

## Mental Images towards the Concept of Drama

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the mental images of preschool teacher candidates related to the concept of drama via metaphors. We questioned these questions; “What are the metaphors or mental images of teacher candidates?”, “Under which conceptual categories are these metaphors or mental images can be collected?” and “Is there any significant correlation between the categories?” For this purpose we studied with 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade bachelor degree students (preschool teacher candidates) who are attending to a faculty of education department of preschool education in Black Sea Region of Turkey. 34 teacher candidates from grade 1, 33 from grade 2, 44 from grade 3 and 41 from grade 4, totally 152 teacher candidates participated to this study. Teacher candidates from grade 1 and 2 haven’t attended to a drama course before, but 3 and 4. We used Mixed Method Research. Participants were asked to create metaphors as much as they want by completing “Drama is like ..... Because .....” sentence. Teacher candidates created 624 acceptable metaphors related to the concept of drama. We analyzed the answers and divided them to 7 different conceptual categories as “Action”, “Human”, “Object”, “Concrete”, “Abstract”, “Nature” and “Animal”. Most metaphors were created in the categories of “Action”, second in “Abstract” and third in “Object”. We found a significant correlation between the categories of “Concrete” and “Object”, “Nature” and “Object”. ( $p < .05$ ). There should be more studies on mental images related to the concept of drama may be with different samples or variables.

**Keywords:** drama, metaphor, mental image, perception

### 1. Introduction

Education which develops children’s potentials of taking responsibility, self-reliance, self-control, independent thinking, problem solving and creativity, is necessary for children to cope with the challenges of life and to sustain their society (Önder, 2007). Drama helps children to gain these kind of skills, takes children into center and ensures children to create their indigenous world.

Learning effective and permanent is only possible by learning hands on experiences and participations. Children can gain the knowledge by themselves by participating to the activities directly, expressing their feelings and taught, exploring and trying. It shows that how including drama to the educational activities in preschool ages is necessary (Kandır, 2006).

Drama is animating an event, a subject, an act or emotions. On the other hand, animating the living and non-living things by verbal or non-verbal ways, is a kind of imagination game (Arıkan, 2007). Drama which is a creative process arises by forming the ways of thinking. Philips (1999) indicates that, drama gives opportunities to the children to communicate and talk with the others. Philips indicates that, children love animating the events since their early ages. Children have opportunities to use and develop the different dimensions of multiple intelligence by drama (Cortell, 1987). Drama supports all developmental areas. Children can express the emotions, taught and events by some spontaneous and acting techniques. Thus drama supports all developmental areas (Fazlıoğlu, 2011). Children can make their relationships with their teachers more clear and free. Teachers can find opportunities to know children better by observing them in dramatic processes. Motivations of children will increase and children will learn more willingly when the relationship between children and teacher is positive (Gage & Berliner, 1982).

Dramatic activities are so important for development of creativity because of their being spontaneous activities. Creativity is a process that effect emotional and cognitive structures. Creation of mental images mean metaphor related to drama is possible, if we consider dramatic and creative processes’ being integrated. Many findings can be obtained by examining teacher candidates’ metaphorical perceptions on process of understanding the drama. Because metaphor is being considered as it is a powerful tool to be able to understand and explain abstract and complicated fact (Saban, Koçbeker & Saban, 2006). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) describe metaphor as it is understanding and experiencing the things according to the other things. According to Ben-Peretz and colleagues (2003) metaphor is a valuable tool as it is a perceptual definition tool. Teachers can find the roots of belief and assumptions related to the roles in a classroom, children and education.

Metaphor helps us to create different forms of concepts and to tend different understandings at the same time. It also helps us to run our experiences on mental processes (Kövecses, 2000). Forceville (2002) indicates that, there should be at least three essential elements in metaphorical relations;

- The subject of metaphor
- The source of metaphor

- The features imputed to the subject from the source.

