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#### **Pictorial** and Narrative Representations of Children's Peace **Perceptions**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study is to reveal children's perceptions of peace through drawings and semi-structured interviews. The second aim of the research is to make inferences about peace education based on the results. Participants consist of 22 students aged 11-12 studying at a public school in Karlsruhe / Pforzheim. The study was designed with phenomenological research method. The data were analyzed by semiotic analysis of the drawings and content analysis of semi-structured interviews. As a result of drawings and interview analysis in the study, the meaning of peace was revealed to be at most "positive peace." Although students mostly used peace icons, indexes and symbols in their peace drawings, they also used about half of the icons, indexes and symbols of war. In the interviews, the meaning of peace was most defined as "interpersonal peace", which is the most common theme related to positive peace in the literature, secondly "general social peace" and least "peace in nature." About half of the children defined peace as "the absence of war" both in drawings and negotiations. In the discussions on the meaning of peace, negative peace was defined mostly as "negative interpersonal peace", secondly, similar to the common perception in the literature, "absence of the war", and least "negative individual peace."

Keywords: Concept of peace, children's drawings, peace education

# Çocukların Barış Algılarının Resimli ve Anlatısal Temsilleri

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, çocukların barış algılarını çizimler ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla ortaya çıkarmaktır. Araştırmanın alt amacı sonuçlardan yola çıkarak barış eğitimi konusunda çıkarımlar yapmaktır. Katılımcılar, Karlsruhe / Pforzheim'da bir devlet okulunda okuyan 11-12 yaş arası 22 öğrenciden oluşmaktadır. Çalışma fenomenolojik araştırma yöntemi ile tasarlanmıştır. Veriler, çizimlerin göstergebilimsel analizi ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerin tümevarımsal içerik analizi ile analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada yapılan çizimler ve röportaj analizi sonucunda barışın anlamı en fazla "pozitif barış" olarak ortaya çıktı. Öğrenciler barış çizimlerinde çoğunlukla barış ikonları, indeksler ve semboller kullansalar da, savaş ikonlarının, indekslerinin ve sembollerinin yaklaşık yarısını da kullandılar. Görüşmelerde barışın anlamı en çok literatürdeki pozitif barışla ilgili en yaygın tema olan "kişilerarası barış", ikincisi "genel sosyal barış" ve en az "doğada barış" olarak tanımlandı. Çocukların yaklaşık yarısı barışı hem çizimlerde hem de müzakerelerde "savaşın olmaması" olarak tanımladı. Barışın anlamı üzerine yapılan görüşmelerde olumsuz barış, çoğunlukla "olumsuz kişiler arası barış", ikinci olarak literatürdeki ortak algıya benzer şekilde "savaşın yokluğu" ve en azından "olumsuz bireysel barış" olarak tanımlandı.

Anahtar kelimeler: Barış kavramı, çocuk resimleri, barış eğitimi

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# 1 | INTRODUCTION

In the literature, the essential features of peace are mentioned its social dimension and its universal dimension in terms of its acceptance in all cultures (Fogarty, 1992). Although there are still debates in the definitions of peace, peace is generally perceived in two dimensions as positive peace and negative peace. In the literature, negative peace relates to the denial of adverse conditions, "the absence of war, the absence of the war activities, or a decline in conflict" (Galtung, 1969). It means the elimination of all forms of direct violence (harassment, armed violence, fighting, etc.). Positive peace goes beyond "the end of war and physical violence, addressing the need for justice, equity, democracy and an end to structural violence (oppression, exploitation, racism, poverty, etc...)" (Ardizzone, 2002).

According to the literature, peace education could be defined as "teaching individuals the knowledge, attitudes, values and behavioral competencies required to resolve conflicts and establish and maintain mutually beneficial and harmonious relationships" (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). The positive and negative understanding of peace used by educators reveals the goals of peace education. The primary purpose of education for negative peace is to develop an informed citizen to achieve peace and disarmament. Education for positive peace focuses on removing all structural and cultural barriers to peace and creating real peace (Ardizzone, 2002). The ultimate goal of peace education, which is a multi-disciplinary and international field, is to create fair and sustainable futures "between individuals (personal peace), individuals (peace between individuals), groups (peace between groups), countries, societies, and cultures (international peace)" (Hicks, 1988; Johnson & Johnson, 2005). Achieving peace is a universal aspiration. The most crucial point in peace education is that education programs are prepared regarding the contextual environment in which children live (Harris, 2009) because children tend to use and store the information close to their experiences (Frias, 2008).

Over the past 30 years, many studies have explored how children understand war and peace. Children's perceptions of peace are mostly found in studies investigating their perceptions of war and peace together. The literature has shown that children of different ages, genders, and socio-cultural and contextual settings could highlight different aspects of peace (Frias, 2008; Oppenheimer & Kuipers, 2003). However, the literature shows more existence of some common themes in children's understanding of peace, regardless of these differences, in studies conducted both by written and verbal methods and through drawings. Negative peace, as a common theme in children's perceptions of peace, is largely perceived as the absence of war, conflict, and quarrels (Covell, Rose-Krasnor, & Fletcher, 1994; Hakvoort, 1996; Hakvoort & Oppenheimer, 1998; Oppenheimer & Kuipers, 2003; Hakvoort & Oppenheimer, 1993; de Souza, Sperb, McCarthy, & Biaggio, 2006; Jabbar & Betawi, 2019; Baring, 2013; Walker, Myers-Bowman, & Myers-Walls, 2003). It has been observed that the most common theme of positive peace in children's perceptions of peace is related to "interpersonal interactions such as treating people well, sharing and being friends" (Covell et al., 1994; de Souza et al., 2006; Frias, 2008; Hakvoort, 1996; Hakvoort & Oppenheimer, 1998; Oppenheimer & Kuipers, 2003; Walker et al., 2003). Oppenheimer and Kuipers (2003) conducted a study with 10-year-old Filipino children using the methodology developed by Hakvoort (1996) and used in different socio-cultural and contextual settings (Hakvoort & Oppenheimer, 1998). These Filipino children, who do not face any environment of war and conflict, in line with the findings of 10-year-olds elsewhere, understood primarily negative peace as "the absence of war, conflict, and violence". In a study by Walker and his colleagues with children aged 3-12 in the United States shortly after the Yugoslavia-NATO conflict, two main themes related to peace emerged from the war and peace drawings: peace as interpersonal interaction and peace as negative peace/absence of war. Walker and colleagues found that the findings in the drawings were similar to verbal responses of Australian children (Hall, 1993), Canadian children (Covell et al., 1994), Swedish and Dutch children (Hakvoort & Hägglund, 2001), and drawings of Northern Irish and English children (McLernon & Cairns, 2001).

