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METAPHORICAL PERCEPTIONS OF FACULTY OF EDUCATION STUDENTS REGARDING SPECIAL EDUCATION

Research article

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METAPHORICAL PERCEPTIONS OF FACULTY OF EDUCATION STUDENTS REGARDING SPECIAL EDUCATION

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Abstract

This research examines the metaphorical perceptions of teacher candidates at the Faculty of Education, and is designed using the case study method. It was conducted with the participation of 68 teacher candidates studying at Amasya University's Faculty of Education during the 2022-2023 academic year. The research included students from the English Language Teaching and Turkish Language Teaching departments. A two-phase form was used by researchers to determine the metaphorical perceptions of the participants related to special education. In the first phase, participants were asked to complete the sentence "Special education is like...." in order to determine which aspect of special education they associated with; instruction processes, profession, educational structure, difficulty-hardship, goal-purpose, love, tool-equipment, material-tool-equipment, benefit, guide, opportunity and need. In the second phase, participants were asked to explain their associations by filling in the section starting with "Because...". Data analysis was done by descriptive and content analysis. The findings of the research show that the total of 592 metaphors produced by the teacher candidates were grouped under 11 themes: "Profession", "Educational Structure", "Instruction Processes", "Tool-Equipment-Material", "Benefit", "Goal-Purpose", "Love", "Guide", "Need", "Opportunity". The results of the study reveal that teacher candidates produced the most metaphors in the areas of Educational Structure (174), Instruction Processes (96), Need (63) and Benefit (60).

Keywords: Special education, metaphor, metaphor analysis, teacher candidates

1. Introduction

A metaphor is defined as a mental tool that is used to describe a term or concept related to an event or phenomenon, to enhance the expression, or to transform thoughts into effective linguistic acts (Semerci, 2007; Saban, 2008; Kövecses, 2002). The general aim of using a metaphor is to show how a concept or event is perceived by individuals (Aydın, 2011). Metaphor is an indicator of how the producer or the listener is included in a mental grasp, and it is used both in understanding social events and in description and comparison (Silman and Şimşek, 2006). The use of metaphors can be seen as a way for an individual to express their thoughts about a concept in a more concise and impactful manner. These metaphors play an important role in shaping an individual's thoughts and influencing their behavior (Strenski, 1989).

The concept of metaphor is defined in the Turkish Language Association (TDK) dictionary as a figure of speech and is described as "a beautiful comparison taken from nature and another thing while describing something" (TDK, 2019). According to Lakoff and Johnson, people use metaphors to make abstract or complex ideas more concrete and easily understandable. They

argue that this helps individuals to better understand and communicate information about the world and reality. Metaphors are the mental structures that shape their thoughts about these concepts and metaphors guide individuals towards creative thinking, interpreting their own experiences, and imagining (Tompkins and Lawley, 2002).

Metaphors also play an significant role in conceptualizing learning elements in educational processes and are frequently used to reveal the connections between personal beliefs and educational definitions or institutions (Leavy, McSorley, and Bote, 2007). Metaphors are used to reveal the thoughts and perceptions of teachers and teacher candidates about specific terms and concepts and to shape the processes of modeling and mental mapping of knowledge acquisition (Dikmenli, Çardak, and Yener, 2012).

1.1. Special Education

According to the Special Education Services Regulation [SESR/ÖEHY] that regulates official special education services in Turkey, special education is defined as "education programs developed to meet the educational and social needs of individuals who show a meaningful level of difference in terms of their individual and developmental characteristics also education competencies, and education that is conducted in appropriate environments with specially trained personnel" (SESR/ÖEHY, 2018). Special education is education that is offered to individuals who need special education and who show a meaningful difference from others, which allows the development of the capacities of gifted individuals, prevents inadequacy from becoming a barrier and enables special individuals to become self-sufficient and exist in society (Ataman, 2003). In special education practices, specially developed programs for individuals who show different characteristics and different development from their peers and who cannot benefit from normal education, partially benefit or continue their education with support programs are used and it is important that these programs are given by special education professionals (Baykoç Dönmez, 2010).

