



## Analysis of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students' Viewpoints to the Concept of Democratic Citizen through Metaphors \*

Gizem Karabulut<sup>1</sup>, Hülya Çelik<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of National Education, Yukarı Hereke Middle School, Körfez/Kocaeli, Turkey

<sup>2</sup> Sakarya University, Sakarya, Turkey

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### ABSTRACT

In this study, it is aimed to determine the view of the 8th grade students on the concept of democratic citizens through the metaphors. In the research towards the general objective, one of the qualitative research designs phenomenology was used. The participants of the survey are 160, 8th grade students in the Körfez district of Kocaeli province in the academic year of 2016-2017. Of the 8th grade students who participated in the survey, 85 are boys and 75 are girls. Data have been reached with semi-structured forms. The metaphors and explanations written by the students were used as the basic data source in this research. Data were analyzed through content analysis. The findings from the research show that 8th grade students perceive democratic citizenship in eight categories: freedom, justice, unity and solidarity, participation, equality, patriotism, diligence and responsibility. When the opinions of the students are analyzed, it is seen that the metaphors they produce concentrate on the categories of freedom and justice. In this context, with 13 students the most widely used metaphor is "fair citizen". Besides the students produced metaphors mostly in the category of freedom. With "tree" and "free bird" metaphors they emphasized dimension of freedom of democratic citizenship. Students have also mentioned the distinctive characteristics of democracy, such as decision-making, election, voting, and having a saying in the country's administration when they are explaining what they do with democratic citizen.

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### 1. Introduction

The process of democracy in a healthy way, the formation of a democratic environment, is due to democratic citizens. A democratic citizen is an active citizen who is aware of his rights and responsibilities to the state and public.

Training democratic citizens is seen as a general purpose of education systems. It is clear that a real democratic administration and life style cannot emerge if the democracy cannot be grasped sufficiently and the principle identified with it cannot be sufficiently absorbed in its values and attitudes. In order for democracy to work at the desired level, it must not be perceived by humans alone, but should be internalized by the individual with all its values and qualities. Because democracy can only live and develop with the multitude of citizens who know its value (Güven, 2008). As long as there are generations that understand and assimilate the principles and qualities of democracy, there will be a stable and successful form of government based on democracy. For this reason, it is very important to know how students perceive opinions and thoughts about democratic citizens. Through metaphors, important elements in revealing the perceptions of individuals' lives,

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<sup>1</sup>Corresponding author's address: Sakarya University, Hendek 54300 Sakarya, Turkey

e-mail: [hcelik@sakarya.edu.tr](mailto:hcelik@sakarya.edu.tr)

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students' perceptions of democratic citizens can be revealed. Metaphors are being applied in a variety of areas of education in the context of encouraging learning and developing creative thinking (Aslan & Bayrakçı, 2009).

The essence of metaphors is to understand and experience something from another point of view (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980). The metaphor allow us to re-conceptualise, see from different directions, and illuminate some previously absolute situations by linking the object or phenomenon we want to understand to a network of concepts belonging to another domain of meaning (Taylor, 1984). There is a widespread recognition that metaphors play a significant aesthetical, ornamental and pedagogical role in literature and education (Botha, 2009). The metaphor can also be used to redefine facts and encourage conceptualization of problem situations as they affect our ways of perceiving situations and events (Goldstein, 2005). Individuals benefit from metaphors both when describing their own feelings and thoughts and when describing their feeling and thoughts. This is seen as an important element in revealing the perceptions of individuals. In this context, metaophors Show individuals the World and the way they perceive themselves (Girmen, 2007). There are many studies in the litarature on democracy perceptions of students (Kaldırım, 2005; Sadık & Sarı, 2012; Kuş & Çetin, 2014). But no direct study has been done on how they interpret the concept of democratic citizens through metaphors. If we want to educate democratic citizens, first of all, we need to know what the students which will be our next generation know about this issue. It seems to be necessary to investigate what they mean for constructing innovations on the preliminary knowledge of the students' "democratic citizens" concept, if there is a need to detect misunderstandings .

