



## ÖĞRETMENLERİN ÖĞRENME YETERSİZLİĞİ OLAN ÖĞRENCİLERİ İLE İLGİLİ ALGILARININ METAFOR ANALİZİ YOLUYLA İNCELENMESİ

### A METAPHOR ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Nilüfer ÖZABACI\* Bircan ERGÜN-BAŞAK\*\*

**ÖZ:** Sınıf öğretmenlerinin öğrenme yetersizliği olan öğrencilere ilişkin algılarının metafor analizi ile incelendiği bu çalışma ile şu sorulara yanıt aranmıştır: 1. Sınıf öğretmenlerini öğrenme yetersizliği olan öğrencilerini tanımlarken kullandıkları metaforlar nelerdir? 2. Metaforlar öğretmenlerin cinsiyetlerine göre hangi kategoriler altında toplanmaktadır? Bu çalışma, 2007-2008 öğretim yılında ilköğretim okullarında görevli 171 ilköğretim öğretmeniyle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Öğretmenlerin algılarını belirlemek için öğretmenlere “Öğrenme yetersizliği olan öğrenciler ..... gibidir. Çünkü .....” yazılı bir ibare verilmiş ve tamamlamaları istenmiştir. Çalışmanın bulgularında öğretmenlerin 106 metafor ürettikleri ve bu metaforların sekiz kategori altında toplandığı görülmüştür.

**AnahtarSözcükler:** Öğrenme yetersizliği, ilköğretim öğretmeni, metafor analizi

**ABSTRACT:** This study will attempt to demonstrate that the metaphors produced by teachers working with students with Learning Disability (LD) give clues about the teachers' relationship with such students. Therefore, this research will investigate primary school teachers' perceptions of students with LD using a metaphor analysis. In order to attain this general aim, the following questions are addressed; 1. What metaphors do the teachers use to describe the concept of the student with LD? 2. How are the conceptual categories distributed in terms of the teachers' gender? It was conducted in the 2007-2008 academic year with 171 primary school teachers in Eskisehir, Turkey. In order to reveal the participant teachers' perceptions of the students with LD, they were asked to complete the sentence “Children with LD are like ..... because .....”. The 106 metaphors obtained and those were grouped into eight conceptual categories.

**Key Words:** Metaphor, Learning Disabled, Teacher

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A well known definition for learning disabilities (LD) can be as a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, speak, read, think, write, spell (Hallahan, Lloyd, Kaufman, Weiss & Martinez, 2005). Although the children with LD are not lazy or dumb, they are often labeled with these attribute by their peers or teachers. Thus, the school years are the period during which they experience the most problems that effects their social and emotional development. During these years, the individuals' feelings about themselves have a remarkable influence on their psychological wellbeing. It is generally stated that children who experience academic problems during their school years tend to have negative self-concepts and self-perceptions (Elbaum & Vaughn 2001).

During the school years, in which academic improvement and personality development support one another, children with learning disabilities have difficulty in spelling, pronouncing the right sounds, forming words, constructing sentences, grammar knowledge, calculating and problem solving (Forman & Liberman, 1989). When these children realize that they are making little progress in their academic life, they come to dislike school. The academic failures they experience cause them to have low self-confidence. Furthermore, these children lose their confidence in their learning abilities during

\*Prof. Dr., Eskişehir Osmangazi University Faculty of Education Guidance and Counselling e-posta: niluferozabaci@hotmail.com

