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THE COMPARISON BETWEEN THE PROSPECTIVE FRENCH TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER AND THE ROLE OF TEACHER ADOPTED BY LEARNING THEORIES

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Extended Abstract

Purpose

With the development and spread of information and communication technologies, all kinds of information have been easily accessible by a large number of people. These developments have also affected the education system and learning/teaching processes. Research in educational sciences also contributes to better explaining this process. As a result, teaching methods are constantly changing and gaining new dimensions. The role of the teacher should be in line with the teaching and learning environment that is constantly changing.

Especially, the task-based language teaching approach, which emphasizes student-centred teaching, has brought important changes in the role of the teachers in the classroom. The teacher is no longer seen as the person who just transmits information; he/she is now required to assume the role of guide and assistant. Therefore, determining prospective teachers' perceptions about the concept of "teacher" could help to see how they perceive the learning and teaching process.

The aim of this study is to answer to the following questions:

1- What are the metaphors that reflect "teacher" perceptions of prospective French teachers?

2- To which concepts these metaphors are related?

3- Which learning theory can be associated with these metaphors?

Method

Participants

The participants in this study, included 50 (n=50) French Language Teaching Department students of the Faculty of Education at the Anadolu University, in the 2017-2018 academic year.

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to determine participants' perceptions of "teacher", we used the qualitative research method. The participants were asked to complete a blank piece of paper with this statement; "Teacher is like … Because …", they were also told to use only one metaphor and explain the reason in 25 minutes.

The data obtained was analysed by content analysis; first, the metaphors that were not valid were eliminated: two metaphors were invalid. In the second stage, the codes were identified and they were reduced to themes. In order to ensure validity conditions, a second expert coded the data. These codes were compared with the coding obtained by the researcher. There was not important differences. In the third stage, the frequency and percentage of the obtained themes were calculated. Finally, the conceptual themes were compared with the role of the teacher adopted by behavioural, constructivist and cognitive learning theories.

Results

According to the results, 6 main conceptual themes were obtained from 22 valid metaphorical images: 1- teacher as a guide and illuminator (% 48), 2- teacher as supporter of character development (%12), 3- teacher as companion (%8), 4- teacher as cultivator and nurturer (%8), 5- teacher as shaper of future generations (%4), 6- teacher as knowledge provider (%2).

The results indicate that the majority of the participants (% 48) perceive the teacher as a guide and illuminator and %12 of the participants see the teacher as a supporter of character development. Only %2 of the participants perceive the teacher as a knowledge provider.

Conclusion

According to the Behaviourist learning theory, the teacher must present information clearly. He/she uses reward and punishment methods to improve students' correct behaviour. The results of this study indicate that prospective French teachers do not consider the teacher as a source of knowledge. It could be concluded that according to the participants, knowledge transfer is not the basic task of the teacher.

According to the constructivist theory, it is by acting on the world that we learn. In other words, it is through experiences that one acquires knowledge. The child is an individual with his own rhythm of evolution that pedagogy must take into consideration. The teacher must give the learners the help they need in construction of new knowledge. Teachers direct and guide students' individual activities, but they do not dictate or force them. Teacher should encourage student critical thinking and inquiry by asking them thoughtful, open-ended questions, and encourage them to ask questions to each other. So that students can construct their own meaning when learning. According to the results, almost half of the participants see the teacher as a guide and illuminator. The participants' perception of teacher fits most closely to the role of the teacher in the constructivist learning theory.

Cognitivist learning theory aims to assist learners in assimilating new information to existing knowledge, and enabling them to make the appropriate modifications to their existing intellectual framework to accommodate that information. Teaching refers to the setting up learning situations that involve the performance of complex tasks, problem solving, and transfer. The teacher trains his students by helping them to acquire knowledge that will make them able to solve problems in different situations through many examples. Teachers should be also role models to their students. The roles of the teacher as supporter of character development and as a companion matches better to the role of teacher in the cognitivist learning theory.

As a result, according to the participants, the teacher's main task is not to transfer knowledge. The role of the teacher should be to guide the learners, to help them in solving the problems they face during the learning process. The teacher should also support students' personal development and be a role model. Therefore, teachers must question the extent to which they have adopted the role of a guide. In addition, pre-service teachers should acquire the required skills in order to undertake these roles effectively. It would be helpful to take this kind of qualitative data into account when determining the educational objectives and outcomes

Keywords: Role of the teacher, Learning theories, Prospective french teachers, Metaphor analysis.

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