

Metaphorical Perceptions of Translation and Interpretation Department Students at Kafkas University in Turkey about Themselves

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ABSTRACT: *The aim of this study is to reveal metaphorical perceptions of translation and interpretation department students at Kafkas University in Turkey about themselves. The study group consists of 70 students attending to classes regularly during the 2015-2016 academic year. The data for the study were collected through the forms containing prompts "Translation and Interpretation students at Kafkas University are like....., because they.....". For the analysis of the data qualitative research method was used. As a result, 64 valid metaphors were determined about the students themselves and these metaphors were categorized under 8 Conceptual groups. The results revealed that mostly used are as follows: Horse (f= 4), flash disk (f= 3), empty box (f= 3), garden (f= 3), soil (f= 3), patient (f= 3), broken car (f= 3), soldier (f= 3), future (f= 3), fruit tree (f= 3), flower (f= 3), family member (f= 3), sapling (f= 3), seed (f= 2), ant (f= 2), angel (f= 2), sheep (f= 2), broken computer (f= 2), play dough (f= 2), clean page (f= 2), puppet (f= 2), slave (f= 2), hungry wolf (f= 2), fox (f= 2), and baby (f= 2), respectively.*

KEYWORDS: *Translation and Interpretation, Conceptual Categorization, Metaphor, Kafkas University.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Metaphors are the daily routines of almost all societies and, therefore, frequently used in the daily speech as well as in literary the works. A metaphor offers new perceptions of reality, ultimately the means to communicate beyond the literalness of experience [1:27]. It is maintained that as metaphors bring with the certain well - defined expectations as to the possible features of target concepts, the choice of a metaphor is a highly consequential decision. Different metaphors may lead to different ways of thinking and to different activities [2:5].

Metaphor can be defined as an implied analogy which imaginatively identifies one object with another [3:264]. The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another [4:5]. Ritchie [5:2]. on the other hand, defines metaphors as tools which often allow us to express subtle nuances of thought and feeling that would otherwise be inexpressible.

When producing metaphor, the creator draws upon his/her own experience, culture, and context to shape the implied comparison between the dissimilar entities. In this way, students are free to choose any metaphoric comparisons and can produce rich, creative, and unique images [6:105].

Oxford, et al. [7:4] suggest that metaphor involves employing a familiar object or event as a conceptual tool to elucidate features of a more complex subject or situation.

Gillis and Johnson state that as metaphors reveal our educational values, beliefs, and principles, they contain information essential to our growth as professionals [8: 37]] and this idea is supported by Kramsch as she put forwards that metaphors help reveal the ways teachers and learners construct representations of themselves and their experience [9:125]

On the other hand, there have been various studies in relation to metaphors throughout the last quarter of the twentieth century [10, 11, 12, 13 14 ,15,16,17, 18, 19, 20].

For example, in a study on prospective teachers' conception of teacher, Saban and Kocber&Saban[14] determined 64 valid metaphors and categorized these metaphors under 10 conceptual themes as follows: (1)

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the Sun, (2) sculptor, (3) parent, (4) compass, (5) lighthouse, (6) gardener, (7) candle, (8) tree/fruit tree, (9) painter, and (10) tour guide.

Another study on 2847 prospective teachers Saban [15] investigating the metaphorical conceptualizations of the learner, 98 valid metaphors were determined and the metaphorical concepts were categorized under 12 conceptual themes.

Karadağ and Gültekin[21] in their study on 567 elementary school students determined 83 valid metaphors and they categorized them under 6 conceptual headings.

In a study on 8 grade students in relation to the concept of “History” Yalçınkaya[18] found out that participants developed 308 metaphors, which were grouped as “comprehensive, useful and important for a nation, complex, loved and addictive, informative and repetitive.

In another study carried out on 169 teacher candidates at Kastamonu University, Faculty of Education by Koç[22] it was determined that teacher candidates created 53 metaphors about teacher and 62 metaphors about teaching profession and 8 conceptual categories were formed in relation to the teacher concept and 11 to the teaching profession concept.