\*\* Arş. Gör. Anadolu Üniversitesi Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışma ABD e-posta: bebasak@anadolu.edu.tr

their school years due to repeated academic failures (Silver, 1998). Slow and restricted learning performance in children with learning disabilities (LD) cause disappointment for teachers since one of the biggest obstacles that teachers encounter is student's that cannot keep up with class work. Primary school teachers need to realize that students with LD require a learning environment that will encourage them to reveal and improve their abilities (Mcmullen, Shippen & Dangel, 2007). There are some responsibilities for educators to support teachers, such as (a) the provision of professional guidance regarding the implementation of effective programs, and (b) the coordination of the provision for struggling learners, by undertaking a more proactive role in the process of curriculum development (Emanuelsson, 2001; York- Barr, Sommerness, Duke,&Ghere, 2005). These responsibilities have changed the traditional role of support teachers. According to Cheminais (2005), for example, the new role of support teachers in the schools of the 21st century demands them to be: lead professionals, advocates and managers of knowledge/information, commissioners and brokers, resource managers, partnership managers, quality assurers, facilitators, and solution managers. The new role of the support teacher is defined, as "special needs coordinator" (Crowther, Dyson, & Millward, 2001). Agalotis and Kalyva (2010) explored general and special primary teachers' role and the professional characteristics of coordinators. According to the responses of the participants who should have both teaching experience in general schools and specialization in teaching students with special needs. Teachers' responsibilities are evaluating and directly teaching students, counselling teachers and parents for program enrichment and knowledge dissemination.

Cognitive theory is far from being a mere figurative part, metaphors structure our emotions, thoughts, and actions. They act as a lens, which a subject is viewed and become a mental model for thinking about something in light of another. The metaphorical expression of "A student is like a white page", for instance, refers not just to what students are like.

Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) definitions for the metaphors as very important indicators not only in language but also in the thoughts and actions. Similarly Guerrero and Villamil, (2002) emphasized the role of metaphors in teaching atmosphere. According to them, teachers' metaphors reflect their teaching roles and experiences.

The time that children spend in primary school represents a significant proportion of their period of psychosocial development and the teacher is one of the most important figures for individuals at this time. It is crucial to understand how this important figure perceives students with LD, because the teacher's perceptions regarding students with LD will inform their behaviors toward students with LD. However, there are very few studies that have considered teachers' perceptions of students with LD and these studies were conducted on the teachers of LD. In their study of teachers' perceptions of students with LD. Kavale and Reese (1991) found that teachers indicated well-developed beliefs and perceptions about the children with LD. In this study 97% of participant teachers had LD certificate. Therefore, according to researcher, participant teachers were well educated about LD. Moreover, DeLoach, Earl, Brown, Poplin and Warner's (1981) study indicated that teachers were able to discriminate the students with LD from children with mentally retardation and, slow learning students. The teachers participating in DeLoch et al.'s study stated that they did not see the learning problems of the students in LD class, as an aspect of LD. According to the participant teachers in this study, some of the learning problems of the children with LD arise from different reasons.

An effective teacher can create a supportive learning environment and a positive class atmosphere (Esen & Çiftçi, 1998). Years ago, Larsen (1978) emphasized the need to handle the problems of students with LD realistically, to produce and present materials that meet their specific education needs, to provide learning conditions that will be appropriate to both their human rights and their education needs and to develop ethical principles that will enable the people working with these children to share a standard of practice. It was also emphasized that educators have great responsibilities to meet these needs. Nowadays, the teacher should not only present information to students but should also support students through every development phase, offering students understanding, knowledge and assistance (Esen & Çiftçi, 1998).

However, it was found that teachers usually send children with LD to the school counselor since they have difficulty with classroom management due to these students' behaviors (Pattinson, 2005). Considering this, it can be assumed that teachers have difficulty in communicating with the students with LD. Esen and Çifçi's (1998) study indicated that, when defining learning disability, teachers mainly identified mentally disabled children or those with problem behaviors, since their knowledge of learning disabilities is inadequate. Moreover, the literature about special education has tended to focus primary school teachers' perceptions of children with LD. The present study was conducted in order to reveal teachers' perceptions of students with LD through a metaphor analysis. Metaphor is a relative meaning transferred from one object to another, between which there are perceptual similarities (Semerci, 2007). Metaphors are developed by expressing the fact that X resembles the fact Y, either explicitly or implicitly (Saban, 2008). Metaphors not only include meanings used to enrich a language (Saban, 2004), but also have the characteristics of reflecting thoughts. Therefore, metaphoric thinking influence and constructs an individuals' behaviors (Moser, 2000). In education, metaphor is a means of explaining complex concepts and facts. Metaphors are considered a useful aid to students understanding of taught concepts. They also demonstrate a teacher's ability to effectively explain such concepts (Semerci, 2007).

