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# The primary school teacher candidates' metaphorical thinking about the concept of music

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## Abstract

In recent years, metaphors became the subject and center of the increasing interests in educational sciences. In this study, the purpose is to determine metaphorical thoughts of primary school teacher candidates' about the concept of music. With the convenience sampling, 85 primary school teacher candidates' participated to this study. Data was collected through the participants' completion of the prompt "Music is like . . . because . . ." by focusing on a simile. The data obtained in the study was analyzed by using qualitative techniques. According to the results, totally 38 valid metaphors were identified and they are collected under 7 different conceptual categories.

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*Keywords:* Primary school teacher candidates, music, metaphors of music.

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, there were many studies conducted to investigate the metaphors in music. Writers such as Bonds (1992), Coker (1972), Ferguson (1960), and Marion (1981, 1991) have written with great insight on the central role of metaphor in music (Johnson & Larson, 2003:64). Lawrence Zbikowski (1997, 1998) has performed analyses from a metaphorical viewpoint, and the articles in Pople (1997) discuss the application of metaphor theory to musicology from different viewpoints (Michelsen, 2001). Jungaberle, Verres and DuBois (2001) has studied musical metaphors extensively.

Conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and studies of gestures (McNeill, 1992) suggest that metaphor is a symbolic or cognitive process which reflects how people think (Chuang, 2010:24).

According to Spitzer (2004), the meaning of music resides in how we choose to hear it, in other words, through the different conceptual frames we impose to organise an informed understanding of our experience. And these frames are mediated through metaphor.

Clearly music is indeed abstract and sufficiently elusive that we are often forced to describe it using metaphors, attempting to describe the abstract qualities by making use of more concrete and familiar experiences (Chuang, 2010:23).

"The metaphor cannot be eliminated from the description of music, because it defines the intentional object of the musical experience. Take the metaphor away, and you cease to describe the experience of music" (Scruton, 1997:92).

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Rice (1998) points out that music is a field propitious to the creation of metaphors, and the nature of music is understood and expressed through metaphor' (Rice, 1998, p. 5). Rice proposes five metaphors for music: music is art, music is a commodity, music is text, music is history and music is a conversation (Txakartegi & Gómez, 2008:340).

Although an increase is seen in the researches that metaphors used in different fields of education, it has been seen that there isn't any research made to reveal the metaphors that the primary school teacher candidates have concerning "music" concept.

The purpose of this study is to reveal the perceptions of primary school teacher candidates on the concept of music through metaphors. The study specifically looks for answers to the following questions:

1. What are the metaphors that primary school teacher candidates have on the concept of music?
2. Which conceptual categories can be grouped under the common features in terms of these metaphors?

## **2. Method**

This research has been carried on with the participation of totally 85 students from 2nd grade students who completed their music education and the students who already have education in Primary School Teaching Program of Faculty of Education in Mersin University in 2010-2011 academic years.

Each of the students is asked to complete the sentence "Music is like.....because....." to introduce the metaphor they have regarding the music concept of the students who participated into the research.

According to Saban (2009), in the researches that metaphor is used as a research tool, the term "like" is generally used to definitively associate with the connection between "the subject of metaphor" and "the source of metaphor" and the term "because" is used to show a reason (or a logical reference) for the participants' own metaphors. These compositions that the students put down on paper have been used as data source in this research becoming one each "document" and "paper".

The data obtained have been used by using content analysis technique. The basic aim in content analysis is to reach the relationships and terms to explain the data gathered. The data summarized and commented in descriptive analysis is processed to deeper procedure and the terms and concepts which couldn't be noticed through descriptive analysis can be discovered in consequence of this analysis. For this purpose, the data obtained should firstly be conceptualized then organized according to the terms occurred and the terms which explain the data should be determined (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011:227).

Throughout the process of analysis of the data, a temporary list has been made according to alphabetical order. For this reason, the metaphors that the students wrote have been coded (water, medicine, sea, love, etc) and the papers which do not include any metaphor and empty papers (3 numbers) have been eliminated.

In the second step, after the papers which include weak metaphor image have been eliminated, valid metaphors have been obtained. The common subjects of metaphors have been determined after the properties have been analyzed in terms of the subject of metaphor and the source of metaphor. In the next step, the metaphors that their common points are determined have been categorized in terms of their properties.

To provide the validity of the data, all the metaphors created and their meanings have been explained in the research report as original statements. Reporting the data collected and explaining the research results have one of the important parts of validity in a qualitative research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011:257). In this research, data analysis process has been explained in a detailed way and the metaphors collected, metaphor list and metaphor images that are thought to symbolize any category have been given place in findings part.

### 3. Findings

According to the results, totally 38 metaphors were identified by participants and they are collected under 7 different conceptual categories. These metaphors and categories were as follows

**Table 1. Metaphors of Primary School teacher candidates' about the concept of "music"**

Metaphors	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Metaphors	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Balance	1	1,18	Painting	1	1,18
Breath	1	1,18	Part of the Soul	1	1,18
Butterfly	1	1,18	Poetry	2	2,35
Emotion	1	1,18	Reflections of the Soul	1	1,18
Favorite food	1	1,18	Rehabilitation	4	4,70
Flower	4	4,70	River	1	1,18
Flowing of the river	1	1,18	Sea	2	2,35
Football	1	1,18	Scream	2	2,35
Food	3	3,52	Silent Cinema	1	1,18
Freedom	2	2,35	Soul	1	1,18
Friend	4	4,70	Station	1	1,18
Life	6	7,05	Sun	1	1,18
Living	3	3,52	Taking a shower	1	1,18
Love	5	5,88	Thinking	1	1,18
Medicine	5	5,88	Vehicle	1	1,18
Mirror	2	2,35	Vessel	1	1,18
Mother	1	1,18	Water	9	10,58
Nature	1	1,18	Waterfall	1	1,18
Nourishes of the Soul	9	10,58	Word	1	1,18

