	f	**%**		**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**		**f**	**%**
Male	17	41	.5	23	50	27	52	.9	67	48 .6
Female	24	58	.5	23	50	24	47	.1	71	51 .4
Total	41	100		46	100	51	100		138	100

When the table regarding the distribution of the genders of the students who explain their perception of life with qualifiers without using metaphors according to grade level is examined, there are 17 male and 24 female students at the second grade level. Male students constitute 41.5% of the participants at the second grade level, and female students constitute 58.5% of them. At the third grade level, 23 male and 23 female students explained life with qualifiers without using metaphors. At the third grade level, male students make up 50% of the participants, and female students make up 50%. There are 27 boys and 24 girls at the fourth grade level. At the fourth grade level, male students constitute 52.9% of the participants, and female students make up 47.1%. There are 67 male students in this part of the study and they constitute 48.6% of the participants. Seventy‑one female students participating in the research constitute 51.4% of the participants. A total of 138 students participated in the current study.

Table 7. Qualifiers used by the students regarding the concept of life in the COVID-19 period

No.	Qualifier	f	%	No.	Qualifier	f	%
1.	Stagnant	3	2,17	6.	Terrible	4	2,90
2.	Beautiful	4	2,90	7.	Bad	75	54,35
3.	Disgusting	2	1,45	8.	Boring	27	19,57
4.	Good	2	1,45	9.	Difficult	20	14,49
5.	Easy	1	0,72				
Total						138	100

When the table was examined, it was determined that the students explained life in the COVID-19 period using nine different qualifiers. Among these qualifiers, eight qualifiers other than easy (1) were used by more than one student. The majority of the students described life as *bad* (f=70, 54.35%), *boring* (f=27, 19.57%) and *difficult* (f=20, 14.49%). As can be seen in the table above, few students described life as *beautiful* (f=4, 2.9%), *good* (f=2, 1.45%) and *easy* (f=1, 0.72%).

Table 8. Categories and codes related to qualifiers

Category	Code	Total
Positive qualifiers	Beautiful, good, easy	3
Negative qualifiers	Stagnant, disgusting, terrible, bad, boring, difficult	6
Total		9

Table 9. Distribution of codes and categories of qualifiers across the grade levels

Grade Level	Category	Code

2nd Grade	Positive qualifiers	Good (1).
	Negative qualifiers	Stagnant (2), terrible (1), bad (18), boring (12), difficult (7).
	Total	41
3rd Grade	Positive qualifiers	Beautiful (4), good (1), easy (1).
	Negative qualifiers	Stagnant (1), bad (24), boring (8), difficult (7).
	Total	46
4th Grade	Positive qualifiers	-
	Negative qualifiers	Disgusting (2), terrible (3), bad (33), boring (7), difficult (6).
	Total	51
General	**Total**	138

In the "positive qualifiers" category, one student at the second grade level used the qualifier of "good". The qualifier "beautiful" was written by four students at the third grade level, and the remaining qualifiers**,** "good" and "easy"**,** were used by one student each. There are no students who used positive qualifiers at the fourth grade level.

Below are some of the statements of the students using positive qualifiers:

"Life feels like good in the time of COVID-19. Because we don't come together (A3), life feels like beautiful in the time of COVID-19. Because I'm doing my homework at home, reading books, solving questions (A43), life feels like good in the time of COVID-19 because I bought toys, played at home, read books (A 47)".

When the category of "*negative qualifiers*" was examined, the qualifier "bad" was determined to be used by 18 students, followed by the qualifiers of "boring" and "difficult". Twelve students used the qualifier "boring" and 7 students used the qualifier "difficult". Two students described life as stagnant and one student described it as terrible. The qualifier "bad" used by 24 students at the third grade level was determined to be the most used qualifier. The qualifier "boring" was used by eight students, making it the second most repetitive qualifier. The qualifier "difficult" was used by seven students and thus became the third most used qualifier. Apart from these qualifiers, one student described his/her life as stagnant. At the fourth grade level, the qualifier "bad" ranked first as it was used by 33 students, the qualifier "boring" was used by seven students and thus became the second most used qualifier**,** and the qualifier "difficult" was used by six students and thus ranked the third. Apart from these qualifiers, three students described life as terrible and two students described it as "disgusting".