### **1.1. Present Study**

In this research, it is aimed to determine the view of the 8th grade students on the concept of democratic citizens through metaphors. The reasons for the selection of 8th classes is that they should be more aware of the concept of democracy as age. For this purpose, the following two basic questions are sought in the study.

- 1) What metaphors do 8th grade students have regarding the concept of democratic citizenship?
- 2) What conceptual categories of metaphor emerging towards the concept of democratic citizens can be grouped in terms of common characteristics?

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Study Design**

In the research, phenomonology which is one of the qualitative research designs was used. This research is a qualitative study in phenomenological design which examines the viewpoints of the middle school students about the concept of democratic citizens through the developed metaphors. In the research towards the general objective, one of the qualitative research designs phenomenology was used. The phenomenology focuses on phenomena in which we do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding of what we are aware of (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006).

### **2.2. Participants**

The study group of this research constitutes a total of 160 8th grade students in the Kocaeli Körfez district in the 2016-2017 school year. Of the 8th grade students who participated in the survey, 85 are girls and 75 are girls. In the study, for the selection of the study group criterion sampling which is one of the in purpose sampling methods was used.

**Table 1.** Distribution of participants according to schools

School	Frequency	Percentage
Nuh Çimento Vatan Middle School	35	21,87
Rıfat Ilgaz Middle School	30	18,75
Uluğbey Middle School	42	26,25
Yukarı Hereke Middle School	53	33,13
<b>Total</b>	160	100,0

As shown in Table 1, 22% of the 165 middle school students who participated in the study, 37% of the Nuh Çimento Vatan Middle School 33% 20 of the Rıfat Ilgaz Middle School 42% 25 of the Uluğbey Middle School 53% of the 32% of the Yukarı Hereke Middle school students.

**Table 2.** Distribution of participants by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	75	46,9
Female	85	53,1
<b>Total</b>	160	100,0

As seen in Table 2, out of 165 middle school students participating in the survey, 75 male, 85 are female students. 50.3% of these students are from girls and 49.1% are from males.

Participants are constituted a total of 165 8th grade students in the Körfez district of Kocaeli Province in the academic year 2016-2017.

### 2.3. Instruments

Data have been reached with semi-structured forms. The students participating in the research are asked complete these sentences; The democratic citizen is similar to ..... , Because..... in order to reveal the metaphors of the democratic citizen concept.. Thus, students expressed their thoughts on the concept of democratic citizenship by using metaphor. The metaphors and explanations written by the students were used as the basic data source in this research.

### 2.4. Data Analysis

The analysis of the documents that the students produced metaphor for the democratic citizen was made by content analysis. The findings were interpreted by transforming the tables. This process consists of 3 stages (1)coding and sorting, (2)category development, (3)providing validity and credibility,

*Stage of Coding and Sorting:* A metaphor for the concept of "democratic citizen" has been determined and a table of metaphors has been established. In the study of 160 participants, the metaphor of 22 students was excluded because they were inappropriate and not fully understood. For example, a participant did not present a metaphorical image but rather defined the democracy as a self-governance of the people. Again, a student did not present any reason (logical basis) for the metaphor in question, as long as he expressed a certain metaphorical image. Metaphors formed by the remaining 138 students were categorized by the researcher and added to the metaphor table. The metaphors and categories in the metaphor table are agreed upon by the researchers. Generated categories and metaphors have been rearranged and interpreted by the researchers and presented to the reader.

*Stage of Category development:* In this stage, the metaphors created by the participants were mainly examined in terms of their common characteristics of the concept of "democratic citizen". Before categorizing, the sources in the field were taken into account. Based on the previously created metaphor table, 8 basic categories have been established and the metaphors created by the participants have been determined according to the logical bases of each categories. That is, since several metaphors have more than one meaning, these metaphors add the relevant categorization, adhering to the loaded meaning, and reveal the direct relation between metaphors and categories. In addition, percentage and frequency calculations of the emerging metaphors related to the categoricals were made using the SPSS 15.0 statistical package program.

