Teachers' Mental/Metaphorical Perceptions to Education Inspector

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In this work, teachers' perceptions about the concept of education supervisor are desired to be determined through metaphors. The field of work of research is formed with 92 primary school teachers working in Erzincan. The inputs of research were obtained with semi-structured interview form on method of qualitative research. According to findings of work, teachers produced 29 metaphors about the concept of education supervisor .Metaphors produced were classified as living-nonliving existences, negative –positive and themes. Teachers produced metaphors within the contexts of assignment theme about the concept of education supervisor. According to metaphors produced by teachers, teachers explained the concept of education supervisor with respectively general, computer, soldier, pen. While teachers were producing 19 metaphors by using negative comparisons for mostly the concept of education supervisor, they produced 10 metaphors with positive comparisons. Hence,it is said that teachers have negative thoughts about the concept of supervision depending on education supervisor.

Introduction

Organizations can fulfill their objectives- in other ways be efficient and effective- only by being sensitive and adapting themselves to the happenings around. Inspectional practices play an important role in the process. In this respect, the inspection mechanism, an important actor in organizational change, is expected to be more sensitive to and more active in the happenings around. Inspection is the process of evaluating whether organizational activities comply with the rules and principles specified in accordance with agreed objectives. The purpose is to determine whether planning and activities have fulfilled the objectives and to correct any deficiencies or abnormalities. Considering that organizations have a very complicated structure, a continuous and efficient inspection is required to benefit from the activities as greatly as possible, to have the expected benefit and improvement, and to carry on the activities successfully (Aydın, 1993; MEB, 2004).

Educational institutions are one of the places where organizational inspection is a requirement. Comprised of the stages "assessment", evaluation" and "correction-improvement" (Başar, 2006), inspection is not only an assessment as to whether educational activities are conducted in a proper way but also a process during which teachers, one of the most crucial actors in education, are provided with in-service training and helped about how to use the knowledge they have acquired in a way that will yield the best results for their organizations and the environment (Sergiovanni and

Starrat, 1979, as cited in Aydın, 1993).

Inspection is of great importance for a school, as it contributes to efficient education, getting feedback about activities, presenting the current situation, making necessary changes and regulations for improvement and establishing favorable conditions (Özmen and Yasan, 2007). In the educational system, inspection functions as a mechanism for synthesizing expected results through certain theories. It helps to find the most suitable values and activities in accordance with the educational process (Bursalıoğlu, 1978). The purpose of inspection in education is to ensure efficient learning and teaching and to improve teachers as well as the educational process (Oğuz, Yılmaz and Taştan, 2007). Inspection enables an institution to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational process, to prevent and overcome mistakes (Astor, 2005; Alleman, 2006; Kovats, 2006), to provide development-oriented guidance and to improve teachers' teaching behaviors (McCarty et al., 1986, as cited in Yalçınkaya, 1993). Similarly, it provides one with the opportunity to determine whether educational activities comply with pre-specified rules and principles, to identify the quality of teaching and to make decisions about the future (Özmen and Batmaz, 2006).

Teachers need help for many reasons, such as dealing with educational problems and making educational activities more efficient. Employees may require help with organizing, conveying and communicating the information required for making decisions and changing their behaviors. Providing such help, inspectors play a pivotal role in establishing a learning culture and facilitating organizational learning processes (Ünal and Gürsel, 2007). The main task of inspectors in education is to help teachers with educational activities and to guide them so that they can be more efficient (Döş, 2005; İlğan, 2008).

In educational institutions, as is the case in all organizations, it is inspectors who are responsible for ensuring and leading organizational connection between departments and providing assessment. Inspectors should provide efficient services in order that the inspection mechanism can carry out its role in enabling the educational system to fulfill its objectives (Öz, 1977). There is a significantly positive correlation between the quantity and quality of inspectors and the scope and quality of the services they provide (Bilgen, 1990). Therefore, education inspectors are expected to do much in order for teachers to be able to overcome educational problems (Özdemir, 1979). It is without doubt that great contributions will be made to improving the educational process if inspectors, who are burdened with significant roles in the inspection mechanism, provide efficient target-oriented services.