This study will attempt to demonstrate the metaphors produced by teachers working with students with LD that give clues about the teachers' relationship with such students. Therefore, this research will investigate primary school teachers' perceptions of students with LD using a metaphor analysis. In order to attain this general aim, the following questions are addressed;

1. What metaphors do the teachers use to describe the concept of the student with LD?
2. Under which conceptual category can these metaphors be gathered according to their common features?
3. How are the conceptual categories distributed in terms of the teachers' gender?

## 2.METHOD

### 2.1.Subjects

This study was conducted in the 2007-2008 academic year with 171 primary school teachers in Eskisehir. Of this population, 40.9% were male and 59.1% were female. 88.9% of the sample group were university graduates, 9.9% had a master degree, and 0.6% were PhD students. Of the teachers in this study, 21.1% had 1-5 years experience, 20.5% had 6-10 years experience, 15.8% had 11-15 years experience, and 11.7% had 16-20 years experience, while 31% had 21 years or more of experience in teaching. Furthermore, 90.6% of these teachers had students with LD while 9.4% of them did not have any students with LD. These participants were selected through random sampling.

### 2.2.Data Collection

In order to define the participant teachers' perceptions of the students with LD, they were asked to complete the sentence "Children with LD are like ..... because .....". Each teacher was given a paper with this statement and was asked to express their opinions using this statement and focusing on one metaphor. In metaphor studies, the term "like" is usually used to indicate the resemblance between the topic of the metaphor and the source of the metaphor more clearly. The word "because" was included to encourage the participants to give logical reasons for their chosen simile. The teachers were allowed 20 minutes to develop their metaphor image.

### 2.3.Data analysis process

The analysis of the metaphorical images encompassed the following stages and actions.

**2.3.1.Coding and elimination stage:** In the first stage, all the metaphors defined by the participants were simply coded (such as **Turtle Weaver**, etc.), and those papers in which a metaphorical image was not clearly articulated were eliminated. For example, some participants simply did not write anything at all (i.e., blank paper). Some statements of views about certain

characteristics of students instead of introducing a recognizable metaphors. Finally, some metaphors were eliminated so they could not be placed under any category (e.g., “A learning disabled child is like a **foolish** because s/he is always unuseful”). Consequently, 20 papers were eliminated.

**2.3.2. Sample metaphor compilation and translation stage:** In the second stage, the 106 metaphors were organized in alphabetical order and represented each identified metaphorical image best. The 171 essays, the one paper that was believed to represent the one image best was picked. This procedure was followed for all of the 106 metaphors which were mentioned by participants.