As stated above, besides the similarities in the main themes in children's perception of peace, some studies have seen differences in sub-themes because of socio-cultural and contextual differences (Baring,

2013; Frias, 2008; Jabbar & Betawi, 2019; McLernon & Cairns, 2001). Frias (2008) analyzed war and peace drawings of children aged 8-13 from South Korean, US, and Filipino cultural backgrounds. The results showed that the children's drawings of peace supported the literature on the main themes. However, Frias identified some intercultural differences in micro-level sub-themes under general themes. Although there is the theme of "positive actions and interactions"; interpersonal level activities such as "helping others, playing together and making friends" in children from Flipino and the USA, it did not exist in South Korean children's drawings of peace. South Korean children associated peace with positive social action, using images of groups "holding hands and shaking hands" to reach agreements. Frias says that this cultural difference at the micro-level in peace themes could result from due to the tension with North Korea, and therefore children could perceive peace at the international level. Similarly, unlike the South Korean and Filipino-American peers' drawings, the pictures of US children did not contain images of leaders and presidents who came together to end the war. Frias says this difference could attribute to the absence of a real war around the USA. The peace pictures of Filipino-American children had Christmas celebrations not found in the drawings of their South Korean and US peers. Frias states that this difference could be attributed to that the Filipinos are predominantly Catholic, and religious holidays are often celebrated with fun and friendship in the Filipino culture. In the study conducted by McLernon and Cairns (2001), primary school children aged 6-7 in Northern Ireland with high and low political and sectarian violence were compared with primary school children in a region non-violent in England. Northern Irish children emphasized the concept of negative peace as the "absence of war" more than British children. Many images indicated that the war was over. There were images of armies laying down their weapons or soldiers getting on board to go home. On the other hand, it is seen that English children draw pictures of nature and religion. Mclernon and Cairns found that drawings generally support the findings in studies using children's verbal explanations (Covell et al., 1994; Hakvoort & Oppenheimer, 1993; Hall, 1993).

This research aims to understand children's perceptions of peace through drawings and semi-structured interviews. As mentioned above, war and peace drawings of children from different cultural backgrounds were mostly analyzed by quantitative methods or content analysis. (Baring, 2013; Bedir & Demir, 2012; Cengelci Kose & Gurdogan Bayir, 2016; Frias, 2008; Jabbar & Betawi, 2019; McLernon & Cairns, 2001; Walker et al., 2003). None of these studies did analyze the pictures according to Pierce's semiotics scheme. In this sense, it is thought that this study will contribute to the literature on children's perceptions of peace in terms of semiotics. Moreover, previous research did not compare qualitative categories of children's perceptions of peace to each other so widely as far as we know. Another aim of this study is to try to make inferences about the qualities of peace education given to children based on children's perceptions of peace.

# 2 | METHOD

#### RESEARCH DESIGN

A phenomenological design was used in the research. "Phenomenological design aims to reveal and interpret individual perceptions related to a specific phenomenon" (Creswell, 2012). In this qualitative study, semi-structured interviews with children about peace, children's narratives about pictures, and pictures of peace were used to understand children's perceptions of peace. Interviews are one of the most important data collection techniques in qualitative research. In semi-structured interviews, interview questions are prepared in advance by the researcher. However, in some cases, it may be necessary to ask new questions depending on the interview course (Karasar, 2009). Pictorial representations have recently played a central role in postmodernist research (Finley, 2011). It was found that "information presented to children is represented mentally, and reproduced from memory in images and modes of representation that suit themselves" (Eng, 1973). One of the main reasons visual research methods are seen as more suitable for working with children is commonly seen as "child-centered" (Mitchell, 2006). As drawings quickly reveal cognitive and communicative skills related to being a child, particularly suitable for pre-

adolescence. Drawings could compensate for the deficiencies in children's verbal abilities, facilitate expressions, and reveal the details verbally conveyed by children (Gross & Hayne, 1998). In this sense, children can reflect their personal, social, and cultural experiences on their peace representations by expressing images about peace graphically (Emmison & Smith, 2000). According to the semiotic approach, the indicator consisting of the signifier and the signified is a substitute for anything for a person in any capacity or any way (Saussure, 2011). Pierre Guiraud, in general terms, defines semiotics as "the science of non-linguistic communication sciences." In this definition, semiotics constitutes the methodological basis of semiotics that examine non-linguistic objects (Guiraud, 1975). Semiotically, symbols take the form of words, sounds, gestures, and objects (Chandler, 2007). Thus, drawing an object allows us to understand how the drawing person perceives that object. Semiotics is an important resource for understanding the pictures that enable children to express themselves and perform a communication function (Bayav, 2006).

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

Participants of this study consist of 22 volunteer students from among those who participated in the "Friedensplackat" peace drawings contest organized by Lions Club Pforzheim in Schlössle-Galerie in Pforzheim/ Karlsruhe region of Baden-Würtenberg state of Germany. There were over 100 drawings in the exhibition. After these pictures were recorded, letters about the research were written to the art teachers of the three schools in order to connect with students and their families. Feedback came only from the Kepler Gymnasium art teacher. Aiming that the study reflects the diversity of children living in Germany, a total of 31 research permission letters were sent to the families of children from different races and ethnic backgrounds through Kepler Gymnasium art teacher. 22 families made positive feedback. However, most of the participants were families of native German children. Although some students and families were tried to be contacted again to increase the diversity of participation, no positive feedback was received. In this sense, since the conditions for maximum variation sample did not occur, 22 volunteering students could be included in the study through convenience sampling. Of the 22 students aged 11-12, 18 were girls and 4 were boys. 20 of the participants were German, 1 Turkish and 1 Hungarian. 8 of the students were Evangelical, 6 were Religious, 4 were Muslim and 4 were Catholic.