*Stage of validity and reliability:* It is important to document the data collected in detail and explain how the investigator reaches the results in a qualitative research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). In order to ensure the validity and reliability of this research, two basic operations have been carried out. Firstly, the data analysis process is explained in detail in order to ensure validity, and all the data obtained are included in the findings both quantitatively and qualitatively. To ensure the reliability of the study, the metaphors were presented and compared to the experts of the 2 educational sciences in order to confirm whether the metaphors given under the 8 conceptual categories reached in the survey represent the category categorically. The reliability of the research was determined by using Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula ( $\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{opinion association}}{\text{opinion association} + \text{opinion separation}}$ ). The result of the reliability calculation of the study is 94%. Miles and Huberman (1994) recommended that consistency of the coding be in agreement at least 90% of the time for good qualitative reliability. In order to increase the reliability of the study, a study was also carried out in the classroom and school where the 1st researcher was teaching. It was frequently quoted from student views in order to increase the internal reliability and validity of the findings.

### 3.Results

In this section, metaphors and the categories created from the metaphors are interpreted in the tables.

**Table 3.** Distribution of Metaphors Created by 8th Grade Students

Metaphor	(f)	Metaphor	(f)	Metaphor	(f)	Metaphor	(f)	Metaphor	(f)
Justice	2	Language	3	swan	1	Role modal	3	Equal arm	5
Fair citizen	13	An old	1	Melody	1	Water mill	2	Citizen	5
Tree	7	Citizen	5	ocean	4	Unproblematic	2	Citizen	4
Atatürk	3	Sea	1	vote	3	Family tree	1	Dove	3
Enlightener	1	World	1	Voting box	8	Forest	2	Helpful	6
Non- sinking	2	Regular	1	teacher	1	Free bird	6	Responsible	5
A head of	1	Tressure	1	Sun	1	Arbiter citizen	1	Family	2
Cloud	3	Helium	1	Ant	4	Sky	3		
Hardworking	5	Pencil	3	A watery	3	Turkish Grand	2		
Flower	2	Wingless	1	Citizen	3				
<b>Total</b>									<b>138</b>

According to the findings of the content analysis conducted in the direction of the research question "What metaphors do 8th grade students have regarding the concept of democratic citizenship?" it is seen in the table 3 that 138 students produced 46 valid metaphors. The metaphors produced by the students on the concept of democratic citizens are : Fair citizen (13), Voting box (8), tree (7), free bird (6), Helpful citizen (6), Hardworking citizen (5), Equal arm scale (5), Citizen who protect his homeland (5), citizen who treat equally (5),responsible

citizen (5), Citizen who risk death for his homeland (4), ant (4), ocean (4), rol modal(3), a watery watermelon (3), Atatürk (3), sky (3), cloud (3), dove (3), Citizen defending his homeland (3), vote (3), pencil (3), justice flower (2), Non- sinking ferry (2), water mill (2), family (2), unproblematic country (2), forest (2), flower (2), Turkish Grand National Assembly (2), language(2), arbiter citizen (1), Enlightener candle (1), A head of crowd (1), an old book (1), Helium filled balloon (1), swan (1), sea (1), Wingless angel (1), teacher (1), Family tree (1), sun(1), melody (1), treasure (1), world (1), regular army (1).

22 students cannot produce any valid metaphors about democratic citizenship.

**Table 4 .** Distribution of metaphors related to democratic citizens by category

<b>Category</b>	<b>(f)</b>
<i>Freedom</i>	32
tree (7), free bird (6), ocean (4), Atatürk (3), sky (3), cloud (3), dove (3), Helium filled balloon (1), swan (1), sea (1)	
<i>Justice</i>	21
Fair citizen (13), rol modal(3), justice flower (2), Wingless angel (1), teacher (1), Family tree (1)	
<i>Unity and solidarity</i>	20
Helpful citizen (6), Non- sinking ferry (2), water mill (2), family (2), unproblematic country (2), melody (1), treasure (1), world (1), regular army (1), forest (2)	
<i>Participation</i>	16
Voting box (8), vote (3), Turkish Grand National Assembly (2), arbiter citizen (1), Enlightener candle (1), A head of crowd (1)	
<i>Equality</i>	14
Equal arm scale (5), citizen who treat equally (5), a watery watermelon (3), sun(1)	
<i>Patriotism</i>	12
Citizen who protect his homeland (5), Citizen who risk death for his homeland (4), Citizen defending his homeland (3)	
<i>Diligence</i>	12
Hardworking citizen (5), ant (4), flower (2), an old book (1)	
<i>Responsibility</i>	11
Responsible citizen (5), language (3), pencil (3)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>