Metaphor forces the educators to make comparison and to make connections between the similarities (Yob, 2003). Metaphor is explaining the complicated structures or different experiences differently. Using metaphor helps us to understand the recent or different perceptions, easier. The process of creating a metaphor is shown on the **Figure 1**, below (Moser, 1999).

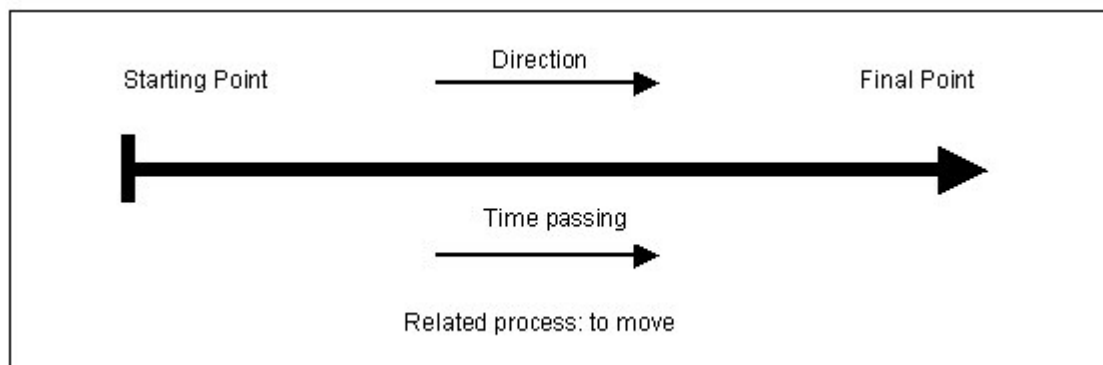


Figure 1: Schema of the metaphor source domain “path” (in Moser, 1999a, p.144)

The “schema” recently present in the cognition “passes” to the new sense in the process of creating a metaphor.

Metaphor can help us to understand the view, belief and attitude of children related to concept of drama. Metaphors can offer us some tips related to the reason of problems. The **Figure 2** shows these mental processes, below.