The Turkish educational system is inspected by three different bodies, namely the Guidance and Supervision Department of the Ministry of National Education, the Higher Education Supervisory Board and the Provincial Education Inspectors Board. Provincial education inspectors have been carrying out inspection and evaluation activities for a long time. As a sub-unit of provincial directorates of national education, they have been inspecting institutions, courses and seminars. When inspecting an institution, they also inspect administrators, teachers and other staff there. During the process, they communicate innovations in the system to the staff, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the institution, inspect the educational and administrative processes in accordance with the legislation, and evaluate them according to the pre-specified criteria (MEB, 2001).

On the other hand, it is a long-known fact that inspectional practices in Turkey cannot enable the objectives to be fulfilled effectively owing to certain problems and that practices are still based on the conventional approach to inspection (Karagözoğlu, 1985; Akan 1998; Kayıkçı, 2006). It is essential that these concerns should be dealt with through scientific studies and that reliable solutions should be found to these problems. In this respect, it is quite necessary to determine

teachers' metaphorical perceptions of inspectors, who play key roles in the inspection process. In this way, one can have important clues as to the overall operation of the existing inspection system.

Metaphors can be defined as the labels, meanings or conceptual connotations of a concept to individuals (Eraslan, 2011), linguistic tools that draw a parallel between two objects or concepts (Palmquist, 2001), mental maps that facilitate understanding of complicated ideas (Heidorn, 2001), the process during which one, in his/her own perception, expresses a concept or phenomenon by referring to it as something different (Aydın, 2010), a tool that individuals use to explain how they perceive the life, environment, happenings and objects via different sayings (Cerit, 2000), a powerful mental mapping and modeling mechanism for understanding and constructing one's own world (Aslan and Bayrakçi, 2006), understanding and experiencing a phenomenon in reference to another (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003), and the way an idea, object or action is expressed with a word or phrase by comparing it to another situation (Palmer and Lundberg, 1995).

Metaphor is a way of describing something in comparison to something else. In this way, one makes attempts to understand the overall meaning as he/she sees the points certain things have in common. The present study is an attempt to reveal teachers' mental perceptions of education inspectors. It is hoped that it will make contributions to identifying how education inspectors carry out their inspectional roles and how competent they are in doing so as well as obtaining information about inspectional activities in education.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine teachers' perceptions of education inspectors through metaphors. The present study is also an attempt to identify how teachers regard education inspectors and what inspection means to them.

Methodology

The study was based on a qualitative method. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 92 teachers randomly chosen among the teachers who worked for the primary schools located in the city center of Erzincan. The reason for conducting semi-structured interviews was that these interviews provide flexibility in case of changing conditions, instant operation of the feedback mechanism, in-depth information, reduced misunderstanding and maintenance of individualism in answers (Yılmaz, 2011). The semi-structured interview form was developed by the researcher. Firstly, a pilot scheme was carried out with five teachers who were not included in the sample. The "interview form" was developed by the researcher in the light of the findings. The form was analyzed by specialists and teachers. Necessary modifications were made before the form was finalized. Each interview lasted five minutes on average.

In this qualitative research, "content analysis" was carried out and phenomenological design was employed. In phenomenological design, the focus is on those phenomena which are recognizable but about which detailed and thorough insight is lacking. Besides, according to phenomenologists, phenomenology sees subjective consciousness as important and essential. In the research, students' responses to open-ended questions which were asked to determine their opinions on school managers were evaluated.

Study Group

The study group of this research consisted of 92 teachers working in 9 elementary schools in the central district of Erzincan, which were selected randomly among a total of 32 elementary schools in the 2011-2012 Academic Year.

Data Collection Instrument

In order to reveal the teachers' perceptions of education inspectors, each participant was provided with the following sentence: "An education inspector is like………. because……….". Next, they were asked to finish the sentences with their own ideas. The present study was conducted on the participants from the city center of Erzincan. The metaphors created by them were collected and evaluated.

Data Analysis

The data for the study were analyzed qualitatively. Frequencies and percentages were taken into consideration during the analysis. The metaphors created by the participants were categorized firstly as "living/non-living" and then "positive/negative". Then, they were divided into certain themes and grouped in accordance with the reasons for the metaphors. The themes were as follows: "problem, information, task, balance and enlightening". Each theme was evaluated separately.

The data collected were analyzed using the content analysis method. For this, the data were first reviewed and encoded. Then, these data were correlated and formatted, and models of the emerged categories were formed. While the initial categories in the study, which were determined through a literature review, served as a guide; actual categories were formed after adding new categories in later stages (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2006). Expert opinions were used in order to determine the validity and reliability of the study. It was discussed whether the metaphors obtained were in line with the categories or not.

