

Gifted Children Metaphor from the Perspective of Teachers and Parents

Tadjimatova Gulnorakhon Shavkatovna

Teacher of Andizhan state university, Azndizhan, Uzbekistan

Abstract: Metaphors help understand how the meanings investigate are perceived. As may be seen from these statements, metaphors may be regarded as an important tool for identifying the perceptions of teachers and parents of the gifted children. Therefore, this study aims to explore the perceptions of teachers and parents of the gifted children by way of metaphors. Data was analyzed using the content analysis technique. The views expressed by the parents and teachers during the interviews were read and coded accordingly, and thereafter, themes were created according to the inter-related codes.

Key words: Gifted and talented, metaphor, teacher, parent, transfer, elucidating, metaphor, perceptions of teachers.

Introduction

Metaphor, as a term, means explaining complex terms by “applying to something”, in other words by “transferring to something” in Greek. Several dictionaries describe it as comparing two things or using basic similarities, in other word, the likes of something. Metaphor is one of the tools used to identify human perceptions. Metaphorical thinking involves using a similar case and object as a conceptual tool to elucidate the characteristics of a very complex phenomenon or case. Metaphors are used to clarify or help clarify subjects that are hard to understand. Hence, various concepts in education have been analyzed using metaphors. It is important in terms of the originality of the present study that the gifted children are not among the subjects intended to be analyzed by metaphors. Among the research in the field of education in the recent years in our country, the number of those focusing on gifted children has been on the rise. Along with the important changes in our educational philosophy, learner's place in education has changed from passive to active. Individual differences of the learners have been increasingly paid more attention. Awareness of the place of intelligence in learning has increased among both pedagogists and teachers as well as both parents and psychologists. Some statutory changes have also been introduced for the special education of gifted children in our country.

Superior intelligence occupies people's minds as a mysterious concept. For, intelligence is an incorporeal mental power that cannot be touched or seen but is believed to exist as in the mystical faiths. According to some, it is gifted by the creator while, to some, it is gifted by nature. Some believe that intelligence exists on a brain region. In fact, intelligence is an abstract name given to the observed effect of the harmonious, productive and effective functioning of all of the devices of the brain on behavior. Gifted people are extraordinary. Being extraordinary is an attribute that is uncommon, out of the ordinary, i.e. doesn't look like anything that is common.

Most parents especially take their children's skills lightly if they are their first children. In fact, most parents (mostly fathers) tend to insist that their child may fall into the gifted group. Sometimes, even after their children are officially identified as gifted in the school system or by an independent psychologist, parents resort to thinking that their children are not actually gifted but only “hard working”. Also, parents believe that test scores are not very effective for school life or

life and may think that, “this is just a test; these scores do not actually mean anything.”. Some parents simply do not want their children to be gifted; “I just want him/her to be normal.” Families of children of superior intelligence may feel both rewarded and punished. Being gifted requires strength to cope with various internal and external social emotional experiences for both the child and his/her family. Having a child of superior intelligence can be both enjoyable and challenging for a family. The education of children of superior intelligence in the academic sense is a matter that must be greatly focused on exclusively and specially in terms of both their special educational needs due to being gifted and the contribution their improved educational quality may make to the development of the country.

Metaphor is a way of thinking and seeing that makes it easier to learn a new information as it carries a known case to a case that has an unknown meaning. Metaphors have been used as a professional thinking, professional identity development and pedagogic tool, reflective tool, evaluation tool, research tool, program theory, cognitive model, and discovery tool in education and teacher education, as well as a tool for change in education. Metaphors help understand how the meanings investigated are perceived. As may be seen from these statements, metaphors may be regarded as an important tool for identifying the perceptions of teachers and parents of the gifted children. Therefore, this study aims to explore the perceptions of teachers and parents of the gifted children by way of metaphors. There are many studies in the literature that focus on the gifted. The research was conducted with both teachers and parents as well as the gifted. The present study that is a metaphorical study conducted with teachers and parents in connection with giftedness is of value in terms of its contribution to the literature. The purpose of the research is to investigate the gifted child metaphor from the teacher and parent perspective. It was aimed to explore the metaphorical perception of both teachers and parents of the gifted child.