The most prominent feature of special education is that individuals with needs cannot benefit enough from general education due to their developmental and learning characteristics. The education of individuals with special needs can be achieved in two ways; one of them is separate education, the other is inclusive education. Separate education is carried out with programs developed taking into account the disability and by special education personnel. Inclusive education is where individuals with special needs and those with normal development are taught by normal class teachers in the same class (Öncül and Batu, 2005).

It is known that the perceptions of teacher candidates towards special education, which begin after taking the special education and inclusive course, and their attitudes towards individuals with special needs are directly related to their knowledge about special education and inclusive (Bek, Gülveren and Başer, 2009; Kim, 2011; Orel, Zerey and Töret, 2004; Şahin and Güldenoğlu, 2013, Vuran, 2013).

According to YÖK/HEI (Higher Education Institution) (2019), the purpose of the special education and inclusive course is to train individuals who understand the basic concepts and principles of special education, who can use the basic concepts of types of inadequacies and learning difficulties correctly, who can explain the development and historical journey of special education in the world and Turkey, who are aware of the legal regulations in the field, who can identify the types of obstacles for individuals with special needs and approach them correctly and who can make specific instructional arrangements for these students. For special education services to be carried out in accordance with this purpose, the definitions and concepts related to special education must be known, understood and structured correctly by the practitioners. Ausubel, when listing the qualities sought in a good teacher, in addition to

mental proficiency and field knowledge, also includes knowledge of development and learning. Therefore, the importance of the metaphors related to this field in the application of the special education course is indirectly revealed (Akt., Kargin, 1997).

In their research, Kumaş and Süer (2020) attempted to determine the metaphors of teacher candidates related to special education and found that these metaphors were grouped under 5 themes: "Special education as a need", "Special education as a tool for ensuring equal opportunities in education", "Special education as a tool for special attention and assistance", "Special education as a tool for unconditional acceptance", and "Special education as diversity". The determination of these metaphors related to the field will contribute to the preparation of special education programs and the production of policies in the field, and will draw attention to issues such as equal opportunities and the use of special education as a tool for unconditional acceptance. The metaphor determination studies will form a basis for the arrangements made in the undergraduate program for teachers in the field of special education, inclusive, and differences. Studies show that teachers do not have enough knowledge in the field of special education and inclusive and that teacher candidates who take inclusion-related courses in undergraduate education have more positive attitudes towards integration in their professional lives (Orel, Töret and Zerey; 2004; Sucuoğlu, Bakkaloğlu, İşcen Karasu, Demir and Akalın, 2014).

Special education is also defined as academic, physical, cognitive, and emotional education provided to students with one or more disabilities, and is seen as a service that promotes academic progress and personal and social development for students with deficiencies. Therefore, determining the metaphors of teachers or teacher candidates for special education is important in terms of improving the quality of special education services (Farrell, 2009; Bateman and Cline, 2016, Akt. Aksoy and Alan, 2019). Since special education is an education that is carried out with specially trained personnel, developed education programs and methods to meet the education needs of individuals with special education needs, the views of teachers who will apply this education are also included in the studies. Focusing on what they can do, rather than the differences of individuals with special education needs, is appropriate teaching in the nature of special education. This focus also gains value by determining special education-related metaphors and the meanings that teacher candidates attach to special education (Diken, 2017).

In line with the aforementioned problem, the aim of this research is to determine the metaphorical perceptions of special education among teacher candidates who are students of education faculties. In accordance with this goal, the sub-problems of the research are listed as follows:

1.What are the metaphorical perceptions of teacher candidates regarding "special education"?

2.Do the metaphorical perceptions of teacher candidates about "special education" differ according to the gender of the teachers?

3.Do the metaphorical perceptions of teacher candidates about "special education" differ according to the departments of the teacher candidates?

2. Method

This research, which aims to identify the metaphorical perceptions of special education among teacher candidates studying in education faculties, is designed according to the case study method. In this research, the qualitative research method and one of the methods used in qualitative research, phenomenology, was utilized. Phenomenology is a type of qualitative research that primarily aims to reveal the common meanings underlying the phenomenon by

describing the world experienced by individuals and explaining the essence of realized experiences (Baker, Wuest, and Stern, 1992; Rose, Beeby, and Parker, 1995). The qualitative research method has been given different names in its historical process, such as "Natural Research" for researching natural phenomena, "Interpretive Research" for including the researcher's personal views on the problem, and "Field Research" for studying a topic in detail within a given social environment (Baltacı, 2019).