In a study done on 120 Turkish university EFL instructors Elkilic and Aybirdi[20] determined 98 metaphors in relation to the students and these were grouped in 5 conceptual categories. The results of the study revealed that the most frequently repeated metaphors were baby (f=10), soil (f=8), seed (f=7), flower (f=5), child (f=5), puppet (f=4), son/daughter (f=4), white page (f=4), empty box (f=4) and slave (f=4) and that 5 conceptual categories were as follows: 1) student as raw material, 2) student as significant other, 3) student as plant, 4) student as absolute compliant, 5) student as an animal.

1.1. Problem

Students’ mental images about themselves can be good tools for the instructors as well as school administrators to understand their psychology. However, in Turkey there have been only limited number of studies on the students’ metaphors about themselves.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the metaphorical perceptions of Turkish translation and interpretation students about themselves and to form categorizations accordingly. In the the study, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are the metaphors used by Turkish translation and interpretation students about themselves?
2. How many conceptual categories can be determined in accordance with the metaphors created by Turkish translation and interpretation department students at Kafkas University about themselves?

II. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

In the study quantitative data collection technique was used, by requesting the translation and interpretation students to fill in forms containing prompts “Students are like....., because they.....”.

2.2 Participants

The participants in this study were 70 Turkish students in the Department of Translation and Interpretation, Faculty of Science and Letters at Kafkas University, Turkey.

2.3 Instrument

Forms containing prompts such as “students are like....., because they.....” were used as data collection instruments. The students were requested to fill in the forms in relation to the metaphors which best described students themselves

2.4 Procedure

The data were collected during the first weeks of the 2016-2017 academic year. Seventy Translation and Interpretation students were distributed the forms eliciting information on metaphors describing their teachers and were requested to fill in them during the class hours. Yet, only 68 of them completed and delivered the forms properly.

2.5. Data analysis

The data analysis was carried out using an adaptation of Saban’s[23] technique:

- 1) Coding and sorting, 2) Forming sample metaphor lists and Categorizing, 3) Ensuring validity and reliability, and 4) Transforming metaphors into quantitative data.

Coding and sorting: the metaphors of the participants were transferred to an Excel program in line with

alphabetical orders. Forms having improper descriptions were eliminated and the remaining 64 metaphors were accepted as valid.

Forming sample metaphor lists and categorizing: 68 metaphors written by the participants were examined, 4 metaphors were eliminated at this stage and 64 metaphors were accepted as valid for the study. Accordingly, 8 different conceptual categories were determined.

Validity and Reliability: The researchers studied on the conceptual categorization and sorting out the data. One expert on the field was given the alphabetical list and the conceptual categorizations of the researchers and was requested to match the list and the categorization.

Based on the reliability formula of Miles and Huberman [24], the reliability of the study was calculated (Reliability= agreement/(agreement + disagreement)*100)). The expert put 6 metaphors into a different category so the reliability was calculated as 0,91.

Using SPSS for qualitative data analysis: The data collected, metaphors, and conceptual categories were transferred to the SPSS 20 program and the frequencies and percentages were given in tables.

III. FINDINGS

As a result of the data collected from 70 students, 64 valid metaphors were determined for the students themselves, and accordingly, 8 conceptual categories were determined. The results revealed that mostly used are as follows: horse (f= 4), flash disk (f= 3), empty box (f= 3), garden (f= 3), soil (f= 3), patient (f= 3), broken car (f= 3), soldier (f= 3), future (f= 3), fruit tree (f= 3), flower (f= 3), family member (f= 3), sapling (f= 3), seed (f= 2), ant (f= 2), angel (f= 2), sheep (f= 2), broken computer (f= 2), play dough (f= 2), clean page (f= 2), puppet (f= 2), slave (f= 2), hungry wolf (f= 2), fox (f= 2), and baby (f= 2), respectively.

3.1. Conceptual Categories

Table 1. Conceptual Categories

Category	Frequency	%
Student as Animal	10	15,6
Student as absolute compliant	09	14,0
Student as defective being	08	12,5
Student as empty vessel	08	12,5
Student as significant other	08	12,5
Student as raw material	08	12,5
Student as developing organism	07	11,0
Student as social capital	06	09,4
Total	64	100

As seen in **Table 1**, the conceptual categories are as follows: Student as animal (f=10, 15,6%), student as absolute compliant (f=09, 14,0%), student as defective being (f=08, 12,5 %), student as empty vessel (f=08, 12,5 %), student as significant other (f=08, 12,5 %), student as raw material (f=08, 12,5 %), student as developing organism (f=07, 11,0 %), and student as social capital (f=06, 09,4 %).