### DATA COLLECTION

The research was conducted in April of the 2017-2018 academic year at the Kepler Gymnasium in Pforzheim. Two Turkish translators who can translate from German to Turkish participated with me in the research. The translators were prospective teachers with pedagogical formation. First, the researcher and translators came together and shared information about the investigation. With the art teacher Frau Jost's permission, a separate part of the art class was allocated for research. Two translators and researchers were present together in all interviews. Individual interviews were face-to-face to feel comfortable with students. It was explained to the children that they could finish the interview whenever they want, ask for time for rest. Also, it was announced that they could say that they did not want to answer any question. Besides, it was noted that the correct and incorrect answers would not be questioned, and their identity information will not be used in the research. Firstly, to understand the proper way and what the students expressed in their paintings, 22 students were interviewed about their drawings one by one. Then, three open-ended questions about peace were asked to get their opinions about peace based on their verbal statements: i. What is peace? ii. What could be the barriers to peace? iii. What would you do to spread peace in the world? Because participants do not want to have audio recordings, the interviews about the drawings and the answers to the open-ended questions were written down by the translators at that moment. There was no time limit for students to freely freely express their ideas, and the research was carried out in a very comfortable environment. The interviews about the drawings for each participant lasted between 7-10 minutes. Responses to open-ended questions took between 10-12 minutes. Considering the average 30-35 minutes that children drew peace drawings before, in this study, at least 45-50 minutes are allocated to each student.

#### DATA ANALYSIS

Peace drawings were analyzed according to Pierce's semiotic scheme (Hoopes, 1991). If the elements included in the drawings are expressed with their literal and real meaning, they were classified as "icon." If they had a cause-effect relationship, the drawings were classified as "index." When were expressed in a symbolic sense; they were classified as "symbol." An important classification created by Pierce is the "icon, index ve symbol" trio. The icon is an indicator that directly portrays what it indicates. The icons are in direct relation with the object it evokes, though not exactly. It is similar to its item. If the elements we see in a child's picture remind us more or less what he wants to show, it means that the drawings have the icon's feature. The index is an indicator determined by that object because of the actual relationship it establishes with the symptom object. For example, whether smoke is a symptom of fire depends on the cause-effect relationship between two things. Symbols do not have to resemble the one shown (Guiraud, 1975). It is a symbolic indicator based on consensus. The child's drawing of a dove in a picture about peace shows his/her ability to use meaningful symbolic functions. The symbolic expression is not just with forms. A person who is aware of the symbolic values of colors, for example, can use black in themes such as despair and disappearance (Bayav, 2006; Guiraud, 1975). Semi-structured interviews about peace were analyzed with content analysis. The purpose of the content analysis is to obtain concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data. Content analysis steps are to encode data, define themes, organize and define themes according to codes, and interpret findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The analysis in this study is not based on a previous theory. The study is a descriptive and exploratory qualitative study based on the information obtained from this sample. In this study, it was aimed to reveal children's perceptions of peace by seeking answers to the following questions through interviews: i. What are the indicators used by students in the drawings? ii. What are the visual icons, indexes, and symbols in the drawings? iii. What qualitative themes emerge from children's responses to open-ended questions about the meaning of peace, the spread, and obstacles to peace? iv. What are the similarities and differences between the themes that emerged from this study and those from previous studies? MAXQDA software (2018.2.4 version) was used for data analysis. After the researcher coded the interviews, meticulously created a chart from the codes, this chart was prepared according to the table suggested by Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

### TRUSTWORTHINESS OF RESEARCH

In this study, data were collected and analyzed using two different methods. In phenomenological research design, participants are chosen for their experience being researched (Baker, Wuest, & Stern, 1992). In this study, 22 students who drew pictures about peace were interviewed about peace. The analysis of the interviews was deepened and reinforced by the semiotic analysis of children's peace drawings. A male and female interpreter joined at each interview. Children from German and other racial and ethnic backgrounds participated in the study. After the researcher meticulously coded the interviews, created a chart from the codes, this chart was prepared according to the table suggested by guests and colleagues (Guest et al., 2006). With the code chart prepared, the data was sent to a peer who had experience in qualitative analysis. The codings made by the researchers were compared in the "intercoder agreement/min. code intersection rate of X% at the segment level [%]" section in the maxqda (MAXQDA, 2018, version 2.4). The result of the 'Kappa test' was 96. 4%. According to the "symbol, index, and symbol" scheme, the art-based analysis was first coded by the researcher. Then drawings were sent to a lecturer in the art teaching department, and some codes were checked mutually, and the final form of coding was given.

#### RESEARCH ETHICS

Before collecting the data of this study conducted in Germany, necessary permissions were obtained from the school where the research was conducted, the art teacher and the parents of the children

participating in the study. All participants in this research participated voluntarily. Participants' identities were preserved in the study. This research titled " Perception of Peace in Children's Drawings and Interviews" was approved by Hacı Bektaş Veli University Ethics Committee with the number 17 meeting dated 22.09.2020.

# 3 | FINDINGS

The findings are presented under two main headings as "findings on the semiotic analysis of peace pictures" and "findings of interviews on the concept of peace." Semiotic analyzes of peace drawings are given as icon, index and symbol according to Pierce's semiotic scheme. The distribution of the intensity of the interviews on peace is given in tables. Since very large tables were needed to give the density table according to individual documents, the tables were given according to religious groups. The aim was to see the general distribution rather than a comparison by religious groups.