2.1. Population and Sample

The population of this research includes the students studying in the English Language Teaching and Turkish Language Teaching departments at Amasya University during the 2022-2023 academic year. "In cases where individuals in the population do not show homogeneity, the individuals with the same characteristics are divided into subgroups and these subgroups are labeled as layers, and the sample is created by selecting groups from each layer, this method is called stratified sampling" (Aziz, 2015). In this research, the sample was chosen as stratified sampling due to the difference in gender and departments of the units that make up the population, related to the research topic. In this research, after each of the different teaching branches of the Faculty of Education were identified as layers, the branches chosen by simple random sampling method formed the sample of the study. The distribution of the groups that make up the sample according to the layers is given in Table 1.

Table 1. *Distribution of students forming the population according to strati*

Strati No	Branch	Number of Students	Number of Students to Participate in the Sampling
1	English	55	33
2	Turkish	40	35

The total number of students and gender distribution for both departments is shown in the table below.

Table 2. *Number of students forming the population and distribution according to gender*

Number of Students	N	Percentage (%)
Female	43	63.74
Male	25	36.76
Total	68	100.0

Upon examination of Table 2, it is seen that female students make up 63.74% of the population, while male students comprise 36.76% of the minority.

2.2. Data Collection Tool

A two-stage form prepared by the researchers was used to determine the metaphorical perceptions of special education among the students of the English Language Teaching and Turkish Language Teaching departments who participated in the research. In the first stage, participants were asked to complete the sentence "Special education is like" in order to determine which aspects of special education; instruction processes, profession, educational structure, difficulty-difficulty, goal-aim, love, tool-equipment, material-tool-equipment, benefit, guide, opportunity and need, they associated with. Then, in the second stage, participants were asked to fill in the section starting with "Because" to explain the metaphorical associations they made with special education. The forms filled in by the participants were used as the main data collection tool of the study.

2.3. Data Analysis

In the analysis of the metaphorical perceptions of special education created by the students of the English Language Teaching and Turkish Language Teaching departments, descriptive and content analysis were used. Descriptive analysis is a method of analysis where the data obtained is presented to the reader by directly quoting what the participants of the research say, without much intervention in the summary of the data (Wolcott, 1994). Content analysis is composed of gathering similar data in a specific theme or concept component and presenting it to the reader (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006).

3. Findings and Discussion

In this section, the data obtained in the research is analyzed and interpreted in accordance with the aim of the research. During the interpretation, the metaphors were grouped under certain sub-themes according to their densities and the types and numbers of metaphors used by the students of the English Language Teaching and Turkish Language Teaching departments for the concept of special education are given in Table 3 in the form of frequency and percentage.

Table 3. *Types of metaphors used by students and the number of usage*

Metaphor Type	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Profession	21	3.55
Education Structure	174	29.39
Difficultly-Distress	45	7.60
Teaching Processes	96	16.22
Tools-Equipment-Material	59	9.97
Benefit	60	10.14
Goal-Purpose	6	1.01
Love	34	5.74
Guide	29	4.90
Need	63	10.64
Opportunity	5	0.84
Total number of uses	592	100.0

In the information given in Table 3, it can be seen that the education structure is the most used metaphor with a rate of 29.39%, while the least used metaphor is opportunity with a rate of 0.84%. The opinions of the students regarding the profession metaphor are given in Table 4

Table 4. *Students' opinions on the profession metaphor*

English Language Teaching	Turkish Language Teaching
Special education is like mining, because it allows the discovery and extraction of many valuable and potential hidden gems.	Special education is like a gardener because the more proper education we give, the more the individual can develop themselves.
Special education is like tailoring, because it carefully sews and beautifies, like special education.	Special education is like a writer, because a writer pays attention to every detail when writing a book, and in special education as well, attention must be paid to the fine details.
Special education is like a gardener, because it can create a paradise garden or dry it out.	Special education is like a sculptor because the meaning changes according to the form given.