Method

In order to identify the gifted child metaphor, which is the research objective, the study group consisted of teachers teaching gifted children and parents of gifted children. Availability sampling was used to determine the study group. The research participants were selected on voluntary basis from among the parents and teachers of primary and middle school students in Istanbul between the 2016-2017 academic year who are identified as gifted. A total of 150 parents and 50 teachers were included in the study group. Screening model was used in the present study entitled, “Gifted Children Metaphor from the Perspective of Teachers and Parents.” Data was collected by qualitative research method. The relevant information on the subject was collected using the interview technique. Teachers and parents were administered a semi-structured interview form. Both parents and teachers were asked the fill the form that includes the statement, “a gifted child is like because” Data was analyzed using the content analysis technique. The views expressed by the parents and teachers during the interviews were read to them and coded accordingly. Data was collected by interview technique. As a data collection tool, a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher was used. Interviews were conducted face to face by the researcher. Teachers were interviewed at their institutions which are their natural environment. No audio or video recording was made to avoid causing any negative feeling among the teachers. Interviews were recorded by the researcher by writing down on the forms. In order to ensure the validity of the research, the findings were presented objectively. Teachers’ responses were directly quoted. In order to ensure the reliability of the research, a reliability analysis was conducted by another researcher for each sub problem of the research. First, the similar and dissimilar aspects of the teacher responses to the questions were gathered, and themes were created by arranging the responses meaningfully according to the resulting concepts. The analyzed data was written down and hand delivered to the members of the study group for checking. Since the teachers were asked

to express their honest and candid feelings, they were promised absolute anonymity. Therefore, the data relating to the participants were not e-mailed but hand delivered. Thus, the participants' confirmation was obtained and both interview and written forms of the data were created. This way, it was attempted to overcome the limitations of a data collection method.

* A gifted child is like a machine because he/she constantly works; the gifted's brain never stops. It constantly produces ideas.

A gifted child is like space because you can never know what you will see in the infinity.

* A gifted child is like a treasure because he/she is curious about everything. Nothing escapes their attention; they surprise you by asking different questions, as if their brain has a hidden treasure of knowledge.

* A gifted child is like atom because if he/she grows as fits his/her potential, then he/she is fine, but if he/she splits, he/she is like a bomb. He/she may bring a fall upon the entire humanity. Leaders that rule the world and do good to the society are one of them; those who establish terrorist organizations and spread terror and murderer doctors who become organ mafia are also one of them.

* A gifted child is like gem because, if processed skillfully, he/she will shine. If not processed as fits its structure, he/she will be shattered.

* A gifted child is like ocean because he/she is a vast and very deep unknown.

* A gifted child is like an encyclopedia because they can always ask anything about any subject.

* A gifted child is like an endless sea because they sometimes feel emotionally very wild and sometimes depressive.

Results and Discussion

Below are the metaphors developed in the present study entitled "gifted child metaphor from the perspective of teachers and parents": Coal, fertile soil, soil, ebb and flow, glass vase, computer, flower, chestnut, treasure chest, dough, sponge, an eye on the neck, puzzle, brick, seed, sky, bomb, star, nesting doll, eagle, water, space, locomotive, gold, being, treasure, iron, mercury, metal, natural stone, lego, precision scale, a film with an unpredictable finale, lahmacun, cloud, fireball, a mighty mountain, plane, grasshopper, world, paradox, numerical axis, chess, gift, garden, sharp knife, doing rodeo, dream, time machine, marble, super hero, a golden ball, metal, ceramics, property, sun, chess, film character, flower, atom energy, rainbow, question bank, ocean/sea, fire, encyclopedia, diamond, search engine, usb, blessing, mirror, concept, brilliant, rubik's cube, book, iron, mountain, and jet. The common point shared in the study where positive metaphors were used is that they have highly turbulent emotions. The future research may investigate the perception of teaching the gifted with teachers teaching the gifted. Advantages and disadvantages of being a parent of the gifted may be investigated with the parents.

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