**Table 1. A Thematic Classification of the 106 Metaphorical Images for Learning Disabled**

Conceptual themes	Teacher used the metaphor <i>f</i> (%)	Metaphors	<i>f</i>
Slow learners	18 (10.5)	<b>Closed bottle (3), Wall (3), Turtle (3)</b> , Weaver (1), Blank (1), Weaver (1), Beating the air (1), Backwater (1), Coal (1), Empty sack (1), Owl (1), Lamp (1)	12
Possessing weak Memories	13 (7.6)	<b>Machine working slowly (3), Old car (2), Robot (2)</b> , Machine (1), Car with broken brake (1), TV with unclear image (1), Kite (1), Fuse with switch-off (1), Engine (1)	9
Unable to react appropriately	20 (11.7)	<b>Firewood (3), Dried flower (3), Package rubber (2), Object that needs to be poked (2), Dried tree (2)</b> , Flowerpot (1), Table (1), Blank pane (1), Coffee table (1), Board (1), Sculpture (1), Vase (1), Non-living thing (1)	9
Deficient in normal developmental features	12 (7.0)	<b>Fruitless tree (4), Unripe fruit (2)</b> , Flower that hasn't bloomed (1), Tree without leaves (1), Fruit grown unseasonably (1), Brittle flower (1), Pumpkin (1), Onion (1)	8
Requiring attention and patience	9 (5.3)	<b>Person who cannot swim (2), Young tree (2)</b> , Person lost in a desert (1), Amateur cook (1), Amateur driver (1), Intolerant person (1), Animal (1)	7
Inefficient	8 (4.7)	Colander (1), <b>Bucket with a hole in it (2)</b> , Strainer (1), Griddle (1), <b>Open- Script written on sand (2)</b> , textured sack (1)	6
Socially and emotionally underdeveloped	33 (19.3)	<b>Fish (9), Computer out of memory (4), Broken tape recorder (3)</b> , Parrot (1), Butterfly (1), Spring (1), Clown (1), Kindergarten child (1), <b>Cat (2)</b> , Chick (1), Pool with open drain cock (1), Passenger who does not get on the bus (1), Unpopped corn (1), Clanging griddle clanging bowl (1), Clanging griddle (1), clanging bowl (1), Unprocessed product (1), Baby bird who cannot fly (1), Inattentive (1), Camera without night vision (1)	20
Unable to behave maturely	58 (33.9)	<b>Baby (7), Human-being (7), Plant (5), Drought plant (4), Flower (3), Drought rose (2), Newborn bird (2), Dull gaze (2)</b> , Baby learning late (1), Dotard person (1), Vacuity (1), Cheerful (1), Talkative (1), Simple-minded (1), Guilty Person (1), Deaf person (1), Timid (1), Created one (1), Wounded lion (1), Bird in a cage (1), Bird with a broken wing (1), Wounded dog (1), Decorative plant (1), <b>Parasite (2)</b> , Sunflower (1), Ivy (1), Infertile soil (1), Walnut (1), Tree without water (1), Patience tree (1), Flower without water (1)	31

**Emboldening** has been used to define the dominant metaphors. *Italic type* has been used for the common metaphors across participants' gender and age.

At this stage, the compilation of a metaphorical list was made. This is important for to define the list as a reference point for the grouping of the 106 metaphors into certain conceptual themes (see the discussion below in the section of “Sorting and categorization stage”) and the analyzing of 106 metaphors’ interpretations of the findings in this list, it was also used to validate the analysis of the study data.

In the second stage, all the 106 metaphorical images in the list were also translated from Turkish to English. Then the translated version of the list was given to a professions in English Language Department of Anadolu University and she translated it into Turkish. In this procedure, any mismatch was identified between the two lists, discussions were held with her regarding the mismatched words, phrases, or sentences, etc., until a complete consensus was reached.

**2.3.3.Sorting and categorization stage:** the third stage of the study aim was to abstract from the 106 metaphors the categories (i.e., conceptual themes) that they represented. Metaphors was distinguished among its elements: (1) the topic, (2) the vehicle, and (3) the ground. The topic is defined the subject of a metaphoric expression and the vehicle is defined as source which the metaphor topic is compared while the ground defined as the nature of the relationship between the metaphor topic and the metaphor vehicle.

**2.3.4. Analyzing data quantitatively:** In the last stage, all the study data were entered into the SPSS programe to calculate the frequencies ( $f$ ) and percentages (%) of the metaphorical images in each conceptual category.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1. Conceptual Categories

**3.1.1. Category 1. Children with LD as slow learners:** The metaphors under the category “students with LD as slow learners” were analyzed in terms of the teachers’ perceptions. Accordingly, this category is represented by 18 (10.5%) teachers and 12 metaphors. Under this category, the dominant three metaphors (the ones with the high mean value), were closed bottle (3), wall (3), turtle (3). Main characteristics of this category of metaphors include the following:

- Teaching students with LD is difficult. For instance:  
*“The child with LD is like a weaver because he stands against the machines. He cannot weave as fast as the machine.”*  
*“The child with LD is like backwater because an attempt is necessary to activate them.”*
- Students with LD struggle to learn. For instance:  
*“The child with LD is like beating the air because he cannot progress with the presented information, he stays at the same place.”*

**3.1.2.Category 2. Children with LD as possessing weak memories:** The metaphors under the category “children with LD as possessing weak memories” were analyzed in terms of the teachers’ perceptions. Accordingly, this category is represented by 13 (7.6%) teachers and 9 metaphors. The dominant metaphors of all, in this category (the ones with the high mean value) were machine working slowly (3), young tree (3), old car (2). Teachers’ perceptions in this study, the common assumptions obtained can be summarized as:

- It is possible for children with LD to learn with the guidance of a teacher but sometimes such children cannot learn in this way at all. For instance:  
*“The child with LD is like a robot because he can only repeats what is said.”*
- Children with LD can progress depending on the teacher. For instance:  
*“The child with LD is like a machine because he gets the supplied things depending on the approach.”*

**3.1.3. Category 3. The child with LD as the one who does not have the ability to react appropriately:** The metaphors under this category were analyzed in terms of the teachers' perceptions. Accordingly, this category is represented by 20 (11.7%) teachers and 13 metaphors. The dominant five metaphors, in this category were firewood (3), dried flower (3), package rubber (2). Main characteristics of this category of metaphors include the following:

- The child with LD cannot give the expected reactions both emotionally and socially. For instance:  
*"The children with LD are like package rubber because no matter how long you extend it when you release it, it takes its old form."*
- Students with LD need attention. However, no matter how much attention you show to them, the expected result cannot be achieved. For instance:  
*"The children with LD are like flowerpots because if you give water and pay attention they can grow a little."*

**3.1.4. Category 4. Children with LD as deficient in normal developmental features:** The metaphors under this category were analyzed in terms of the teachers' perceptions. Accordingly, this category is represented by 12 (7.0%) teachers and 8 metaphors. The dominant five metaphors, in this category were fruitless tree (4), unripe fruit (2). Main characteristics of this category of metaphors include the following:

- Students with LD do not show the expected features appropriate to their development stage. For instance;  
*"Children with LD are like unripe fruit because these students' intelligence and development do not progress like their peers."*
- In spite of the efforts spent on children with LD, they cannot develop appropriately to their age and cannot perform with the expected efficiency. For instance;  
*"Children with LD are like fruitless trees because if you give water to the tree and care for it, it gives fruit but these children cannot give any fruit."*

**3.1.5. Category 5. Children with LD as requiring attention and patience:** The metaphors under this category were analyzed in terms of the teachers' perceptions. Accordingly, this category is represented by 9 (5.3%) teachers and 7 metaphors. The dominant metaphors, in this category were person who cannot swim (2), young tree (2). Main characteristics of this category of metaphors include the following:

*"Children with LD are like young tree because these students need more effort to be taken a result."*

**3.1.6. Category 6. Children with LD as inefficient:** The metaphors under this category were analyzed in terms of the teachers' perceptions. Accordingly, this category is represented by 8 (4.7%) teachers and 6 metaphors. The dominant metaphors, in this category were bucket with a hole in it 2.

**3.1.7. Category 7. Children with LD as socially and emotionally underdeveloped:** The metaphors under this category were analyzed in terms of the teachers' perceptions. Accordingly, this category is represented by 33 (19.3%) teachers and 20 metaphors. The dominant five metaphors, in this category were) fish (9), computer out of memory (4), broken tape recorder (3). Main characteristics of this category of metaphors include the following:

- Children with LD are unable to give social and emotional reactions. For instance;  
*"Children with LD are like fish because they always look vacuous."*  
*"Children with LD are like kindergarten students because they do not know anything about the school rules, they should be trained in the right manners."*