The students of the English Language Teaching department chose the profession metaphor 15 times, while the students of the Turkish Language Teaching department chose it 6 times. When the common opinions in the profession metaphor used by both departments are examined in Table 4, it can be seen that they emphasize the importance of the teacher who will provide education to individuals who need special education in the context of shaping their lives and the importance of this education. The opinions of the students regarding the educational structure metaphor are given in Table 5.

Table 5. *Students' opinions on the educational structure metaphor*

English Language Teaching	Turkish Language Teaching
Special education is like a rainbow, it contains different beautiful colors, but each one is a unique piece of a pure white light. I compare special education to a brick because when they are put together, they create a very strong structure	Special education is like a box, because you can't know what's inside without opening the lid.
Special education is like the sea, we see the blue at a glance, but when we dive into it, it gives life to thousands of creatures.	Special education is like a door, because you don't know what will be on the other side until you open it.
Special education is like a fingerprint, because they are all different. We need to provide different approaches and education targeting their goals for each one.	Special education is like a fingerprint, because just like each of our fingerprints is different and valuable, special children are also each unique and valuable.
	Special education is like DNA, because individuals with special needs, like DNA, are unique and one-of-a-kind.

English Teaching major students have chosen the metaphor of education structure 48 times, while Turkish Teaching major students have chosen it 126 times. When looking at the usage numbers, it is revealed that education structure is the most important metaphor. When considering the comments of both major students in Table 5, it can be understood that the education structure metaphor is the most preferred and important one. The comparison of fingerprint is the most striking and impressive example, and it is used by students from both majors. The fact that fingerprints change from person to person is a metaphor that has become a general one for students, emphasizing that special education is structured according to the needs of each individual. In addition to the fingerprint example, the DNA example used by Turkish Teaching major students is another beautiful example emphasizing that needs change from person to person. Table 6 includes the views of students on the difficulty-trouble metaphor.

Table 6. *Opinions of students on the metaphor of difficulty-distress*

English Language Teaching	Turkish Language Teaching
Special education is like banging one's head against a brick wall because it is a difficult and demanding task.	Special education is like fishing. Because patience is an essential part of this job.
Special education is like the art of marbling because it requires time and patience.	Special education is like art because it requires fine craftsmanship.
Special education is a path filled with thorns and roses because no one notices the pain of their feet being pricked by the thorns while walking, and the beauty of the rose reached in the end.	Special education is like living in the countryside with the harsh winter and waiting for the spring because patience is required for the better future of individuals with special needs.

English Teaching Department students chose to use the Difficulty-Distress metaphor 18 times, while Turkish Teaching Department students chose to use it 27 times. As seen in Table 6, when considering the common opinions of students from both departments, it is observed that the idea that special education requires patience and is a difficult process is widespread among students. The opinions of students regarding instructional processes are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. *Students' views on the metaphor of teaching processes*

English Language Teaching	Turkish Language Teaching
Special education is like a class of snow because it accumulates slowly like snowflakes and ultimately brings happiness to our lives.	Special education is like a journey into the unknown, because you never know where the end will take you.
Special education is like a hill because it is a difficult path that leads to a flat surface.	Special education is like a scientific experiment, because it requires repeatedly trying to achieve the desired outcome without giving up.
Special education is like a marathon, because even though it is long and challenging, it ultimately leads to the successful integration of the individuals being trained into society.	Special education is like carpet weaving, because each motif requires patience and the process of carefully threading one thread at a time.

English language teaching department students chose to use the "teaching process" metaphor 35 times, while Turkish language teaching department students chose to use it 61 times. According to Table 7, when the common opinions of students from both departments were considered, it was seen that students from the Turkish language teaching department had doubts about whether short and long-term goals could be achieved through special education processes, while students from the English language teaching department emphasized that special education is a success that leads to positive results for the individual, even though it is a difficult journey for the student and stakeholders. The students' views on the tool-equipment-material metaphor are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. *Students' opinions on the metaphor of tools-equipment-material*

English Language Teaching	Turkish Language Teaching
Special education is like a picklock because it opens any door the individual in need wants.	Special education is like a key, because with the right teaching techniques, the right subjects can be learned, just like a key opens the right door.
Special education is like a cane because it supports adaptability to life.	Special education is like the pillar of society, it keeps society standing.
Special education is like a door because it opens up to new knowledge, skills, and abilities.	Special education can be compared to the key-lock harmony. With the right key, or the right education, we can open the worlds of individuals.