Results

The data collected in the research were classified as positive and negative, and then they were themed and interpreted.

Table 1: The metaphors created by the teachers for education inspectors

No	Metaphors Created	Reasons for Metaphors	F	%
1	Computer	The person with necessary information.	21	22.82
2	Commander	Because they are simple memorizers, not open to criticism and sulky.	21	22.82
3	Pencil	Because we focus on what they will write about us.	17	18.47
4	Soldier	They want to control because they are controlled.	7	7.60
5	Parrot	They repeat the same words but never produce new things.	2	2.17
6	Eraser	Because they regulate activities.	1	1.08
7	Book	Because they know the regulations.	1	1.08
8	Stress	Because they always criticize us and make us stressful.	1	1.08
9	Archer	Because they are focused on the target.	1	1.08
10	Typewriter	They complain about anything.	1	1.08
11	Detective	They always look for a criminal.	1	1.08
12	Paper	Because they live with the regulations.	1	1.08
13	Bureaucracy	They carry out their tasks in the best way possible.	1	1.08
14	Nervous System	Because they report the problems in the system to the brain.	1	1.08
15	Mother-in-law	Because they are fussy and claim to know anything.	1	1.08
16	Lighthouse	Because they lead the way and provide light in the dark.	1	1.08
17	Traveler	Because they are always in pursuit of something.	1	1.08
18	Nitpicker	Because they observe one's deficiencies.	1	1.08
19	Guardian	Because they claim that whatever they say is true.	1	1.08
20	Bailiff	Because they inspect and appraise teachers.	1	1.08
21	Hard Disk	Because they are just a legal legislation store.	1	1.08
22	Prosecutor	Because they are interrogative.	1	1.08
23	Computer Program	Because they distribute the program loaded in Ankara to each school.	1	1.08

24	Supervisor	Because they enable tasks and responsibilities to be done in a more proper way.	1	1.08
25	Problem	Because they look for defects.	1	1.08
26	Law	Because they draw their strength from the regulations.	1	1.08
27	Zero	Far be it from me!	1	1.08
28	Politician	Perfect on paper, weak in practice.	1	1.08
29	Painkiller	Should be used when necessary not all the time.	1	1.08
	Total		92	100

The participants created a total of 29 metaphors for education inspectors. The metaphors represented by the highest number of teachers were computer (21 teachers) and commander (21 teachers). Teachers who see the school manager as the person who possesses required information produced the metaphor of "computer"; whereas those who see the school manager as grim-faced and not open to criticism produced the metaphor of "commander".

The teachers likened education inspectors to computers apparently on the grounds that they have both theoretical and practical knowledge about the educational process whereas they drew a parallel between education inspectors and commanders mainly on the grounds that education inspectors are considered as individuals that are simply memorizers, not open to criticism and sulky. Furthermore, the participants that created the metaphors computer and commander had a positive and negative opinion of education inspectors respectively.

Table 2: Classification of the metaphors created by the teachers for education inspectors as living or non-living things.

	Metaphors created out of living things	F	%	Metaphors created out of non-living things	F	%
1	Commander	21	22.82	Computer	21	22.82
2	Soldier	7	7.60	Pencil	17	18.47
3	Parrot	2	2.17	Eraser	1	1.08
4	Archer	1	1.08	Book	1	1.08
5	Detective	1	1.08	Stress	1	1.08
6	Mother-in-law	1	1.08	Typewriter	1	1.08
7	Traveler	1	1.08	Paper	1	1.08
8	Nitpicker	1	1.08	Bureaucracy	1	1.08
9	Guardian	1	1.08	Nervous System	1	1.08
10	Bailiff	1	1.08	Lighthouse	1	1.08
11	Prosecutor	1	1.08	Hard disk	1	1.08
12	Supervisor	1	1.08	Computer Program	1	1.08
13	Politician	1	1.08	Problem	1	1.08
13				Law	1	1.08
14				Zero	1	1.08
15				Painkiller	1	1.08
	Total	40	43.47	**Total**	52	56.53