**3.1.8. Category 8. Children with LD as unable to behave maturely:** The metaphors under this category were analyzed in terms of the teachers' perceptions. Accordingly, this category is represented by 58 (33.9%) teachers and 31 metaphors. The dominant metaphors, in this category were baby (7), human-being (7), plant (5), drought plant (4). Main characteristics of this category of metaphors include the following:

- Children with LD are weak and desperate. For instance; *“Children with LD are like babies because you should be patient towards them, and you should like and care for them. It is essential to answer their questions patiently. If you get angry, you lose them.”*

### 3.2.1. The Teachers’ Metaphors in terms of Their Gender and Experience

#### 3.2.1.1. Gender Differences in Teacher’s Perceptions

Table 2 lists the eight conceptual categories according to the gender of teachers in the study. It can be seen from this table that a large proportion of teachers perceive children with LD as unable to behave maturely (33.9%). Secondly, the teachers perceived the child with LD as emotionally and socially underdeveloped (19.3%). Thirdly, the teachers considered children with LD as unable to react appropriately (11.7%). Furthermore, 10.5% perceived these students as having difficulty learning. The percentages of the remained four categories show the teachers that perceived children with LD as, respectively, as having a weak memory (7.6%), deficient in the normal development features (7.0%), needing patience and attention (5.3%) and inefficient (4.7%).

**Table 2. Distribution of The Conceptual Themes By Gender**

Name of Metaphor		Female	Male	Total
	<i>N</i>	10	8	18
	<i>Total%</i>	55.6%	44.4%	100%
Children with LD as slow learners	<i>Gender%</i>	9.9	11.4	10.5
	<i>N</i>	8	5	13
	<i>Total%</i>	61.5%	38.5%	100%
Children with LD as having weak memories	<i>Gender%</i>	7.9	7.1	7.6
	<i>N</i>	11	9	20
	<i>Total%</i>	55%	45%	100%
Children with LD as unable to react appropriately	<i>Gender%</i>	10.9	12.9	11.7
	<i>N</i>	5	7	12
	<i>Total%</i>	41.7%	58.3%	100%
Children with LD as deficient in normal developmental features	<i>Gender%</i>	2.9	4.1	7.0
	<i>N</i>	5	4	9
	<i>Total%</i>	55.6%	44.4%	100%
Children with LD as needing attention and patience	<i>Gender%</i>	5.0	5.7	5.3
	<i>N</i>	5	3	8
	<i>Total%</i>	62.5%	37.5%	100%
Children with LD as inefficient	<i>Gender%</i>	2.9	1.8	4.7
	<i>N</i>	22	11	33
	<i>Total%</i>	66.7%	33.3%	100%
Children with LD as socially and emotionally underdeveloped	<i>Gender%</i>	12.9	6.4	19.3
	<i>N</i>	35	23	58
	<i>Total%</i>	60.3%	39.7%	100%
Children with LD as unable to behave maturely	<i>Gender%</i>	20.5	13.5	33.9
	<i>N</i>	101	70	171
Total	<i>%</i>	59.1%	40.9%	100%

Pearson chi square= 2.67 sd=7 p=0.91

Table 2 shows the female and male teachers’ metaphors describing students with LD (Pearson chi square= 2.67 sd=7 p=0.91). The differences between the genders can be summarized as follows:

1. Female teachers emphasized features of students with LD such as, “Children with LD as socially and emotionally underdeveloped (66.7%)”, “Children with LD as inefficient” (62.5%), and “Children with LD as unable to behave maturely” (60.3%). This emphasis was significantly greater than the male teachers (respectively; 33.3%, 37.5%, and 39.7%).

2. Male teachers emphasized the feature of “Children with LD as deficient in normal development features” (58.3%) more than the female teachers (41.7%).