The students in the English Teaching department chose to use the tool-material-equipment metaphor 40 times, while the students in the Turkish Teaching department chose to use it 19 times. According to Table 8, when considering the common comments of both departments'

students, it is seen that both department students see special education as a tool that will produce effective results in the individual's life, as an inevitable and necessary practice for society and a helping tool for social integration for individuals with special education needs. The students' views on the benefit metaphor are given in Table 9.

Table 9. *Students' opinions on the metaphor of benefit*

English Language Teaching	Turkish Teaching
Special education is like a candle; it turns darkness into light.	Special education is like technology because it makes life easier for people.
Special education is like a light of hope, as it guides those who are seeking light just like in the dark places.	Special education is like music because it nourishes the soul.
Special education is like chocolate, as it helps individuals with special needs to connect to life with happiness, just like how chocolate triggers happiness hormones.	Special education is like eyeglasses because, like eyeglasses, it allows the individual to see without needing them.
Special education is like light, as it rescues individuals who need it from the darkness and guides them towards light. It provides them with a bright future and makes them self-sufficient, integrating them into society.	Special education is like first aid because if it is done early, it can save lives.

English Teaching Department students have chosen to use the benefit metaphor 30 times, while Turkish Teaching Department students have also chosen to use it 30 times. In Table 9, when the common comments of the students of both departments are examined, the comments of the students of the English Teaching Department indicate that special education provides happiness and connects individuals in need of special education to life by saving them from darkness. The Turkish Teaching Department students have emphasized in their comments that special education makes life easier, nourishes the soul, and has a life-saving feature. The views of the students regarding the goal-purpose metaphor are included in Table 10.

Table 10. *Students' views on the goal-purpose metaphor*

English Language Teaching	Turkish Language Teaching
Special education is teaching how to fish, because the main goal is to raise self-sufficient individuals.	Special education is like playing the game of finding the biggest rock with a friend in the ocean as deep as your height allows when you were a child, because just like in special education, we always want to find the biggest, the most beautiful, and the most special rock.
Special education is the middle path, because the aim is to unite all individuals at one point.	Special education is like a mussel, because just as it is the task of a mussel to reveal the pearl inside, it is also the task of special education teachers to reveal the potential of the individual receiving special education.
Special education is like an egg, because you want to crack it open and grow, develop and fly.	Special education is like salt, because salt enhances the flavor of food. Special education improves the society and those who needs it should be integrated into the society. This is also one of the goals of special education.

According to the data presented in Table 10, students from the English Teaching department chose the goal-objective metaphor 3 times, while students from the Turkish Teaching department also chose the goal-purpose metaphor 3 times. When the common comments of students from both departments were examined on the goal-purpose metaphor, which had an equal number of usage, it was seen that both groups agreed that special education is an education that enables individuals to stand on their own feet and harmonize with society, and that the goal of special education is focused on these points. The opinions of students regarding the love metaphor are included in Table 11.

Table 11. *Students' views on the metaphor of love*

English Language Teaching	Turkish Language Teaching
Special education is like a family, because every member is important and is not worthless. If individuals with special needs feel that they are part of the family, the process will be healthier and more productive.	Special education is like a mother, because it requires unconditional love and sacrifice.
Special education is like a mother's lap, because it embraces every individual without discrimination.	Everyone needs love and attention, and special children need it more than anyone else. That's why special education is a work of love.
Special education is like an angel, because they have no evil in their hearts, we feel their love and compassion at all times.	Special education is like a mother, because it is patient and compassionate.
Special education is like a child, because it is open to development, wants to play and laugh, and is innocent and pure.	Special education is like a mother's love, the absence of it causes great harm while the presence of it leaves positive impacts.

According to the data presented in Table 11, students from the English Teaching department chose the love metaphor 18 times, while students from the Turkish Teaching department chose the love metaphor 16 times. When the common comments of students from both departments were examined, it was seen that English Teaching department students emphasized on the features of special education that awakened the feeling of purity and cleanliness, Turkish Teaching department students compared special education to a mother's lap, and emphasized the aspects of compassion, mercy and unconditional love. The opinions of students regarding the guide metaphor are included in Table 12.