As seen in table 1 students were identified totally 38 metaphors. 23 of them were mentioned by only one participant. Other metaphors are listed in descending order as follows; **“water”** (f:9, 10,58% ), **“nourishes of the soul”** (f: 9,10,58%), **“life”** (f: 6, 7,05%), **“medicine”** (f: 5, 5,88%), **“love”** (f: 5, 5,88%), **“rehabilitation”** (f:4 , 4,70%), **“flower”** (f: 4, 4,70%), **“friend”** (f:4 , 4,70%), **“food”** (f:3 , 3,52%), **“living”** (f:3 , 3,52%), **“freedom”** (f:2 , 2,35%), **“mirror”** (f:2 , 2,35%), **“poetry”** (f:2 , 2,35%), **“sea”** (f:2 , 2,35%), **“scream”** (f:2 , 2,35%).

**Table 2. Categories of the Primary School Teacher candidates' Metaphors**

CategoriesMetaphors		Frequency (f)	Percentage(%)
Music as an expression, sharing and reflection of the feelings the soul, silent cinema	flower, life, emotion, painting, scream love, mirror, word, poetry, reflections of	26	30,58
Benefits and as a therapy of music water, flowing of the river, vehicle part of the soul, rehabilitation, sun	medicine, nourishes of the soul, friend	24	28,24
Music which gives happiness, relaxes, feeds and rests	favorite food, sea, taking a shower friend, freedom, butterfly, soul, medicine	12	14,12
Music as a life and source of life	water, vessel, food, breath, balance	12	14,12

Essential	living, mother , food	5	5,88
Music which shows continuity	waterfall, river, nature, thinking	4	4,71
Universal music	football, station	2	2,35

The direct quotations of the 7 conceptual categories that were developed by participants include the following:

### 1. Music as an expression, sharing and reflection of the feelings

*"Music is like a flower; because it provides people to express their feelings"*

*"Music is like a painting; because it plays a role in the transfer of feelings and thoughts..."*

### 2. Benefits and as a therapy of music

*"Music is like medicine; because it gives strength to the person. The person takes medicine and becomes good when s/he is ill so it is good for a person to listen music when s/he is in psychologically bad mood."*

*"Music is like water; because it relaxes the person...makes the soul fine and free."*

*"Music is like sun; because it enlightens the soul"*

### 3. Music which gives happiness, relaxes, feeds and rests

*"Music is like medicine; because it makes you feel relaxed and rested when you listen."*

*"Music is like a friend; because you relax when you listen."*

*"Music is like taking shower; I become comfortable as I listen."*

*"Music is like sea; because it gives eternal peace like sea..."*

### 4. Music as a life and source of life

*"Music is like vessels which provide living; because a person left without music is considered to have lost one of its blood vessels..."*

*"Music is like water; because just as there's not a life without water, there is not life without music."*

*"Music is like water; because water is the most important life source of a person in life. How the water enables people to continue their life by meeting their physical needs, music enables people to improve their souls and live."*

### 5. Essential

*"Music is like a mother; because it is our inseparable part like a mother..."*

*"Music is like a food; because I cannot do without music just like food"*

### 6. Music which shows continuity

*"Music is like waterfall; because the voices flow one after another over and over again."*

### 7. Universal music

*"Music is like football; because it appeals to the world."*

## 4. Result and Conclusion

According to the results, totally 38 metaphors identified by 85 participants and they are collected under 7 different conceptual categories. The 7 conceptual categories that were developed by participants include the following:

(1) 26 participants imagined music as an expression, sharing (30,58%), which encompassed the metaphors of flower, life, emotion, painting, scream, love, sun, mirror, word, poetry, reflections of the soul, silent cinema. (2) 24 participants conceived *music benefits and as a therapy* (28,24%), which encompassed the metaphors of medicine, nourishes of the soul, friend, water, flowing of the river, part of the soul, rehabilitation, vehicle. (3) 12 participants imagined *music* which gives happiness, relaxes, feeds and rests (14,12%), which encompassed the metaphors of favorite food, sea, taking a shower, friend, freedom, butterfly, soul and medicine. (4) 12 participants envisioned *music as a life and source of life* (14,12%), which encompassed the metaphors of water, vessel, food, breath, balance. (5) 5 participants perceived *music essential* (5,88%), which encompassed the metaphors of living, mother, food. (6) 4 participants imagined *music* which shows continuity (4,71%), which encompassed the metaphors of waterfall, river,

nature and thinking (7) 2 participants imagined *music* universal (2,35%), which encompassed the metaphors of football and station. “Water” is the most widely used metaphor under the category of “*music as a life and source of life*”. Jungaberle, Verres and DuBois (2000) has studied musical metaphors extensively. In their review a series of core metaphors was identified like ‘*Music is water, Music is landscape*, because it expresses the spaciousness of music-there is ‘room for everyone’, and most people can ‘find their place’ in the music(Wigram, Pedersen & Bonde, 2002:103).

The categories and the metaphors that the students state, show similarity with the definition and functions of the music.Langer (1957) defined music as ‘a tonal analogue of emotive life’ (Woody, 2002).According to Hoffman, music is a language of the emotions ( Alperson, 1987:8).Music serves many functions. Kaplan (1990, p.28), Merriam (1964, pp.209-27)and Gaston (1968) identifies several functions of music like emotional expression ,therapy,moral and gratification( Abeles, Hoffer & Klotman, 1994).

As a result metaphors can be used as a powerful research tool to understand the prospective teachers’ personal insights on the educational phenomena such as music.

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