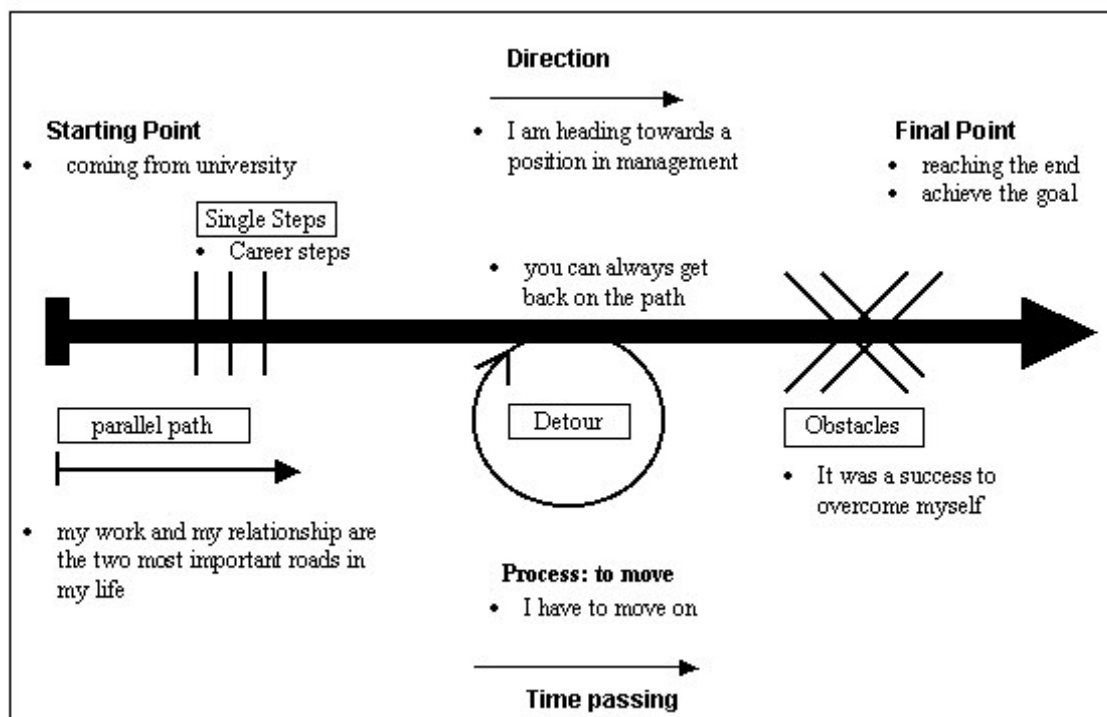


Figure 2: Metaphor model “success in a path” with metaphorical expressions from interviews about the transition from university to work (in Moser, 1999a, p.145).

In the recent studies it is asked to the teacher candidates to create metaphors or images of concept of drama as they are concrete, abstract, living or non-living things and they are asked to explain the reason by “because” sentence. They are given enough time to focus on only one metaphor and to express their thought. Metaphor is used as it is a research tool in the recent studies. We can see researchers used the concept of “like” to evoke clearly and the concept of “because” to express the reasons. (Saban, 2009).

Analyzing the metaphors ensure multilateral perspectives to the scientific studies. Metaphors also reflect creating new concepts, different perceptions, expressions and efforts as we can see in the **Figure 2** (Gentner & Gentner, 1983). Metaphor is an important tool for us to reflect our self and our vision and to develop communication skills (Moser, 2000). Metaphor has an important role to reveal tacit knowledge and verbal

expression of it (Neuweg, 1999; Sternberg & Hovarth, 1999). Metaphor which helps us to transfer, organize and to clear the complicated knowledge and similar problems, ensures representing the knowledge totally. Because metaphor ensures concepts to be understood by everyone and to be expressed differently (Moser, 2000).

Nowadays metaphor is seen as it is conspicuous area by researchers because of all these reasons. We can see many studies in Turkey related to the metaphor in recent years (Altun & Apaydın, 2013; Arslan, 2008; Arslan & Bayrakçı, 2006; Aydın & Ünalı, 2010; Aydođdu, 2008; Babacan, 2014; Cerit, 2008; Cořkun, 2010; Döő, 2009; Eraslan, 2011; Girmen, 2007; Günay & Toy, 2015; Güven & Güven, 2009; Hafizođlu, Karadeniz & Dalgıç, 2011; İbret & Aydınözü, 2011; Ođuz, 2009; Öztürk, 2007; Saban, 2004; Saban, 2008; Saban, 2009; Saban, Koçbeker & Saban, 2006; Semerci, 2007; Töremen & Döő, 2009; Tunç, 2008; Yařar & Bayır, 2010). All these studies focus on social sciences, education and related to the language, culture, student, course, administer, internet, organization, teaching, school and geography. Studies towards analyzing the metaphor help us to develop reliable measurement standards in psychology because of its revealing and reflecting the knowledge (Moser, 2000; Ottati, Rhoads & Graesser, 1999). There is no study in the recent studies related to metaphor on metaphorical conceptions of concept of drama. Therefore we tried to examine perceptions of preschool teacher candidates related to concept of drama via metaphors.

## 2. Purpose

We aimed to examine the mental images of preschool teacher candidates related to the concept of drama via metaphors, in this study. The questions below, questioned in the edge of this study;

- What are the metaphors or mental images of teacher candidates related to the concept of drama?
- Under which conceptual categories are these metaphors or mental images can be collected?
- Is there any significant correlation between the conceptual categories of metaphors or mental images?

## 3. Method

This study is a mixed method research. According to Creswell (2008), the main hypothesis of mixed method research is to use qualitative and quantitative research methods together or combined. Thus, research questions and problems can be understood clearly. According to Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007), mixed method research is obtaining, analyzing and explicating the qualitative and quantitative datum from the same basis.