Table 3 lists the eight conceptual categories according to the experience of teachers in the study. It can be seen from this table that a large proportion of teachers perceive children with LD as unable to behave maturely (33.9%). Secondly, the teachers perceived the child with LD as emotionally and socially underdeveloped (19.3%). Thirdly, the teachers considered children with LD as unable to react appropriately (11.7%). Furthermore, 10.5% perceived these students as having difficulty learning. The percentages of the remained four categories show the teachers that perceived children with LD as, respectively, as having a weak memory (7.6%), deficient in the normal development features (7.0%), needing patience and attention (5.3%) and inefficient (4.7%).

**Table 3. Distribution of the Eight Conceptual Themes by Experience as a Teacher**

Name of Metaphor		1-5 year experience	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-26 years	More than 26 years	Total
Children with LD as slow learners	<i>N</i>	5	1	5	2	5	18
	<i>Total%</i>	27,8%	5,6 %	27,8%	11,1%	27,8%	100,0%
	<i>Experience%</i>	13,9%	2,9%	18,5%	10,0%	9,4%	10,5%
Children with LD as having weak memories	<i>N</i>	4	2	2	4	1	13
	<i>Total%</i>	30,8%	15,4%	15,4%	30,8%	7,7%	100,0%
	<i>Experience%</i>	11,1%	5,7%	7,4%	20,0%	1,9%	7,6%
Children with LD as unable to react appropriately	<i>N</i>	3	7	4	2	4	20
	<i>Total%</i>	15,0%	35,0%	20,0%	10,0%	20,0%	100,0%
	<i>Experience%</i>	8,3%	20,0%	14,8%	10,0%	7,5%	11,7%
Children with LD as deficient in normal developmental features	<i>N</i>	1	4	1	1	5	12
	<i>Total%</i>	8,3%	33,3%	8,3%	8,3%	41,7%	100,0%
	<i>Experience%</i>	2,8%	11,4%	3,7%	5,0%	9,4%	7,0%
Children with LD as needing attention and patience	<i>N</i>	2	3	0	1	3	9
	<i>Total%</i>	22,2%	33,3%	,0%	11,1%	33,3%	100,0%
	<i>Experience%</i>	5,6%	8,6%	,0%	5,0%	5,7%	5,3%
Children with LD as inefficient	<i>N</i>	1	2	0	0	5	8
	<i>Total%</i>	12,5%	25,0%	,0%	,0%	62,5%	100,0%
	<i>Experience%</i>	2,8%	5,7%	,0%	,0%	9,4%	4,7%
Children with LD as socially and emotionally underdeveloped	<i>N</i>	8	7	4	6	8	33
	<i>Total%</i>	24,2%	21,2%	12,1%	18,2%	24,2%	100,0%
	<i>Experience%</i>	22,2%	20,0%	14,8%	30,0%	15,1%	19,3%
Children with LD as unable to behave maturely	<i>N</i>	12	9	11	4	22	58
	<i>Total%</i>	20,7%	15,5%	19,0%	6,9%	37,9%	100,0%
	<i>Experience%</i>	33,3%	25,7%	40,7%	20,0%	41,5%	33,9%
Total	<i>N</i>	36	35	27	20	53	171
	<i>Total%</i>	21,1%	20,5%	15,8%	11,7%	31,0%	100,0%
	<i>Experience%</i>	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

*Pearson chi square= 29.97 sd=28 p=0.36*

Table 3 shows metaphors among the teachers' experiences describing students with LD (Pearson chi square= 29.97 sd=28 p=0.36). The differences between the work experiences among years can be summarized as follows:

1. 1-5 years experienced teachers emphasized features of students with LD such as, “Children with LD as slow learners (66.7%)”, “Children with LD as inefficient” (62.5%), and “Children with LD as unable to behave maturely” (60.3%). This emphasis was significantly greater than the male teachers (respectively; 33.3%, 37.5%, and 39.7%).

2. The male teachers emphasized the feature of “Children with LD as deficient in normal development features” (58.3%) more than the female teachers (41.7%).



