Primary school teacher freshmen’ metaphoric perceptions in relation to university concept

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Abstract

In this research, it has been aimed to reveal primary school teacher the freshmen’ perceptions relation to university concept by means of metaphors. This research has been planned within the framework of the qualitative research approach. The research has been done by 104 students in total, 73 of them are females and 31 of them are males, who have education at Faculty of Education Department of Primary School Teaching, in Kastamonu University. With the aim of revealing primary school teacher the freshmen’ metaphoric perceptions relation to university concept, the data collected by the form in which the sentence: university “is like ……; because ……” takes place has been analysed by descriptive analysis. In total, 57 notable metaphors have been produced a relation to classroom teaching the freshmen’ university concept. These metaphors have been examined under 8 categories.

1. Introduction

Universities without Plato and Aristotle’s any politic and religious element of oppression were inspired by philosophic platforms that they set with their students; they have survived until today as institutions independent and legal entity on universal scale. Universities, which prefer wisdom process before sensual process at philosophic platforms, are places that enable the events to be noticed by being seen and discussed (Ortaş, 2004). Thus, university freshmen’s mental perceptions in relation to university are of capital importance in terms of both their academic proficiencies occurrence and intellectual developments. This study is founded on determining classroom teaching first class students’ mental perceptions in relation to university. Students’ university metaphors have been used to achieve this goal.

People use words and pictures in order to comment their lives, experiences and even their own sense of self (Shaw, Berry & Mahlios, 2008 ). At this point, the metaphor defined as “a person’s expression about a concept or a case as he understands by using similes” is important in order to mirror a person’s mental world. Metaphor is a powerful mental device which serves in understanding and explaining abstract, complicate or a theoretical case at a high level in conceptual meaning. The origin of metaphor is to understand and experience a kind of thing considering another kind of thing (Demirtaş, 2011). Metaphors are devices that help us to perceive and structure the
world by giving a name to a thing which belongs to another thing, defining a thing with different words or phrases (Perry & Cooper, 2001; McGlone, 2007). It is a powerful mental mapping and modelling mechanism directed to individuals’ understanding and structuring their own worlds (Arslan & Bayrakçı, 2006:103).

It has been accepted that metaphor generally consists of two parts including one meaning and one translative. While meaning is defined as subject, main theme, expressed; translative is defined as based, figurative term or terms (Balci, 2011). Metaphor usage means a way of thinking and a way of seeing which is permeating to individual’s perception of world in general. Metaphors provide a cognitive process start on reader or listener (Girmen, 2007). When the related literature was studied, metaphor studies in relation to different concepts were found; but, there was not any metaphor studies relation to university concept. Moreover, to reveal university students’, who have just begun to university, mental perceptions relation to university by means of metaphors has been seen important. In this research, it has been aimed to reveal classroom teaching the first class students’ perceptions in relation to university concept by means of metaphors. In the direction of this general aim, answers to following questions have been sought:

1- What kind of metaphors primary school teaching students who have education at the first class use to explain university concept?
2- Under which categories are the metaphors, propounded by primary school teaching students who have education at the first class in relation to university concept, gathered?

2. Methodology

At this part of the research; method, study group, the collection and analysis of data have been included.

2.1. Method and study group

This research has been planned within the framework of the qualitative research approach. The research has been done by 104 students in total, 73 of them are females and 31 of them are males, who have education at Faculty of Education Department of Primary School Teaching in Kastamonu University.

2.2. The Collection and Analysis of Data

With the aim of revealing classroom teaching the first class students’ metaphoric perceptions in relation to university concept, the form in which the sentence: university “is like ……; because ……” takes place, has been given and they have been asked to fill out it. Before application, information about metaphor was given. After, this information was supported by examples.

The collected data was analysed by descriptive analysis. The study had been started by metaphors belonging to 151 students in total; but, metaphors belonging to 47 students were excluded as they represented more than one category, contained opinions about university and, the used metaphor and the sentence explaining this metaphor were not compatible. Metaphors evaluated were listed and divided into different categories by researchers. After, these categories and metaphors were compared; the categories represented by metaphors were given their final forms considering the related literature and arguments between the researches.

3. Findings

According to the findings acquired by the research, in total 57 notable metaphors by 104 attendants have been produced in relation to primary school teaching the freshmen’ university concept. These metaphors have been examined under 8 categories. While the most represented category with 17 (51 attendants) metaphors is “university as a personal development centre”, the least represented category with 1 metaphor (1 attandant) is “university as a free living space” category. Explanations in relation to these categories are given below.
Category 1: University as a personal development centre: Metaphors that represent this category are as: Life/lifetime (31), science (1), age (1), food (1), teacher/educator (2), library (2), family (2), lair (2), book (1), cyclopaedia (1), sand (1), field (1), child (1), shopping centre (1), information cube (1), light (1), sky(1).

Table 1: Metaphors Forming University Category as Personal Development Centre

| Metaphor          | f |
|-------------------|---|
| Life/Lifetime     | 31 |
| Teacher/Educator  | 2  |
| Library           | 2  |
| Family            | 2  |
| Lair              | 2  |
| Light             | 1  |
| Science           | 1  |
| Age               | 1  |
| Food              | 1  |
| Book              | 1  |
| Cyclopaedia       | 1  |
| Sand              | 1  |
| Field             | 1  |
| Child             | 1  |
| Shopping Centre   | 1  |
| Information Cube  | 1  |
| Sky               | 1  |

For example; “University is like life. Because it is the place where many things about the world are learned, individual enters in the process of self knowledge, he can stand on his own feet, he gains self-confidence as individual.”