In qualitative part: In this part, phenomenological analysis was used. This analysis examines physical, affective and cognitive status of people, holistically (Smith & Eatough, 2007). Phenomenology ensures the basis of studies when we couldn't understand the facts clearly or they weren't exactly unknown (Őimőek & Yıldırım, 2006).

In quantitative part: In this part, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was used in order to determine if there was a significant correlation between the conceptual categories created by examining metaphors.

### 3.1 Population and Sample

Population of this study is preschool teacher candidates who are attending to a faculty of education department of preschool education in Turkey.

Sample of this study is a group of teacher candidates who are attending to a faculty of education department of preschool education in the Black Sea Region in Turkey. The participants are 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade bachelor degree students (preschool teacher candidates), totally 152. *Convenience Sampling* method was used to determine the sample. Convenience sampling method is a sampling method which is one of the non-probability methods. Participants were currently attending to relevant faculty and they were available to be studied (Creswell, 2008). 22, 3% of all participants were from grade 1 (34 students), 21,7% from grade 2 (33 students), 29% from grade 3 (44 students) and 20% from grade 4 (41 students). Students from grade 3 and 4 have attended to a drama course before but 1 and 2 haven't. Drama course is offered compulsory to students, in faculty of education in fourth semester.

### 3.2 Data Collection

Teacher candidates were asked to fill in the blanks on the sentences given by researchers in order to examine the mental images or metaphors of them related to the concept of drama. The sentence given was exactly like this; "Drama is like ....., because; ....."

We tried to determine the connection between source and subjects of metaphor by using the word "like". Again we tried to determine the meaning imputed to the metaphor and to determine the reason by using the word "because".

### 3.3 Analysis of Data

Analyzing the metaphors was done by following these three steps below;

- Content analysis

- Obtaining the reliability and validity
- Coding the datum on SPSS program in order to get qualitative analysis

In the first step: Metaphors were sorted alphabetically. Only 624 of 642 metaphors were acceptable as a metaphor. Similar metaphors were collected under the same conceptual categories mean 7 different conceptual categories. We gave names all the categories. They were; *Action, Human, Object, Concrete, Abstract, Nature* and *Animal*.

In the second step: Metaphors and categories were offered to 5 different researches in order to determine if metaphors divided into 7 different categories represents the concept of drama in the edge of obtaining reliability processes as an expert opinion. Researchers were sent written copies of teacher candidates' answers. They were asked to create conceptual categories and to classify the answers to the categories. Some of these researchers took some metaphors from action, concrete and object to another categories. Researchers were dissent on 34 metaphors. We used Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula to obtain the reliability. According to them we can calculate the ratio by using the formula shown below;

$$R (\text{Reliability}) = \text{Number of Consensus} / (\text{Number of Consensus} + \text{Number of Dissent}) \times 100$$

In this study we calculated the ratio as;  $R = 590 / (590 + 34) \times 100 = 94 \%$ . As a result of this calculation the reliability was found as 94 %. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), higher than 70 % is acceptable as it is reliable.

In the third step: All the data were coded on IBM SPSS program. Frequency of participants (*f*) and percentage (%) were calculated as representation of 624 metaphors and 7 different categories. Pearson's correlation was used and results were analyzed. Grades were coded to be practical as **1S** for grade 1, **2S** for grade 2, **3S** for grade3 and **4S** for grade 4.

#### 4. Findings

Participants created totally 650 metaphors related to the concept of drama. Only 624 of them were accepted. Frequencies and percentages of the metaphors created by teacher candidates is shown on **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Frequencies and Percentages of The Metaphors Created By Teacher Candidates

Category	<i>f</i>	%
Action	208	34
Human	54	9
Object	121	19
Concrete	34	5
Abstract	125	20
Nature	70	11
Animal	12	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>100</b>

##### 4.1 Drama as a Category of "Action"

208 metaphors were created in this category (34 % of all).24 metaphors in this category were created by grade 1, 41by grade 2, 75 by grade 3 and 68 by grade 4. Some of them were; playing a game, activity, marathon, living, gymnastic, acting, cure, theatre, movie, sport, smiling etc.