According to the findings of the content analysis conducted in the direction of the research question "Which metaphors produced by middle school students can be grouped under the conceptual categories in terms of their common characteristics, 46 metaphors developed by middle school students were collected under 8 different conceptual categories. Freedom, justice, unity and solidarity, participation, equality, patriotism, diligence and responsibility.

### Category 1: Democratic Citizen as the Expression of Freedom

It appears that this category of 10 metaphors and 32 pupils, formed by those who identify democratic citizens with freedom and perceive themselves as a part of democracy or themselves. When we look at the frequency distributions (number of students) of the metaphors in this category, the most frequently used are tree (7), free bird (6), ocean (4), Atatürk (3), sky (3), cloud (3), dove (3), Helium filled balloon (1), swan (1), sea (1). Below, there are some students statements in this category are given.

“A democratic citizen is like a free bird. Because in a democratic country, no one should be able to express fearlessly without believing that his ideas will be respected without being under pressure. Like a free bird, a man can flap its wings and go wherever he wants. If even a bird is doing it, it is possible for a citizen to do so in a democratic country. So democratic citizens should be free to express their thoughts like a free bird”.

“Democratic citizen; It looks like the sky. Because freedom can be seen as infinite and unlimited. But in some cases freedoms can be limited like when a fish crosses the limits, it becomes the bait to the dog's fish. If people cross the limits of freedom, democracy cannot be talked about. So democratic citizens are free like the sky. But he must know the boundaries of the sky”.

“The ability of the mechanism of democracy to work depends on the freedom to make democratic decisions freely. So democratic citizens must be free enough”.

### Category 2: Democratic Citizen as the Expression of Justice

It is seen that this category formed by the students who perceive democratic citizens as being fair is composed of 21 students and 6 different metaphors. When we look at the frequency distributions of the metaphors in this category (number of students), the most common ones are Fair citizen (13), role model (3), justice flower (2), Wingless angel (1), teacher (1), Family tree (1).

Below, there are some students' statements in this category are given.

“Democratic citizens are similar to fair citizen. Because we cannot talk about democracy in a country where there is no justice. If it comes to justice, however, the necessary order and system is formed. A democratic citizen believes in justice. They will not tolerate injustice. Democratic citizens work to live a just life and use their rights in this direction”.

“Democratic citizens are like being fair. Because Atatürk gave the right to be elected and election to the Turkish nation. People should be fair when they exercise these rights. If we are not fair we ignore the rights of the ancestors and come from ignorance. This shows us that we are breaking social laws. A democratic citizen is a just and democratic citizen who is sensitive to his country and its environment”.

“Democratic citizens resemble justice flower. Since justice flowers provide justice and peace among people. If you are a justice flower, you should be proud of yourself. Because in our world, the generation of justice flower is in danger”.

### Category 3: Democratic Citizen as the Expression of Unity and Solidarity

This category, formed by the students who perceive the democratic citizen as unity and solidarity, appears to be composed of 21 metaphors and 21 students. When we look at the frequency distributions (number of students) of the metaphors in this category, the most commonly used are Helpful citizen (6), Non- sinking ferry (2), water mill (2), family (2), unproblematic country (2), melody (1), treasure (1), world (1), regular army (1), forest (2) Below, there are some students statements in this category are given.

“Democratic citizen is similar to helpful citizen. He has his rights. When the country faces a problem, he helps in unity and solidarity. A democratic citizen is a benevolent citizen. He does not just think about his own rights”.

“Democratic citizens are like water mills. Because the turn of the mill depends on a certain mechanism. Just as in a country, there is a need for unity and cohesion in the better functioning and strengthening of the country”.