### FINDINGS REGARDING THE SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF PEACE DRAWINGS

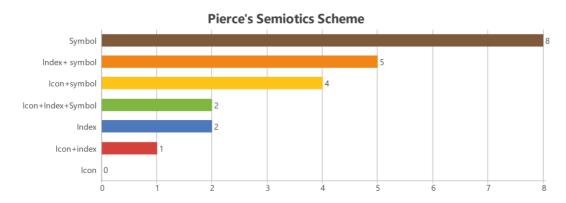


Figure 1. The Indicators Used by The Participants in Their Drawings According to Pierce's Semiotic Scheme

As seen in Figure 1, 8 out of 22 students participating in the study used the symbol sign alone in their peace paintings. Five participants used the index and symbol indicators together. Four participants used the icon and symbol indicator together. Two participants used three types of indicators together. Two participants used index indicators, and one participant icon and index indicator together. No student used the icon indicator alone.

Matrix Browser) Code System Non-religious Muslims Evangelist Catholics SUM Symbols used by students Symbols regarding peace Symbols regarding war 15 Indexes used by students Indexes regarding peace Indexes regarding war Icons used by students Icons regarding peace Icons regarding war ∑ SUM-

Table 1. The Density Distribution Table of the indicators Used by The Participants in Their Pictures (Cod

As seen in Table 1, students mostly used peace icons, indexes, and symbols (56 times). On the other hand, they also used war icons, indexes, and symbols (27 times) to describe peace. Children mostly used the symbols (44 times), second indexes (9 times), and least icons (3 times) regarding peace. Children mostly used the symbols (15 times), secondly icons (8 times), and least indexes (4 times) regarding war.

**Table 2.** Density Distribution Table of the Symbols Related to War And Peace Used by The Participants in Their Peace Drawings



As seen in Table 2, students used many symbols related to peace. They at most used "light colors, Gerald Haltom Peace Symbol, and white Piegon" symbols. Secondly, they drew the symbols of "alive flowers, green, rainbow, and sun." They at most used the symbols "nimbus, dark colors, withered flowers" related to war.

In below, the drawings and the narrations of the two students who used the symbol indicator are.



Drawings 1. Student 9/12-year-old girl

Student's narrative about her drawing: "I painted feathers. I made the background in rainbow colors. This tells me about peace. I adapted the colors to the colors of the rainbow. These colors in the sky tell me about peace. A group of birds' flies near the rainbow, and each of them leaves its feathers as it passes by. In this way, such a picture is formed. My picture is not realistic at all. Because there are no such colorful birds and we cannot see the sky as closely as the picture shows. There were beautiful pictures in the classroom. However, among them, my picture tells about peace the most



Drawings 2. Student 5/12 year-old girl

Student's narrative about her drawing:

"I drew two locks in my picture. The bad side represents the war. The lock is closed here. The good side represents peace. I drew the good and bad sides face to face. The middle key can open both locks. So peace can be achieved through the key. On the good side, the arm of the lock is like a rainbow. The rainbow is a beautiful and positive thing. On the bad side, I painted the arm of the lock brown. Brown shows evil and sadness. I painted the inside of the good lock with light colors. There is a beautiful view of it with the sun, trees, and flowers. I painted the inside of the bad lock with dark colors. It contains rain, lightning, withered flowers, and dried tree."

According to student 9, it is understood that the various birds in the picture lay down their feathers and use the rainbow colors as symbols that express peace. Student 5 expressed his thoughts on peace by using war and peace symbols together.

**Table 3.** Density Distribution Table of The Indexes Related to War And Peace Used by the Participants in Their Peace Drawings.

Code System	Non-religious	Muslims	Evangelist	Catholics	SUM
▼					0
✓					0
Shake hands Shake			-		1
Flower on spaceship (for preventing emission)			-		1
Destruction of all weapons				-	1
			-	-	2
Different skin-colored people together				-	2
💽 Smiling face		-		-	2
✓					0
💽 Torn Geralt Haltom peace symbol (absence of peace)		-			1
				-	1
<b>©</b> Weeping face				-	2
∑ sum	0	2	4	7	13

As seen in Table 3, peace symbols based on the cause-effect relationship that is most commonly used in pictures are "coexistence of various flags, different skin-colored people together, smiling face." Some children stated that it is possible to live together with differences as a result of peace, and they explained this by drawing various flags side by side and drawing people of different skin colors together. Some children stated that as a result of people's love and communication with each other, their faces would smile, and that meant peace. One student drew that peace would occur as a result of the destruction of weapons. Another participant drew a flower on the back of the spaceship he drew. He explained that this flower prevents gas emission. As a result, less carbon dioxide will go to the universe, and peace with nature will be achieved. Another student drew "shake hands" in the middle of the drawings, where he drew the symbols of peace and war side by side and explained that this handshake was the result of peace.

In below, the drawings and the narrations of 2 students using the index indicator are given.



Student's narrative about her drawing:

"The right side in the picture wishes for the world to be what it wants. Everyone here is peaceful, everyone is happy. The left side in the picture describes the current situation; wars and sadness.

Drawings 3. Student 20/12-year-old girl



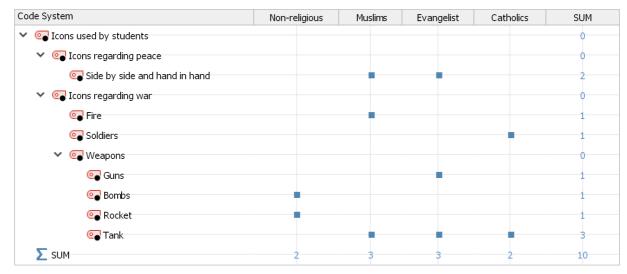
Student's narrative about her drawing:

"I painted a world and it is a rocket that moves away from the world. That rocket symbolizes all weapons so that all weapons and rockets are gone from this world and the war is over. The yellow round thing above is the moon."

**Drawings 4.** Student 21/12-year-old boy

By dividing the Student 20 picture pages into two, he drew to one side of it a peaceful landscape and a smiling person, burning houses and a crying person to another side. It is understood that the student uses the index indicator by establishing a cause-effect relationship between happiness as a result of peace and unhappiness as a result of the war. The student 21 represents all the weapons in his drawing with a rocket. It means that when all weapons are gone from the world, wars will end, and peace will come. From here, it is understood that the student uses the index indicator by establishing a cause-effect relationship between the disappearance of weapons and the arrival of peace.