Some expressions of teacher candidates were;

"Drama is like living because it teaches the life through games" (1S)

"Drama is like a game because it is funny" (2S)

"Drama is like a movie because it contents experiences" (3S)

"Drama is like dance because it relaxes people" (3S)

"Drama is like sports because it helps people to get rest" (4S)

##### 4.2 Drama as a Category of "Human"

Teacher candidates created 54 metaphors (9 % of all) in this category. 10 metaphors in this category were created by grade 1, 18 by grade 2, 10 by grade 3 and 16 by grade 4. Some of them were; mother, father, friend, teacher, family, child, scientist, poet, Nasreddin Hodja, clown etc.

Some expressions of teacher candidates were;

"Drama is like a trainer because it teaches" (1S)

"Drama is like a clown because it makes us both smile and cry" (2S)

"Drama is like a child because it is always excited, happy and wriggly" (3S)

"Drama is like a human because it can make us have different emotions any moment" (4S)

##### 4.3 Drama as a Category of "Object"

Teacher candidates created 121 metaphors (19 % of all) in this category. 32 metaphors in this category were

created by grade 1, 38 by grade 2, 18 by grade 3 and 33 by grade 4. Some of them were; toy, book, pen, pencil, desk, compass, bag, eye glasses, mirror, door, rubber, paper, oven etc.

Some expressions of teacher candidates were;

“Drama is like a mirror because it reflects the life” (1S)

“Drama is like a door because it combines the reality and dreams” (2S)

“Drama is like a penny bank because it contains valuable things” (3S)

“Drama is like a book because it helps us to see the world from different perspectives” (4S)

#### 4.4 Drama as a Category of “Concrete”

Teacher candidates created 34 metaphors (5 % of all) in this category. No metaphors in this category were created by grade 1 and 2, 28 by grade 3 and 6 by grade 4. Some of them were; picture, palette, playground, funfair, cigarette, coffee, light etc.

Some expressions of teacher candidates were;

“Drama is like light because it lightens us and raises awareness”

“Drama is like breath because it is not possible to live without it”

“Drama is like a picture because it helps self-revelation”

#### 4.5 Drama as a Category of “Abstract”

Teacher candidates created 125 metaphors (20 % of all) in this category. 13 metaphors in this category were created by grade 1, 43 by grade 2, 28 by grade 3 and 41 by grade 4. Some of them were; dream, water of life, idea, infinity, poem, soul of a child, soul, vision, music, the meaning of life etc.

Some expressions of teacher candidates were;

“Drama is like a dream because it is infinite” (1S)

“Drama is like vision because it still influences you even you awake” (2S)

“Drama is like limitless idea because it shapes the life” (3S)

“Drama is like music because it makes us happy” (4S)

#### 4.6 Drama as a Category of “Nature”

Teacher candidates created 70 metaphors (11 % of all) in this category. 18 metaphors in this category were created by grade 1, 13 by grade 2, 25 by grade 3 and 14 by grade 4. Some of them were; rain, tree, seed, sea, ocean, water, flower, soil, rock, snow, storm, rainbow etc.

Some expressions of teacher candidates were;

“Drama is like a flower because it makes people happy” (1S)

“Drama is like nature because it contains everything” (2S)

“Drama is like a river because it can find its way on its own” (3S)

“Drama is like rainbow because it makes people happy” (4S)

#### 4.7 Drama as a Category of “Animal”

Teacher candidates created 12 metaphors (2 % of all) in this category. 2 metaphors in this category were created by grade 1, 2 by grade 2, 0 by grade 3 and 8 by grade 4. Some of them were; bird, animal world, butterfly, chameleon, clam etc.