“A democratic citizen is like a family. Because the parents take decisions in unity and together. They make decisions by thinking about their own family and other families. A democratic citizen is like a family because

if we think of our country as a family, the decisions we take will affect everybody and we must take it in unity and togetherness. Only the self-conscious citizen is not a democratic citizen”.

#### **Category 4: Democratic Citizen as the Expression of Participation**

This category, formed by the students who perceive the democratic citizen as participation appears to be composed of 6 metaphors and 16 students. When we look at the frequency distributions (number of students) of the metaphors in this category, the most commonly used are Voting box (8), vote (3), Turkish Grand National Assembly (2), arbiter citizen (1), Enlightener candle (1), A head of crowd (1)

Below, there are some students statements in this category are given.

“A democratic citizen is like a enlightener candle. He participates in elections and illuminates the future of the country like a candle”.

“Democratic citizens are similar to the Turkish Grand National Assembly. It makes decisions for the benefit of the country”.

#### **Category 5: Democratic Citizen as the Expression of Equality**

It is seen that this category formed by the students who perceive the democratic citizen as equal and equality is composed of 4 metaphor and 14 students. When we look at the frequency distributions (number of students) of the metaphors in this category, the most common ones are equal arm scale (5), citizen who treat equally (5), a watery watermelon (3), sun(1). Below, there are some students statements in this category are given.

“Democratic citizens resemble equal-arm scales. Because the democratic citizen can look at the events objectively. They approach the events equally and focus on the request. He does not try to take sides. Thus, the nearest result for reality can be obtained. In every case, he looks at national issues with an equal approach in elections. This is why democratic citizens are similar to equal-arm scales”.

“A democratic citizen is like a watery watermelon. Because, if we think of our country as a watermelon, we, citizens of that country, must exist equally in the watermelon. When slicing the watermelon, it should be divided into equal parts and form a whole within itself. For example, women used to have no right to vote. Along with democracy, women were also given the right to choose. That is, everyone should be given equal rights. Democratic citizens should use their rights in equality”.

“A democratic citizen resembles a non-discriminatory citizen. Because discriminating people is not a democratic citizen. Discrimination does not provide convenience for the country. On the contrary, it creates problems. Democratic citizens protect their country's rights. But he does it so equally and without discrimination”.

#### **Category 6: Democratic Citizen as the Expression of Patriotism**

This category, formed by students perceiving democratic citizens as patriots, appears to be formed by 3 metaphors and 12 students. When the frequency distributions (number of students) of the metaphors in this category are examined, the most frequently used ones are Citizen who protects his homeland (5), Citizen who risks death for his homeland (4), Citizen defending his homeland (3). Below, there are some students statements in this category are given.

“A democratic citizen is a citizen who defends his homeland. Because the democratic citizen knows how to defend the country when he is in a difficult situation. For example; On July 15th, our citizens did not leave their country and flag on the ground. They defend their country”.

“Democratic citizen is the citizen who protects his homeland. Because the democratic citizen knows the responsibility to defend his country. For example; On July 15th, he fought for democracy and protected his country. It is unlikely that non-defending people who do not protect their country will be democratic citizens. He who protects and sacrifice himself for the country is a democratic citizen”.

“Democratic citizen; is a citizen who risks death for his homeland. Because democratic citizen goes to death without batting an eye if the motherland is the subject”.

### Category 7: Democratic Citizen as the Expression of Diligence

It is seen that this category formed by the students perceiving the democratic citizen as diligence is composed of 4 metaphors and 9 students. When we look at the frequency distributions (number of students) of the metaphors in this category, the most commonly used are the hardworking citizen (5), ant (4), flower (2), and an old book (1). Below, there are some students statements in this category are given.

“A democratic citizen resembles a hard-working citizen. Because he works for the country and the future without stopping. If he does not, he knows that his country will fall behind. It is up to working to develop the country. It is necessary to work for the homeland first to become a democratic citizen”.