**Table 4.** Density Distribution Table of icons Regarding War and Peace Used by the Participants in Their Peace Drawings



As is seen in Table 4, children used the least the icons that express the real meaning of the object compared to other indicator types. The children drew more war-related icons in the drawings than did the peace-related ones. They drew the most tank icons about war and drew people holding hand in hand concerning peace.

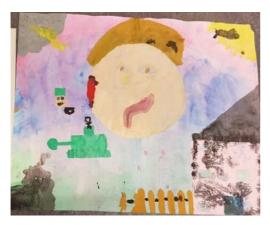
In below, there are examples of drawings which icon + index + symbol indicators are used together.



Drawings 5. Student 10/12-year-old girl

Student's narrative about her drawing:

"In my picture, I wanted to show that the world is interconnected and showed that there can be peace on the earth. I drew a peace sign. Drawing several flags (Germany, France, Spain, Turkey, Italy, Argentina, Finland, Czech Republic) I wanted to show the diversity in the world. The rainbow symbolizes the colorful world. Pigeon is also a symbol of peace. People around the World have different skin colors."



Drawings 6. Student 13/11-year-old girl

Student's narrative about her drawing:

"One half of the human face in the middle symbolizes war, and the other half symbolizes peace. In the half symbolizing the war, tears flow from the eye and there is a wound on his cheek. This shows the severity of the war. Sun is on the top right corner. The sun symbolizes peace. I painted a rain cloud and lightning on the left, which symbolizes the war. I painted a house on the right side of the picture below. I painted a tank and soldiers shooting on the left."

Student 10 used all three types of indicators in his picture. The fact that people are hand in hand and side by side evokes the theme of peace as a literal indicator, which is an icon when looking at the picture.

The student thinks the various flags and people of different skin colors together as a result of peace and uses the index indicator. Besides, the student used the Gerald Haltom Peace Symbol, the white dove, and the rainbow symbols as symbols of peace in his painting. Student 13 also used three types of indicators together. Half of the picture depicts war and the other half peace. The presence of a tank and soldiers firing on one side of the drawing evokes the war as a literal visual indicator, which is an icon. At the same time, the student uses the index indicator by establishing a cause-effect relationship between the presence of wounds and tears on the face and the violence of war. Also, the rain cloud and lightning are depicted as the symbol of war and the sun as the symbol of peace in the drawing.

#### FINDINGS REGARDING THE INTERVIEWS ON THE CONCEPT OF PEACE

#### FINDINGS ON THE MEANING OF PEACE

Table 5. Density Distribution Table of the Participants' Views on the Meaning of the Concept of Peace

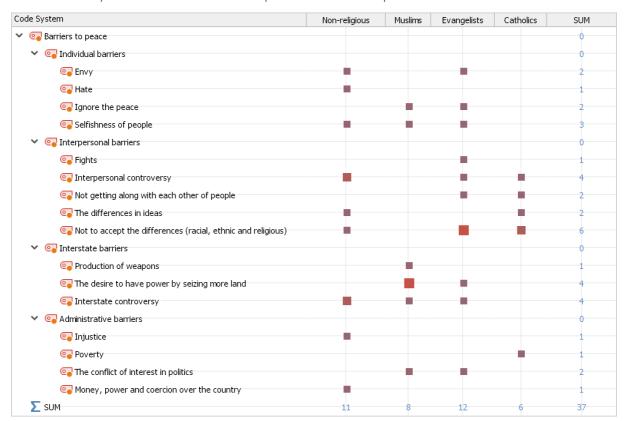


As seen in Table 5, the meaning of peace emerged under two main themes as positive (40 times) and negative peace (35 times). Positive peace consists of 4 sub-categories in order of frequency, "interpersonal peace, general social peace, individual peace and peace in nature." As seen in the table, positive peace concentrates mostly on "interpersonal peace" that emerges through relationships such as "understanding each other, getting along well with each other, being respectful to each other, mutual helping, loving each other of everyone." Secondly, "general social peace" has been expressed the most. Negative peace consists of four sub-categories, in order of frequency, "negative interpersonal peace, absence of war, absence of violence, and individual negative peace." The negative meaning of peace was mostly expressed in "interpersonal relations."

Some direct quotations from the interviews in the sub-theme "interpersonal peace", which is the most expressed theme in the main theme of positive peace, are as follows: Student 21: "Although there are different opinions among people, we need to respect each other." Student 1: "For me, peace is that everybody getting along well with each other." Student 6: "For me, peace is that everyone is thoughtful and attentive to each other." Negative quotations: Student 14: "Absence of war between the countries." Student 20: "For all families to be happy, there will be no wars and destruction will end, and then there will be peace everywhere."

#### FINDINGS ON BARRIERS TO PEACE

Table 6. Density Distribution Table of the Opinions of the Participants on the Barriers of Peace



As seen in Table 6, children's views on situations that prevent peace have emerged in 4 themes, in order of frequency, "interpersonal, intergovernmental, individual and administrative barriers." Children expressed that the biggest obstacle to peace is interpersonal barriers such as "fights, controversy, not getting along with people, the difference in ideas, not to accept the differences (racial, ethnic and religion)." Secondly, they said that the inter-state barriers could prevent peace.

Some direct quotations from the interviews in the theme "individual barriers," which is one of the subthemes in the theme of barriers to peace, are as follows: Student 6: "People's selfishness." Student 4: "Not

wanting to share." Student 2: "People always want to be the best, and nobody wants others to be better than him." Student 9: "Some people don't care about peace. They only want to win the war."