Table 12. *Students' opinions on the metaphor of the guide*

English Language Teaching	Turkish Teaching
Özel eğitim haritadır, hazinenin yolunu gösterir.	Special education is a map, it shows the way to the treasure.
Özel eğitim dersi soyut bir rehberdir. Çünkü özel eğitime ihtiyaç duyan bireylere yön verir.	Special education is an abstract guide, because it guides individuals with special needs.
Özel eğitim kutup yıldızıdır, çünkü hem özel hem eğitime gereksinim duyan bireylere hem de ailelerine yol gösterir.	Special education is like a North Star, because it guides both individuals with special needs and their families.

According to the data presented in Table 12, students from the English Teaching department chose the guide metaphor 14 times, while students from the Turkish Teaching department chose the guide metaphor 15 times. When the common comments of students from both departments were examined, it was seen that both groups emphasized that special education guides both individuals and their families throughout their lives, providing light and direction. They also pointed out that special education is the most important guide in the lives of the individual and their families. This feature is best explained by the following statement, "Special education is a map, it shows the way to the treasure." In this statement, the treasure represents the individual with special needs reaching the same level as their peers, physically, mentally and emotionally sufficient. The opinions of students regarding the need metaphor are included in Table 13.

Table 13. *Students' views on the metaphor of need*

English Language Teaching	Turkish Language Teaching
Special education is like breath, because it is needed at every point in everyone's life.	Special education is like water, because just as people need water to survive, individuals with special needs require special education.
Special education is like sand, because a high-quality sand is necessary for a solid building.	Special education is like rain, because just as the soil needs water, individuals with inadequate abilities require a special education program.
Special education is like the heart, because just like the heart is the most important organ that keeps us alive, special education is the most important thing for these individuals.	Special education is like oxygen, because education that addresses individual differences is essential for individuals with special needs to thrive and survive in society.

According to the data presented in Table 13, students from the English Teaching department chose the need metaphor 35 times, while students from the Turkish Teaching department chose the need metaphor 28 times. When the common comments of students from both departments were examined, it was seen that both groups emphasized the importance of special education as a basic need for individuals and the necessity of special education for building a strong society. The opinions of students regarding the opportunity metaphor are included in Table 14.

Table.14 *Students' views on the metaphor of opportunity*

English Language Teaching	Turkish Language Teaching
Special education is like recycling, it takes unused or outdated materials and processes them to bring them back to life.	Special education is similar to a playground because in the playground each individual plays with the toy of their choice.
Special education is like a library, it makes sure that the amazing books waiting to be read are read.	
Special education is like releasing a bird from a cage. when life sometimes feels like a cage and open the door, special education gives the opportunity to leave.	
Special education is a privilege because it is shaped according to the individual's wishes and needs.	

English Teaching students have chosen the opportunity metaphor 4 times, while Turkish Teaching students have only chosen it once. When looking at the number of choices, it can be seen that the least chosen and least valued metaphor is the opportunity metaphor. When examining the common comments of students from both departments in Table 14, Turkish Teaching students emphasize the importance of giving individuals a choice in special education, while English Teaching students focus on the benefits of special education in society and life, such as giving individuals an opportunity to be discovered by society and providing an exit for individuals who are judged for their differences.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

In conclusion, the research results show that students produced a total of 34 metaphors in the area of love and compared special education to mother, angel, family, and child. This finding is similar to the results of other studies (Uçuş, 2016; Başgöl and Sağır, 2017; Kumaş and Süer, 2020). These studies have found that the most frequently repeated metaphors used by teacher candidates in relation to special education are mother, flower and sun. In addition, Başgöl and Sağır (2017) study also describes special education as a nurturing and loving environment, where the metaphor of special education as a desert plant that needs care, reflects the idea that special education is a nurturing environment for individuals with needs. Overall, these studies suggest that teacher candidates perceive special education as a form of care and support for individuals with special needs.