The participants created 16 metaphors out of non-living things and another 13 out of living things. The former group of metaphors could be listed in order of representation as follows: *computer* by 21 teachers, *pencil* by 17 teachers and each of the remaining metaphors (*eraser, book, stress, typewriter, paper, bureaucracy, nervous system, lighthouse, hard disk, computer program, problem, law, zero and painkiller*) by 1 teacher. On the other hand, the latter group of metaphors could be listed in order of representation as follows: *commander* by 21 teachers, *soldier* by seven teachers, *parrot* by two teachers and each of the remaining metaphors (*archer, detective, mother-in-law, traveler, nitpicker, guardian, bailiff, prosecutor, supervisor and politician*) by one teacher. The numbers of teachers who created metaphors out of living and non-living things were 40 and 52 respectively, which shows that teachers prefer to create more metaphors out of non-living things.

Table 3: Classification of the reasons for the metaphors by the teachers for education inspectors as positive and negative.

	Metaphors with a positive meaning	F	%	*Metaphors with a negative meaning*	F	%
1	Computer	21	22.82	Commander	21	22.82
2	Pencil	17	18.47	Soldier	7	7.60
3	Eraser	1	1.08	Parrot	2	2.17
4	Book	1	1.08	Stress	1	1.08
5	Archer	1	1.08	Typewriter	1	1.08
6	Nervous System	1	1.08	Detective	1	1.08
7	Lighthouse	1	1.08	Paper	1	1.08
8	Traveler	1	1.08	Bureaucracy	1	1.08
9	Supervisor	1	1.08	Mother-in-law	1	1.08
10	Bureaucracy	1	1.08	Nitpicker	1	1.08
11				Guardian	1	1.08
12				Bailiff	1	1.08
13				Hard disk	1	1.08
14				Prosecutor	1	1.08
15				Problem	1	1.08
16				Law	1	1.08
17				Zero	1	1.08
18				Politician	1	1.08
19				Painkiller	1	1.08
	Total	**46**	**50**	**Total**	**46**	**50**

A look at the reasons for the metaphors suggests that the teachers created ten of them with a positive opinion in mind whereas the remaining 19 were created for negative reasons. Even so, the percentage of metaphors created for positive reasons was equal to the percentage of metaphors created for negative reasons. Therefore, the number of teachers who had a positive opinion of education inspectors was the same as the number of teachers who thought negatively about them.

The analysis of the metaphors yielded five themes, namely "problem, information, task, balance and enlightening". A total of nine metaphors fell into the theme "problem". The theme represented by the highest number of teachers was "information" (42 teachers) while the theme "task" was represented by 35 teachers.

Table 4: The metaphors in the theme "Problem"

	Problem	F	%
1	Parrot	2	2.17
2	Stress	1	1.08
3	Typewriter	1	1.08
4	Detective	1	1.08
5	Nitpicker	1	1.08
6	Guardian	1	1.08
7	Problem	1	1.08
8	Zero	1	1.08
9	Mother-in-law	1	1.08
	Total	**10**	**10.81**

There were nine metaphors in the theme "problem". They were represented by a total of 10 teachers. The metaphor represented by the highest number of teachers was "parrot" (two teachers). On the other hand, teachers who produced the metaphor of "parrot" stated that education supervisors are people "who continuously repeat same things but never create new ones".

The reasons for the metaphors in the theme were as follows: repeating the same words but never producing new things (parrot), always criticizing teachers and making them stressful (stress), complaining about everything (typewriter), always looking for a criminal (detective), observing

one's deficiencies (nitpicker), claiming that whatever they say is true (guardian), creating a negative atmosphere all the time (problem), far it be from me (zero), and being fussy and claiming to know anything (mother-in-law).

Table 5: The metaphors in the theme "information"

	Information	F	%
1	Computer	21	22.82
2	Pencil	17	18.47
3	Book	1	1.08
4	Paper	1	1.08
5	Hard disk	1	1.08
6	Law	1	1.08
	Total	**42**	**45.36**

There were six metaphors in the theme "information". They were represented by a total of 42 teachers. They could be listed in order of representation as follows: *computer* by 21 teachers, *pencil* by 17 teachers and each of the remaining metaphors in the theme by one teacher. The reasons for the metaphors in the theme were as follows: the person with necessary information (computer), writing about teachers (pencil), knowing all the regulations (book), living with the regulations (paper), just being a legal legislation store (hard disk), and drawing their strength from the regulations (law).