#### FINDINGS ON SPREADING PEACE

Table 7. Density Distribution Table of the Participants' Views on Spreading Peace



As seen in Table 7, the views of the participants on what could do spread peace, similar to the main themes in the meaning of peace, appeared in two main themes, respectively, in order of frequency, as "through positive peace (32 times) and through negative peace (10 times)." The main theme of positive

peace has emerged in 4 sub-categories as "spreading interpersonal peace, spreading general social peace, protecting nature, spreading individual peace times" in order of frequency. The children said that peace at most could be spread by "spreading interpersonal peace." Besides, the participants also think that peace could spread through negative peace such as "not to start the war, lifting weapons, telling about the absurdity of war, putting bad people in jail, helping victims of war, not arguing with people, not fighting, not insulting people."

In the sub-theme of "protecting nature" under the main theme "through positive peace," some direct quotations from the interviews are as follows: Student 7: "There is a lot of garbage in the forest." Student 3: "I take care of the animal world and look after them." Some direct quotations from the interviews on the theme of the "through negative peace" are as follows: Student 21: "Eliminating weapons is just like I paint them in my picture." Student 22: "When there are bad people, it is necessary to immediately put them in jail, not to allow them to do bad things. We cannot change those people. They willingly *do bad things.*"

# 4 | Discussion & Conclusion

#### **DRAWINGS OF PEACE**

Naturally, peace symbols and indexes were more than war symbols and indexes in peace-themed drawings. But there were more icons about war than the ones about peace. That may be because children are more likely to encounter icon indicators of war through means such as the social environment and the media. No student has used the icon indicator alone. They used the icons with index or symbols together. While ten students used one indicator alone in their paintings, 12 students used at least two indicators together. Participants used the indicator symbol most often (see Figure 1). Similar to these results, in a study we conducted with Grunschule, Realschule, and Gymnasium students aged 9-12, it was seen that Gymnasium students with the highest academic level used the icon indicator least, only these students used the symbol indicator, and in the same way, these students used more than one indicator together (Güleç, 2019). In the study of Türkcan (2013), in which third-grade students draw the "key" concept, it was observed that children in upper socioeconomic status use symbol indicators more than students in the lower socioeconomic group (Türkcan, 2013).

Only 8 of the 22 students (student 1,4,9,2,11,12,16,10) drew the theme of peace alone. Fourteen students explained the peace using the theme of war and peace together (see the appendix I / Figure 2). Although the students mostly used peace icons, indexes, and symbols in their drawings, they also used war icons, indexes, and symbols about half (see Table 1). In this sense, the positive perception of peace is more common in the drawings in parallel with the studies made by drawings (Baring, 2013; Frias, 2008; Jabbar & Betawi, 2019; Walker et al., 2003). Children drew elements of nature as symbols of peace, using animals, plants, natural phenomena, and light colors to express positive peace. They also used the well-known pigeon and Gerald Haltom Peace Symbol. Similarly, in Baring's (2013) research, most of the drawings contain "house, farm, tree, shining sun, and clouds." Birds and doves, two well-known symbols of peace, were also in the pictures. In the research of Cengelci Köse and Gürdogan Bayır (2016), pigeon, olive branch, kite, and letter symbols were used as symbols of peace. Similar to the colors used in our study, it was seen that light colors were used in the peace paintings in the work of Bedir and Demir (2012). Secondly, positive peace was expressed mostly in indexes such as "people with different skin colors being side by side and hand in hand, hands shaking hands, the coexistence of various flags" that mostly express interpersonal relations. Similarly, Baring (2013) had the theme of "holding, shaking, or raising hands" in the drawings. In parallel, under the theme of "positive actions and interactions," South Korean children described peace with group images, "holding hands and shaking hands" (Frias, 2008). It was seen that the most common theme defined in the peace drawings of US children was peace as "interpersonal interactions." In this theme, there were positive peace relationships, such as "being friends, shaking hands, holding hands, and helping someone else or playing together" (Walker et al., 2003). In the present study, negative peace is most often depicted with the colors and symbols of nature. Secondly, negative peace was mostly described with icons representing war environments consisting of soldiers, fire, and various weapons. Similarly, the second theme identified in the study of Walker et al. (2003) was peace as negative peace.

As stated above, in the literature on children's drawings of peace, it was seen that their perception of peace was generally similar in main themes. But there were cultural and contextual differences in some sub-themes. Similar to the results in the literature, in this study, it was seen that some themes that were not included in the indicators used in the drawings were found in some other studies done with drawings. There are no icons, indexes, and symbols related to religion and beliefs in the drawings in our study. However, in Baring's (2013) study, there were symbols of "church and cross, bible" evaluated under the theme of "faith." Similarly, although there are Christmas celebrations in the drawings of Filipino-American children, these celebrations were absent in the drawings of their South Korean and US peers (Frias, 2008). Likewise, in the study of Jabbar and Betavi (2019), there were sub-themes related to religious activities and religious symbols in the theme of "religion" regarding positive peace. For example, an 11-year-old girl represented her drawings as: "A church with three crosses and a colorful garden showing that peace is security, protection, and spirituality." Regarding negative peace, there was a sub-theme "the end of Isis" quite different from our study and the general literature. For example, an 11-year-old boy depicted his drawing as: "There is a new house in Australia, a beautiful garden and a waterfall surrounding the house, there is no Isis." In our study, there were quite a lot of indicators related to nature. In the study of McLernon and Cairns (2001), English children drew more images of nature and religion associated with positive peace than Northern Irish children. Moreover, in our study, there were no icons, indexes, and symbols that could be related to the "people dealing with peace" theme in the drawings in Frias's (2008) study.