“Democratic citizen is similar to ants. It is important for democratic citizens to live together and work for the country. Just like the ants that try not to die in the winter. Democratic citizen should work like ant for his country and his future”.

### Category 8: Democratic Citizen as the Expression of Responsibility

It is seen that this category which is formed by the students who perceive the democratic citizen as the responsibility and the responsible person is composed of 3 metaphors and 11 students. When we look at the frequency distributions (number of students) of the metaphors in this category, the most frequently used are the responsible citizen (5), language (3), and pencil (3). Below, there are some students statements in this category are given.

“A democratic citizen is like a responsible citizen. Because if you use a right for good things, if you obey the rules of the state and know your responsibilities, then you are a democratic citizen. A democratic citizen is a person who does good works that conform to the rules. In fact, a citizen should be like this, and if he fulfills his responsibilities for his own benefit and the country, he will find peace in society”.

“The democratic citizen resembles the language. Because our language knows where to defend what to do. He who knows his democratic citizenship responsibilities is a citizen. A democratic citizen never does anything bad against his democratic citizenship. That's why I resemble a democratic citizen to language”.

“Democratic citizens resemble pen. Because the pen writes only if we write. So it is necessary to apply a force to write the text. A pen has to write and this is its responsibility. A democratic citizen resembles a pen because a democratic citizen has a number of responsibilities to his country. If democratic citizens do not do this, there will be no democracy”.

## 4. Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations

When the metaphors developed by the 8th grade middle school students related to the concept of democratic citizens were examined, a total of 46 metaphors were collected under 8 different conceptual categories. These categories are democracy as expression of freedom, democracy as expression of justice, democracy as expression of unity and solidarity, democracy as expression of participation, democracy as expression of equality, democracy as expression of patriotism, democracy as expression of diligence and democracy as expression of responsibility.

When the opinions of the students are analyzed, it is seen that the metaphors they produce concentrate in the categories of justice and freedom. In this context, with 13 student the most widely used metaphor is “fair citizen”. Besides the students produced metaphors mostly in the category of freedom. “Tree” and “free bird” metaphors represented freedom. In the broadest sense, democracy, defined as a system of management in which people are equal and whose fundamental rights and freedoms are protected, is identified with freedom from the past by day-to-day majority (Çeçen, 1995). From these expressions, it is understood that justice and freedom are perceived as indispensable for democracy. The elements that complement this are unity and solidarity, participation, equality, patriotism, diligence and responsibility. It has been seen that the students perceive the concept of democratic citizens as an indispensable element for our country. When the research findings are examined, the students have also touched on distinctive characteristics of democratic concepts such as choice and decision making. Decision-making, participation and election are the most important distinguishing features of democracy. In the study of Sadık and Sarı (2012), students also

explained democracy mostly with the concepts of equality, freedom and justice. It has been seen that pupils correctly perceive democratic citizens and their integral elements in general.

To briefly summarize the situation in the direction of these findings, it is observed that the students are knowledgeable about the democratic citizen concept and the elements that integrate it, but only because they cannot find the necessary environment to live it, this is all they have. First of all, students should gain democratic attitude and behavior. This can only be possible with managers and teachers who have adopted democratic principles and are able to apply these principles to life. (Gömleksiz and Akar-Vural, 2006). Teachers here have a lot of duty. The democratic citizen concept should be taken in a part of our life and it should be internalized. In the field of effective citizen learning in the social studies curriculum of 2017, the democratic ways of influencing the management by learning the ways of participation of the students in social services and the different official activities take place. (MEB, 2017)

There must be an environment in which students can express their opinions easily in the classroom. Patrick (2003) stated that for the effective teaching of democracy in schools, students should be allowed to teach contemporary events to discuss in a comfortable class environment. Placing controversial issues in the classroom will contribute to the development of the students' natural democratic values such as equality, freedom, human rights and self-control (Levitt and Longstreet, 1983). If we want our students who are our future to grow up as democratic citizens, we have to give our lessons with more democratic methods. This will create a vivid example of our students. It would not be effective if we speak of democratic citizens to students as only formal information. However, students will contribute more positively if they create various projects and especially situations that require participation.

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