Some expressions of teacher candidates were;

“Drama is like a bird because it can take people to different places” (1S)

“Drama is like a butterfly because it makes people happy even for a limited time” (2S)

“Drama is like a clam because its bowels and shells are so different” (4S)

#### 4.8 Is There Any Significant Correlation Between the Categories?

On the **Table 2** which is shown below, it was tried to find out if there was any significant correlation between 7 different conceptual categories. We can see the significant and positive correlation between the categories of concrete and object, nature and object, if we look at **Table 2**. ( $P < .05$ ).

Table 2. Correlation Between Conceptual Categories ( $p < ,05$ ).

Category	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(1) Action	1						
(2) Human	,027	1					
(3) Object	-,609	,740	1				
(4) Concrete	,781	-,504	-,954*	1			
(5) Abstract	,469	,889	,352	-,059	1		
(6) Nature	,392	-,846	-,967*	,869	-,532	1	
(7) Animal	,203	,513	,460	-,391	,451	-,636	1

## 5. Discussion and Suggestions

In this part, findings were discussed. Metaphor can be used as a *Powerful Research Tool* in order to determine, understand and explain teacher candidates' mental images related to the concept of drama.

It has been investigated that, what are the metaphors or mental images of teacher candidates and under which conceptual categories can we collect them, as it has been questioned with sub questions of this study.

Participants created totally 624 metaphors. Some of them were; game, river, flower, nature, dream, rainbow, butterfly, water, life, rain, snow, tear, theatre, dram etc. We can see the metaphors collected under the conceptual categories of "Action", "Human", "Object", "Concrete", "Abstract", "Nature" and "Animal". We can say that many metaphors were created, related to the concept of drama, because of drama's reflecting experiences, socio-cultural and cognitions of people (Bargh & Barndollar, 1996). Because, drama is a process which contains freedom, originality and different thinking skills.

We can see that, metaphors in the category of "Action" were created most. Metaphors make the thought, belief and attitudes clear. Thus we can explain why they were created most. Teacher candidates focused on -to play, -to live and -to act in this category. Because, drama is transforms internal processes to external structures. One expresses his/her feelings, what he/she saw and heard by his/her acts and perceives this process as a game. He/she also imitates different experiences in this process. Thus people can develop his/her reasoning skills and deduces about many different things. We can understand why most metaphors were created in the category of action.

Metaphors in the category of "Abstract" were created second most. Because drama is a process which reflects gesture, mimic, body language, silent moments, deeply feelings and life styles when the verbal expressions are no longer enough (San, 2004). In sum, drama is reflecting internal feelings. Thus we can understand why they were created most.

No metaphors were created by grade 1 and 2 in the category of "Concrete". They haven't attended to a drama course. May be it can be a reason of it. Because people need to get some experience to make the knowledge more concrete. Thus we can understand why grade 1 and 2 couldn't create any metaphors in this category.

Another finding is that, there is a positive and significant correlation between the categories of concrete and object, nature and object. ( $P < ,05$ ). According to these results, may be teacher candidates made some connections between the mental images related to object, concrete and nature. Because we can assign many different meanings to any of a concept and we can use the knowledge multilaterally through metaphors (Dweck, 1996). We can accept metaphor as a creative expression which reveals different perspectives. Reminding by using actions or objects in order to explain facts better, can be accepted as a different way of learning (Morgan, 1998). Thus, we can explain why there is a correlation between these categories.

We can see that, metaphors created by teacher candidates related to the concept of drama were collected under 7 different categories. "Game" and "Life" are most created metaphors. Drama covers an important part of our life. We reflect our experiences and hope by games. There is no study on analyzing the perceptions related to drama by using metaphors among the recent studies. It can be studied that mental images related to drama with different samples mean with preschool children, primary and secondary school students and it can be examined according to different variables. It is necessary to fulfill the lack of studies on this area if we consider the importance of drama on developmental areas.

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