#### THE MEANING OF PEACE IN THE INTERVIEWS

Children perceived peace at most as positive peace in the interviews. Likewise, Turkish children (Bedir & Demir, 2012; Cengelci Kose & Gurdogan Bayir, 2016) perceived peace at most as positive peace in their written opinion. However, in the study of Oppenheimer & Kuipers (2003) and Souza and colleagues (2006), the perception of peace in the verbal opinions of children was mostly negative. In the study, positive peace was mostly seen in "positive interpersonal relationships" such as sub-codes; "understanding each other, getting along well with each other, being respectful to each other, mutual helping, loving each other of everyone." In this sense, it is compatible with the theme of "interpersonal interactions," one of the most common themes related to positive peace in the literature (Covell et al., 1994; de Souza et al., 2006; Hakvoort, 1996; Hakvoort & Oppenheimer, 1998; Oppenheimer & Kuipers, 2003). Similarly, in the study of Bedir and Demir (2012), when children were asked to write the first three things that the word peace brings to mind, the first three things were, respectively, "love" (love/joy), "respect for others' opinions," and "reconcilement." Negative peace was most commonly expressed in the interviews with the theme of "negative interpersonal relationships." Secondly, negative peace has been described as the "absence of war," in line with the common perception in the literature (Covell et al., 1994; Hakvoort, 1996; Hakvoort & Oppenheimer, 1993, 1998; Oppenheimer & Kuipers, 2003).

The sub-themes in the context of positive peace and negative peace in our study (see Table 5) are quite similar to the study of Cengelci Kose & Gurdogan Bayir (2016). However, the "individual peace" theme found in our study was absent in this study. There were also similarities in many themes in Baring's (2013) 's work with our work. However, the "individual peace" theme found in our study was not found in Baring (2013), and the themes of "satisfaction of needs, religious proposition, national concern" found in Baring (2013) were absent in our study.

# 5 | CONCLUSION AND EDUCATIONAL IMLICATIONS

In this study, the perception of peace of 22 children between the ages of 11-12 who live in Pforzheim/ Karlsruhe region of Baden-Würtenberg state of Germany and continue their education in a Gymnasiumlevel high school was examined through their drawings and verbal expressions. Children should describe their drawings to be understood the meaning of the signs and the sources of the drawings.

In the study, the meaning of peace was mostly perceived as positive peace, both in pictures and interviews. Although the students mostly used peace icons, indexes, and symbols in their peace drawings, they also used almost half of the icons, indexes, and war symbols. In this sense, although the positive perception of peace is more in the drawings, children also reflected the drawings' negative peace perception.

In the drawings, positive peace was most often represented by the colors and symbols of nature. The second most positive peace was shown by indexes describing interpersonal relationships. In this study, similar to the literature on peace drawings, besides the similarities in the main themes in children's perception of peace, differences were observed in sub-themes due to different contexts. The meaning of peace in the interviews was mostly defined by the theme of "interpersonal interactions," which is the most common theme related to positive peace in the literature. Besides, children emphasized the importance of interpersonal relationships in situations that prevent peace and in spreading peace.

The children almost half described peace as the absence of war in both drawings and interviews. Negative peace was most often depicted in the drawings by colors and symbols of nature. Secondly, negative peace was mostly indicated by icons showing war environments consisting of soldiers, fire, and various weapons. Negative peace was mostly defined with the theme of interpersonal negative peace in the negotiations on the meaning of peace. Secondly, negative peace was expressed as the absence of war, similar to the common perception in the literature. Furthermore, they also stated that the situations that led to war would create an obstacle to peace. Moreover, they also noted that peace could also be spread through negative peace.

If the results obtained from this sample are evaluated in terms of guiding peace education, some results may arise:

i.In this study, the participants defined peace in their verbal expressions, both positively and negatively, by interpersonal relationships. Likewise, they stated that situations that hinder peace stem from mostly interpersonal relationships. They also said that peace might be spread mainly through spreading peace between people. In summary, children emphasized the most importance of interpersonal relationships. Again, they talked about the protection of nature concerning the definition of peace and the spreading of peace.

In peace education through positive peace, the "virtue-based peace education approach" can be applied to improve the individual's responsibilities towards himself, other people, and nature. The person who is at peace with himself and with other people, instead of trying to have nature and the beings in nature, to use them consciously will realize. Thus, communities at peace with themselves, other people, and nature will create an ecosystem where peace prevails. In our opinion, approaching peace education with a virtue-based approach is one of the most important ways social peace culture continues permanently. This approach requires applying methods and means of gaining universal human values (Rajshree, 2012) according to people's capacities and needs.

The children emphasized that the most significant obstacle to peace stems from some non-virtuous behavior in interpersonal relationships. They stated that thoughts and behaviors in interpersonal relations such as "fights, controversy, not getting along with people, the difference in ideas, not to accept the differences (racial, ethnic and religion)" could be an obstacle to peace. Similarly, they expressed some individual non-virtuous such as "envy, hate, selfishness." It may be beneficial for children to gain the virtues of "respect, tolerance, and empathy" to minimize these thoughts and behaviors. Remarkably, participants recommended more ethical behavior to spread peace than they said in the definition of peace. Starting from respecting everyone in interpersonal relationships for the spreading of peace, they recommended more ethical behaviors such as "getting along well, sharing things, giving gifts, ignoring mistakes, solving

other people's problems, relieving angry people, and even complimenting people." Children are not satisfied with respect alone, which is perhaps the minimum virtue for spreading peace among individuals. But they talk about the virtues that could be included in "altruism and compassion" (McClain, Ylimaki, & Ford, 2010). To gain such virtues and turn them into behavior, the family still maintains its feature of being the "seedbed of peacemaking"" (Baring, 2013). The school continues to be the essential auxiliary institution next to the family.