When the category of "positive qualifiers" is examined in general, students at all three grade levels described life as bad, boring and difficult. The order of these three qualifiers is the same at each grade level.

Below are some of the statements of the students who used negative qualifiers:

'Life feels like bad in the time of COVID-19. Because we always have online lessons I hate corona (A5), life feels like bad in the time of COVID-19. Because corona caused an increase in the number of patients (A52), life feels like bad in the time of COVID-19. Because mom and dad are worried (A114), life feels like boring in the time of COVID-19. Because we can't go outside (A24), life feels like boring in the time of COVID-19 b   ecause we always stay at home. We want to go out and play. We want to breathe. That's why it's boring (A80), life feels like boring in the time of

COVID-19. Because corona has spoiled our lives and forced us to stay at home and hurt us (A132), life feels like difficult in the time of COVID-19. Because it's difficult to live in corona (A41), life feels like difficult in the time of COVID-19. Because we can't see friends often, there are bans (A82), life feels like difficult in the time of COVID-19. Because the epidemic has distressed us all (A136), life feels like disgusting in the time of COVID-19. Because schools could not be opened, bans started (A88), life feels like stagnant in the time of COVID-19 b   ecause the corona virus affects people, social life badly (A42)'.

Discussion:

It was determined that 190 primary school students who participated in the current study developed a total of 64 different metaphors. Vosniadou (1987) states that children produce metaphor-like expressions as soon as they start to speak, and they can understand simple metaphorical expressions until the age of four. He also emphasizes that metaphors make it easier for children to use their existing knowledge to make sense of phenomena they have not experienced before, as well as to classify similarities between objects and events in their environment. The fact that the students participating in the current study used situations they had not experienced before (prison, dungeon, hell, etc.) as a metaphor shows that they can make a connection between their current knowledge and the situations they have not experienced.

In the current study, metaphors were grouped under the categories of "*Being Restricted*", "*Disruption of Order*", "*Feeling Threatened*" and "*Despair*" for each grade level. This may help explain what remains unclear as to whether school closures have worked well enough to warrant the expected negative consequences for children in terms of the epidemic and education (Kickbusch, Leung, & Shattock, 2021). Researchers can try to assess the impact of COVID-19 on other vulnerable populations such as children, those from low socioeconomic classes, etc. (Rajkumar, 2020).

It was observed that the students who explained their perceptions of life through qualifiers mostly used negative qualifiers. As negative emotions increase, people may rely more on negative information about COVID-19 than other information to make decisions (Van Bavel et al., 2020). It is believed that negative thoughts developed by children may cause them to be more prone to adopt negative information. This situation can affect not only the education of children, but also their entire future life.

Conclusion:

In the current study, it is seen that the primary school students can explain life through metaphors during the period of epidemic. Students participating in the research developed a total of 64 different metaphors, two of which (prison, hell) were repeated by more than 10 students. In addition to these two metaphors, it was determined that there were seven different metaphors (house arrest, nothing, nightmare, darkness, death, poison, dungeon) repeated five or more times. When the metaphors developed by the students participating in the current study were analyzed, it was seen that these metaphors were gathered under four certain categories. These categories are defined as Being restricted, Disruption of order, Feeling threatened, and Despair. When the qualifiers used by the students to explain life in the COVID-19 period were examined, it was seen that there were two types of qualifiers: positive qualifiers and negative qualifiers. The majority of the students, including the students who used qualifiers instead of metaphors, see the epidemic as a negative and bad situation that limits and disrupts them. Students who were left alone with this situation felt helpless and under threat. The categories in which the metaphors were collected in

the current study enable us to see this picture more clearly. For students who are away from social interaction and school, and who have never had the opportunity to go to school, issues related to education and real life should be investigated more, and solutions to improve the current situation should be offered.

Recommendations:

In addition to their physical health, researchers should focus on children's perceptions, attitudes towards life and behavioural changes during the COVID-19 period, which has a worldwide impact. In order for children to get through this period with the least damage both physically and mentally, studies can be carried out especially for disadvantaged groups. In addition to this study, in which students' perceptions of life are examined through metaphors, concepts such as school, teacher, and education can also be examined from students' perspectives.

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