According to studies, when the perceptions of teacher candidates towards special education are examined, it is seen that they are positive and at a high level, and that elementary school teacher candidates mostly produce the category of special education as a product of attention, dedication, and effort through the use of metaphor (Uçuş, 2016). In a study conducted by Kumaş and Süer (2020), it was also observed that teacher candidates produced 85 different metaphors related to special education, describing special education as a means of providing equal opportunities in education, acceptance, and assistance while also noting some metaphors in the category of special education as differences. When these studies are examined, it is observed that teacher candidates mostly produce metaphors on the purpose of special education and the characteristics of individuals who need special education (Uçuş, 2016; Kumaş and Süer, 2020). The origin of teacher candidates producing metaphors in this way may be due to their lack of adequate knowledge on ongoing special education, integration, and inclusion education in schools, and their failure to develop awareness of types and education for disabilities and inadequacies.

When the results of the research are examined, it is seen that teacher candidates produced 63 metaphors under the theme of needs and 35 of these metaphors were produced by students studying in the Turkish Teacher Education department. In the study, the concept of need was attempted to be defined through the words heart, oxygen, breath and it was determined that students from both departments see special education as a necessity for the individual. This result is similar to other research findings. In similar studies, teacher candidates who attempted to explain special education through metaphors under the theme of need, likened special education to objects and elements that are essential in daily life, such as air, sun, water and even attempted to explain the necessity of special education for those who have special needs, just like people who are hungry need food (Başgöl and Sağır, 2017). However, teacher candidates who associate special education with needs through metaphors, have concerns that special education is a necessity for students who have deficiencies and that if they do not receive this education, they will encounter different problems in their lives.

In a study conducted by Efilti, Demirci and Karaduman (2021), special education is also discussed in terms of the difficulty and patience dimension which is different from other sub-

themes, and special education is described as a difficult process with different examples. There are striking examples such as special education being likened to the Ankara Konya highway or an experiment in which results are desired. These results are similar to the findings of the research. Indeed, in the study, students studying in the English and Turkish teacher education departments have used metaphors under the theme of difficulty and hardship 45 times in total. In the study, these difficulties were explained by metaphors such as spending a difficult winter in the countryside, waiting patiently to catch fish, or working with fine craftsmanship to produce an original work of art.

As a result of the research, one of the theme topics where students used their metaphors most frequently for special education was determined to be benefit. It has been seen that students from both departments structured 30 metaphors under the benefit sub-heading. When the examples given for these metaphors are examined, it is seen that special education is likened to objects such as light, first aid, eye lens, technology, candlelight, etc. that will provide benefit to individuals. In the studies conducted by Başgül and Sağır (2017) and Kumaş and Sürer (2020), although it is under different sub-themes, special education is likened to light and first aid.

In the study, one of the sub-theme topics where students produced the most metaphors is seen as teaching processes. Under this sub-theme, students have produced a total of 96 different metaphors. When these metaphors are examined, it is observed that Turkish teacher education students are interested in whether special education goals are achieved or not when writing their metaphors, whereas English teacher education students point out that special education is a long journey for students and stakeholders. In this context, when student views are examined, special education is likened to a steep road, marathon or carpet weaving, and it is emphasized that the teaching processes are difficult. In the study conducted by Efilti, Demirci and Karaduman (2021), one of the sub-theme topics that students prepared for special education was academic process, and it was observed that students likened special education to a winding path, life or tree. In some studies, special education was not approached in this context, and special education was tried to be explained more under themes such as place/space or nature or abstract or concrete actions (Yıldırım and Kuzu, 2021).

When all of these results are considered together, it is seen that the metaphorical perceptions of students or teacher candidates towards special education are structured under common sub-themes such as benefit, need, process, love, and difficulty, and they point out that it is a challenging education process (Yıldırım and Kuzu, 2021; Efilti, Demirci and Karaduman, 2021; Uçuş, 2016). This is an indication that these students or teacher candidates are aware of special education and that they are aware of the difficulties that can be encountered in planning and implementing special education processes. In this sense, it is thought that providing information on the dimensions of special education, such as the dimension of opportunity equality in education that is not or less reflected in metaphors, and providing different education opportunities in areas such as special education practices, integration and inclusion education, would be appropriate.

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