3.1.1. Student as an animal

Table 2. Students as Animal

Metaphor	Frequency	%
Horse	4	40
Ant	2	20
Hungry wolf	2	20
Fox	2	20
Total	10	100

It is clear from Table 2 that, under the category “Student as animal,” most of the participants used the metaphor horse (f=4, 40%), ant, hungry wolf, and fox (F=2, 20 %), respectively.

The main characteristics of this category of metaphors are as follows:

“A student is like a horse, because we are always at a competition for exams, as horses have races.”

“A student is like an ant, because he/she has to study very hard for his or her future.”

“A student is like a hungry wolf, because as students we are hungry for knowledge.”

3.1.2. Student as an absolute compliant

Table 3. Student as absolute compliant

Metaphor	Frequency	%
Soldier	3	33,3
Sheep	2	22,2
Puppet	2	22,2
Slave	2	22,2
Total	9	100

It can be seen from **Table 3** that under the category “Student as absolute compliant,” most of the participants used the metaphor soldier (f=3, 33,3%), sheep, puppet, and slave (F=2, 22,2 %), respectively.

The following sentences are some of the examples for this category:

“A student is like a soldier, because soldiers obey their commanders, and we obey our instructors.

“A student is like a sheep, because he/she has to follow his/her teachers’ orders.”

“A student is like a puppet, because instructors always direct them.”

3.1.3. Student as a defective being

Table 4. Student as defective being

Metaphor	Frequency	%
Patient	3	37,5
Broken car	3	37,5
Broken computer	2	25,0
Total	8	100

Table 4 indicates that under the category “Student as defective being” most of the participants used the metaphor patient (f=3, 37,5%), broken car (f=3, 37,5%), and broken computer (F=2, 25 %), respectively.

Sample sentences for this group are as follows:

“A student is like a patient, because as patients need curing, students need to get rid of their illiteracy.”

“A student is like a broken car, because he/she needs to refresh his/her knowledge.”

“A student is like a broken computer, because broken computers are fixed by computer repairers and students become intellectual by means of instructors/teachers.”

3.1.4. Student as an empty vessel

Table 5. Student as empty vessel

Metaphor	Frequency	%
Flash disk	3	37,5
Empty box	3	37,5
Clean page	2	25,0
Total	8	100

According to **Table 5**, under the category “Student as empty vessel” most of the participants used the metaphor flash disk (f=3, 37,5%), empty box (f=3, 37,5%), and clean page (F=2, 25 %), respectively.

Sample sentences for this group are as follows:

“A student is like a flash disk, because students store the information their instructors teach them into their brains.”

“A student is like an empty box, because he/she puts into it everything he/she finds.”

“A student is like a clean page, because clean pages can be filled with new writing, so students can be taught new information.”

3.1.5. Student as a significant other

Table 6. Student as significant other

Metaphor	Frequency	%
Family member	3	37,5
Flower	3	37,5
Angel	2	25,0
Total	8	100

In **Table 6** one can see that under the category “Student as significant other” most of the participants used the metaphor family member (f=3, 37,5%), flower (f=3, 37,5%), and angel (F=2, 25 %), respectively.

Sample sentences for this group are as follows:

“A student is like a sister/brother, because he/she considers himself/herself as the family of the school.”

“A student is like a flower, because flowers flourish when they are taken care of, similarly students improve by means of teachers.”

“A student is like an angel, because his only aim is to serve.”

3.1. 6.Student as a raw material

Table 7.Student as raw material

Metaphor	Frequency	%
Garden	3	37,5
Soil	3	37,5
Play dough	2	25,0
Total	8	100

It is clearly seen in **Table 7** that under the category “Student as raw material” most of the participants used the metaphor garden (f=3, 37,5%), soil (f=3, 37,5%), and play dough (F=2, 25 %), respectively.