Category 2: University as the centre of change and production: Metaphors representing this category are as: Dough (1), factory (2), avalanche (1), bee (1), tree (2), soil (1), and nature (1).

Table 2: Metaphors Forming University Category as the Centre of Change And Production

| Metaphor       | f |
|----------------|---|
| Factory        | 2  |
| Tree           | 2  |
| Nature         | 1  |
| Dough          | 1  |
| Avalanche      | 1  |
| Bee            | 1  |
| Soil           | 1  |
| Nature         | 1  |

For example; “University is like tree. Because, it produces fruit. Students grow and maturate like fruit.”

Category 3: University as a device in reaching the aim: It is as: Building (1), bank account/investment (2), education dormitory (2), door (2), stair (1), step (1), bus (1), jewellery (1), road (1), and key (1).

Table 3: Metaphors Forming University Category as a Device In Reaching The Aim

| Metaphor              | f |
|-----------------------|---|
| Bank Account/Investment| 2 |
| Education Dormitory   | 2 |
| Door                  | 2 |
| Building              | 1 |
| Stair                 | 1 |
| Step                  | 1 |
| Bus                   | 1 |
| Road                  | 1 |
| Key                   | 1 |
| Jewellery             | 1 |

For example; “University is like bus. Because, it is a road, vehicle that takes us to the place where we want to be in the future. As we cannot have the job that we want without going to university, we have to get on the bus.”

Category 4: University as the Living Centre of Different Cultures: It is as: Zoo (1), country (2), cosmos (1), salad (1), cowherd (1), garden (1), world (3), human (1), coop (1).

Table 4: Metaphors Forming University Category as the Living Centre of Different Cultures

| Metaphor  | f |
|-----------|---|
| World     | 3 |
| Country   | 2 |
| Garden    | 1 |
| Coop      | 1 |
| Zoo       | 1 |
| Cosmos    | 1 |
| Human     | 1 |
| Salad     | 1 |
| Cowherd   | 1 |
| Park      | 1 |
For example; “University is like cowherd. Because, it’s colours and patterns on it are different. It is a place where living things, which like different grasses but have a common purpose (to eat their fills), exist together in line with an aim.”

**Category 5: University As The Centre Of Social And Cultural Activities:** It is as: Amusement park (1), cafe (1).

Table 5: Metaphors Forming University Category as the Centre of Social and Cultural Activities

| Metaphor        | f | Metaphor | f |
|-----------------|---|----------|---|
| Amusement Park  | 1 | Cafe     | 1 |

For example; “University is like cafe. Because, time is spent together. Have fun together.”

**Category 6: University As A Free Living Space:** It is as: pigeon (1).

Table 6: Metaphors Forming University Category as a Free Living Space

| Metaphor | f |
|----------|---|
| Pigeon   | 1 |

For example; “University is like pigeon. Because, we are free here. We can express our feelings and opinions. We take all responsibility.”

**Category 7: University As Being A Guide:** It is as: sun (3), star (4), compass (1), and guide (1).

Table 7: Metaphors Forming University Category As Being A Guide

| Metaphor | f | Metaphor | f |
|----------|---|----------|---|
| Star     | 4 | Compass  | 1 |
| Sun      | 3 | Guide    | 1 |

For example; “University is like star. Because, it helps us direct our lives.”

**Category 8: Negative Metaphor:** It is as: the city of irregularities (1), marriage (1), drum (1), bottomless well (1), tabula rasa (1), love (1).

Table 8: Negative Metaphors

| Metaphor                             | f | Metaphor       | f | Metaphor   | f |
|--------------------------------------|---|----------------|---|------------|---|
| The city of irregularities           | 1 | Drum           | 1 | Tabula Rasa| 1 |
| Marriage                             | 1 | Bottomless Well| 1 | Love       | 1 |

For example; “University is like bottomless well. Because, it’s beginning and end are invisible; and what is waiting for you in it cannot be estimated.”

4. **Results and Suggestions**

According to the results of the research, metaphors formed by university students in relation to university concept are mainly gathered under university category as personal development centre. Students see universities as the places where are full of opportunities by which they can improve themselves. But under the category of university as the centre of change and production, university confronts us as a area in which production is contributed by catching the change dynamism. As study group consists of the students of faculty of education who will train as teachers, university is seen as a device in the way of becoming a teacher. In this respect, university
category as a device in reaching the aim comes to the forefront. But under the category of university as being a guide, university serves as a guide about preparing for future and how to direct the future. The number of students who imagine the university as a place where different cultures exist together is at a substantial rate. In spite of this, the number of students who state the metaphors under categories of university as the centre of social and cultural activities, and university as a free living space is quite low. Besides, 6 negative metaphors stated by 6 students have been found. It has been thought that the deficiency of social and physical opportunities of university, and the failure of expectations from university have an effect on this result. Students have not mentioned the university’s side which is academic, producing information or contributing to science.

By looking at the metaphors stated by the students, guiding studies that focus on university’s aims, function and contributions can be done at institutions giving education prior to university. In the orientation studies done with students on the onset of university, university’s scientific aspect can be emphasized. It has been suggested that social, physical and academic proficiencies should be provided before giving education at universities, and institutions giving education should fill the deficiencies at the same points as soon as possible.

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