Table 6: The metaphors in the theme "task"

	Task	F	%
1	Commander	21	22.82
2	Soldier	7	7.60
3	Eraser	1	1.08
4	Archer	1	1.08
5	Bureaucracy	1	1.08
6	Nervous System	1	1.08
7	Bailiff	1	1.08
8	Computer Program	1	1.08
9	Supervisor	1	1.08
	Total	**35**	**37.8**

There were nine metaphors in the theme "task". They were represented by a total of 35 teachers. The one represented by the highest number of teachers was *commander* (21 teachers), which was followed by *soldier* (seven teachers). Each of the remaining metaphors (*eraser, archer, bureaucracy, nervous system, bailiff, computer program and supervisor*) was represented by one teacher. The reasons for the metaphors in the theme were as follows: being simple memorizers, not open to criticism and sulky (commander), giving orders because of receiving orders (soldier), regulating the activities (eraser), focusing on the target (archer), carrying out their tasks in the best way possible (bureaucracy), reporting the problems in the system to the brain (nervous system), inspecting and appraising teachers (bailiff), distributing the program loaded at the center to the schools (computer program), and enabling tasks and responsibilities to be carried out in a more proper way (supervisor).

Table 7: The metaphors in the theme "balance"

	Balance	F	%
1	Politician	1	1.08
2	Painkiller	1	1.08
	Total	**2**	**2.16**

There were two metaphors in the theme "balance". Each of the two metaphors in the theme was represented by one teacher. The reasons for these metaphors were because they are perfect on paper but weak in practice (politician) and they should be used when necessary not all the time

(painkiller).

Table 8: The metaphors in the theme "enlightening"

The theme "enlightening"		F	%
1	Lighthouse	1	1.08
2	Traveler	1	1.08
3	Prosecutor	1	1.08
	Total	**3**	**3.24**

There were three metaphors in the theme "enlightening". Each was represented by one teacher. The reasons for the metaphors in the theme were as follows: leading the way and providing light in the dark (lighthouse), always being in pursuit of something (traveler), and being interrogative (prosecutor).

Discussion and Conclusion

The participants created a total of 29 metaphors in the study, whose purpose was to reveal teachers' mental perceptions of education inspectors. They were categorized as living and non-living metaphors. According to the categorization, 13 of them had been created out of living things whereas the remaining 16 of them had been created out of non-living things. A total of 52 teachers based their metaphors on non-living things while another 40 based their metaphors on living things. In addition, the metaphors were more often of negative origin (Yıldırım, 2012; Tekin and Yılmaz, 2012). A look at the reasons for the metaphors suggests that the teachers created ten of them with a positive opinion in mind whereas the remaining 19 were created for negative reasons. The finding makes one think that teachers have a negative opinion of education inspectors, which is supported by Töremen and Döş's (2009) article entitled "primary school teachers' metaphorical perceptions of inspection". Similar findings were found by Sümbül and İnandı (2005). The metaphors created by the participants fell into certain themes. With nine metaphors for each one, the most popular themes were "problem" and task". The metaphors in the former were represented by 10 teachers while the ones in the latter were represented by 35 teachers. The finding suggests that teachers commonly focus on the concept "task" as for as education inspectors are concerned.

Another popular theme was "information", which contained six metaphors. These metaphors were represented by 42 teachers, which makes it the theme represented by the highest number of participants. The reasons for the metaphors in this theme suggest that teachers more often focus on education inspectors' competence in laws and regulations. There were a total of five metaphors in the themes "balance" and "enlightening"- two in "balance" and the remaining three in "enlightening". The metaphors in the former indicate that the teachers emphasized both positive and negative aspects of education inspectors. On the other hand, the ones in the latter suggest that the participants focused on the contributions by education inspectors to the educational process.

The present study provides comprehensive information as to not only how inspectors are perceived but also their behaviors, roles and efficiency. The findings reveal how teachers regard education inspectors. The findings of the study are important in that they provide clues as to teachers' expectations of education inspectors and the areas in which the former would like to get help from the latter. Furthermore, they suggest what kind of approaches education inspectors could adopt towards teachers and what their roles could be. Education inspectors could use the findings of the present study as a tool of professional self-evaluation. In this way, they can determine the extent to which they are competent in their profession and what they can do to carry out their profession in a more efficient and effective way.

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