Some metaphors the participants created are as follows:

“A student is like a garden, because gardens can be like paradise if cared, so students can improve if taught.”

“A student is like soil, because, we put the seeds in to the soil and cultivate it, so it develops into a yield-giving factory.

“A student is like a play dough, because they can develop according to the information their teachers supply with them.”

3.1.7.Student as a developing organism

Table 8.Student as developing organism.

Metaphor	Frequency	%
Sapling	3	42,8
Seed	2	28,6
Baby	2	28,6
Total	7	100

It can be understood from **Table 8** that under the category “Student as developing organism” most of the participants used the metaphor sapling (f=3, 42,8%), seed (f=2, 28,6%), and baby (f=2, 28,6%), respectively.

Some metaphors the participants created are as follows:

“A student is like a sapling, because saplings grow when taken cared of, likewise students improve their abilities if they are taught.”

“A student is like a seed, because seeds grow into tall/big/huge trees, likewise students become the future of the world.”

“A student is like a baby, because babies, become adults as they grow up.”

3.1.8.Student as a social capital.

Table 9. Student as social capital

Metaphor	Frequency	%
Future	3	50,0
Fruit tree	3	50,0
Total	6	100

It is obvious from **Table 8** that under the category “Student as social capital” the participants used the metaphor future (f=3, 50%) and fruit tree (f=3, 50%).

Some metaphors the participants created are as follows:

“A student is like future, because our next generations will be formed through him/her.”

“A student is like a fruit tree, because, we plant fruit trees to benefit from them.”

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Question 1: What are the metaphors used by Turkish translation and interpretation departments students about themselves?

In his study on 600 primary school students, 203 teachers and 51 administrators, Cerit [25] found out that for a teacher “a friend”, “a guide” and “a person enlightening his environment” were the metaphors used frequently by all the student, but completely agreed by teachers and administrators. The same study also revealed that the metaphor of a teacher as a “source of knowledge”, “a distributor” and “a mother/a father” is completely agreed by students, teachers and all the participants, but mostly agreed by administrators.

In our study metaphors created by Turkish translation and interpretation department students about themselves are horse (f= 4), flash disk (f= 3), empty box (f= 3), garden (f= 3), soil (f= 3), patient (f= 3), broken car (f= 3), soldier (f= 3), future (f= 3), fruit tree (f= 3), flower (f= 3), family member (f= 3), sapling (f= 3), seed (f= 2), ant (f= 2), angel (f= 2), sheep (f= 2), broken computer (f= 2), play dough (f= 2), clean page (f= 2), puppet (f= 2), slave (f= 2), hungry wolf (f= 2), fox (f= 2), and baby (f= 2), respectively.

Research Question 2: How many conceptual categories can be determined in accordance with the metaphors created by Turkish translation and interpretation department students about themselves?

In their study, Saban, Koçbeker and Saban [14] examined metaphors produced by 1222 education students in a Turkish university and 111 valid metaphors were identified in relation to the concept of “teacher”. These metaphors were grouped under 10 conceptual categories as follows: (1) the Sun, (2) sculptor, (3) parent, (4) compass, (5) lighthouse, (6) gardener, (7) candle, (8) tree/fruit tree, (9) painter, and (10) tour guide.

Another study on 2847 prospective teachers, investigating the metaphorical conceptualizations of the learner, 98 valid metaphors were determined and the metaphorical concepts were categorized under 12 conceptual themes [15].

In a study by Elkilic and Bayrakci [26] on 68 students in the department of Translation and Interpretation at Kafkas University in Turkey to determine the metaphors of the students about their English and French language instructors 60 valid metaphors were determined for English language instructors and 58 for French language instructors, and 7 conceptual categories were determined for both instructors.

As for the present study, 8 conceptual categories were determined for the students themselves, such as : student as an animal (f=10, 15,6%), student as an absolute compliant (f=09, 14,0%), student as a defective being (f=08, 12,5 %), student as an empty vessel (f=08, 12,5 %), student as a significant other (f=08, 12,5 %), student as a raw material (f=08, 12,5 %), student as a developing organism (f=07, 11,0 %), and student as a social capital (f=06, 09,4 %).

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