According to some studies, if the meanings given to peace are based on thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors coming from parents (Frias, 2008) and the immediate environment (Walker et al., 2003), it may be easier for children to acquire peace-making skills and make it permanent. Children are more open to learning new information and developing various skills during their school years. Schools are the most relevant institutions to provide the necessary conditions for peace education (Harris, 2009).Peace education programs in schools should include textbooks, various learning materials, and extracurricular activities (Bar-Tal & Rosen, 2017). In the virtue-based approach to peace education, starting peace education in pre-school education could be more effective. Depending on their age capacities, starting with four-year-old children, values such as "friendship, cooperation, gentleness, concern for others, love, respect, responsibility, honesty, helpfulness, and courtesy" should be taught with fun and active participation of the student. Starting education at an early age could have a lifelong effect (Rajshree, 2012) by ensuring that such values are internalized. Peace education should continue during the primary school period. The teacher who will teach peace education must be a positive model. The teacher should strive for the classroom environment to be a peaceful democratic environment, and encourage the students to "kindness, critical thinking and cooperation" (Harris & Morrison, 2012). It seems to be one of the important preconditions for peace that both teachers and students comply with concepts such as "transparency and accountability" (Baring, 2013). A value education program that focuses on the virtues of "respect, tolerance and empathy" should continue in primary and secondary school years. Children should be taught strategies for dealing with conflicts that arise when living with people of different ethnicity, gender, national origin, or other distinctive differences (Harris, 2009; Schwebel, 2001). In his high school years, with an approach focused on "altruism and compassion," permanence of peaceful behavior could be achieved through the maturation and internalization of previously learned virtues. In fact, with the effect of the "sense of justice" that is intense among young people in this period, many students could develop the will and courage to spread peaceful behaviors. When peace-making efforts fail, students should be taught what they can do to avoid harm to themselves and other people. Alternative behaviors that can be done when faced with physical harm should be shown. The teacher's example of mediation, which is a key principle in peace education (Rajshree, 2012) could be influential in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors in resolving conflicts between individuals. Besides, family and the school have an important place in developing an awareness of responsibility towards nature. Today, the consequences of the destruction of the natural environment cause great disasters and are at an unprecedented level. "Pedagogy of ecological responsibility" should be in line with today's needs. It requires developing a deepened consciousness by controlling our choices and behaviors that are harmful to living in peace with nature (Mische, 1999).

ii. In this study, the children did not only mention individual, interpersonal, and protection of nature themes regarding peace. Children also define peace as providing general social peace, which they express with concepts such as "unity between people, the existence of justice, equality between people, respect for differences (race, religion, language)". Moreover, children believe that general social peace could be achieved with a fair and democratic government by explaining the importance of peace to the society, spreading the good news, helping aid organizations, and creating a culture of living together with differences. In addition, children emphasized that inter-state barriers (interstate controversy, the desire to have power by seizing more land and production of weapons) and administrative (injustice, poverty, the conflict of interest in politics, money, power, and coercion over the country) barriers could also prevent peace. Developing individual virtues in peace education is part of peace education. However, it is not all (Harris & Morrison, 2012). Peace could be provided with a global understanding that includes the

education of children and society, as well as relations between states, religions, races, and ethnic structures (UNESCO, 1995). This study says much more than research (Nasser & Abu-Nimer, 2012), recommending that peace may be provided through urgent reconciliation and considering peace as the opposite of war and violence. Children here think of peace as an active, dynamic, and mutual process (Johnson & Johnson, 2005), contrary to what children often think of peace as "weak, passive and boring" (Matthews, 2002). Children advocate the relational aspects of peace (Baring, 2013; McClain et al., 2010; Rajshree, 2012), penetrating many areas related to peace, including individual, interpersonal, natural, social, administrative, interstate, and global, both in drawings and interviews.

iii. Peace was defined as "the absence of war" on the proportion of almost half in both the drawings and peace's definition. Likewise, children stated that situations that could lead to war, such as "the production of weapons, conflicts, the desire of states to have more land to have more power," could prevent peace. In this sense, peace education must also include in the concept of the "absence of war" regarding this research. Even though the root words of peace clearly show that peace is more than the absence of war, the studies on peace education in the literature are mostly about active war and countries in conflict (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). That may be due to the perception of peace as the absence of war and non-violence in previous studies. The children participating in this study conducted in Germany were not in active war and conflict environments. Similarly, in some previous studies, it was observed that children who do not directly face to a war and conflict environment use the expression "the absence of war and violence" when defining peace because they encounter war and various types of violence through media and other environmental sources (Walker et al., 2003). Children should know that even if there is no war in their own country, there are places in the world where there is active war. However, wars should be discussed with children, not from the preconceived viewpoint that is widely available from the media, but with truthful data presented (de Souza et al., 2006). Speaking and awareness of wars could be useful in understanding the true meaning of peace and the importance of human cooperation in achieving peace.

#### LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Conducting the study with a qualitative methodological procedure does not allow the findings to be generalized. The research was originally intended to variation sampling diversity. However, since the conditions did not exist, volunteers could be included in the study with convenience sample. In this sense, the research does not represent the diversity of children living in Germany. Future research could include more representative examples. The cross-sectional of the study limits our understanding of how children's understanding of peace changes with age. Longitudinal studies should be conducted in the future to understand the developmental changes that may occur over time. Peace drawings in this study can not be culturally compared with those in other studies. Intercultural studies could be conducted in cooperation with researchers who are closely acquainted with the cultures to compare the cultural peace images used in the drawings.

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#### STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION ETHICS

I declare that the research has no unethical problems and I observe research and publication ethics.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The author proclaimed that there was no conflict interest in the publication and authorship of the article.

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# APPENDIX I

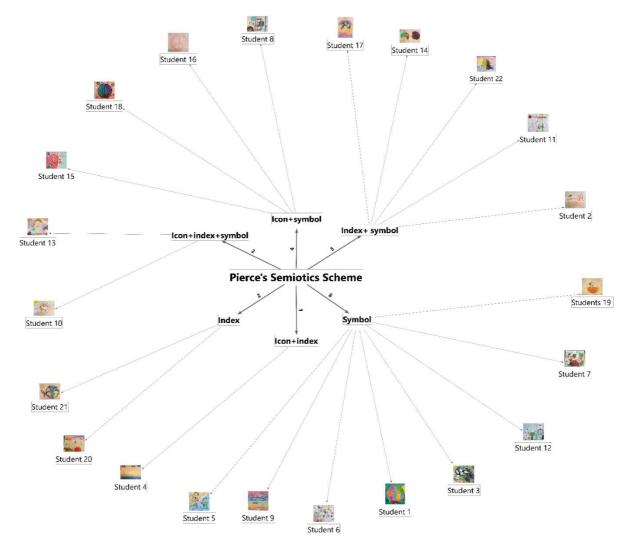


Figure 2. Pierce's Semiotics Scheme/Code-Subcodes-Segments Model