#### 4. DISCUSSION

This study revealed the metaphors generated by teachers to describe children with LD and grouped these metaphors under certain conceptual categories. Based on the metaphors produced by the teachers in this study, it was seen that primary school teachers define students with LD as slow learners, as having difficulty learning, as requiring attention and patience, as having inadequate memories, who cannot react appropriately, and who are deficient in normal development features and from whom efficiency cannot be obtained, lastly, who emotionally and socially underdeveloped. All the metaphors included deficiency. This study indicates that teachers define these children by their negative features. Jordan, Glenn, Richmond (2010) revealed that teachers may be faced with messages about inclusive education and they are responsible for designing the instruction to meet a range of learner needs. It is no surprise therefore that teachers express ambivalence about including students with disabilities in their classes.

In this study, teachers were asked to explain the reasons of their metaphors. Regarding to these reasons, it was seen that one part of the teachers focused on the difficulty of teaching to the children with LD, whereas other part of the teachers focused on the inadequacy in learning capacity of the children with LD. These tendencies are inconsistent with the principles that every individual has strong aspects to develop. Moreover, findings of this study are inconsistent with the previous study conducted by Kavale and Reese (1991). Kavale and Reese (1991) found that teachers had positive perception to the students with LD because of their educational background including LD courses. In this regard, current study showed that, teachers' knowledge about LD needs to be developed in Turkey via in-service education programs. Besides, during undergraduate educations, positive attitudes towards the children with LD should be gained to the teacher candidates.

Erikson's (1956) theory of psychosocial development, points out that, children's essential challenge is achievement versus inferiority between 5 – 12 years. This period of the life is including the elementary school years. Since children spend most of their time at school, relations with the teachers become the most important part of their life. However, this time of life is more difficult for the children with LD. As their academic development follows behind the peers, it is hard to achieve the developmental task stated by Erikson. The level of the expectations of the teachers from the children with LD is important for having a positive self-concept. If they punished for their efforts or if they aren't fulfilling the teachers' expectations, they develop feelings of inferiority about their capabilities. Adler (1956) focused on the role of the inferiority feelings in psychosocial development. According to him, inferiority feelings lead the individuals to be connected with the life from maladaptive ways such as violence, isolation or introversion. Thus, to design courses or activities, including the ways the children with LD learn or discover their own talents will be useful to be gained positive tendency toward this children among teachers.

Explaining primary school teachers' experiences of these children through metaphors enables us to understand the common features of these children through the lens of teacher's perceptual frameworks. Children with LD require teachers to show more patience and make a great effort. Teachers will experience disappointment when they cannot attain their goals for these students despite all of the time and energy they put in. This possible frustration may affect their perceptions of these children.

As considering the importance of the school years and the key role of teachers in children's growth and development, students with LD who are defined according to their negative features by their primary school teachers are at risk of developing low self-esteem. This study is called attention to the need for effective counseling services among students with LD. Thus, it is required to be connected the teachers of the children with LD. Positive attitudes can be developed via consultation activities. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) pointed out, teachers' metaphors reflects the social and mental reaction towards their students with LD. Therefore, their perception need to be changed by the effective advices based on the rights, benefits, learning potentials and learning styles of the children with LD. Moreover, the counselors responsible for dealing with the psychological problems these children come across at school. With the cooperation of the school administration an equal opportunity

to success would be aimed and achieved for children with LD. Further study to identify the types of emotional, behavioral, social and academical difficulties experienced by these students and the kind of teachers' educational regulations related with LD is needed.

## REFERENCES

- Adler, A. (1956). The individual psychology of Adler: A systematic presentation in selections from his writings. (Ed: H. L. Ansbacher ve R. R. Ansbacher). New York: Harper Torchbooks.
- Agaliotis, I., Kalyva, E. (2011). A survey of Greek general and special education teachers' perceptions regarding the role of the special needs coordinator: Implications for educational policy on inclusion and teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 27, 543-551
- Cheminais, R. (2005). Every child matters: A new role for SENCos. London: David
- Crowther, D., Dyson, A., & Millward, A. (2001). Supporting pupils with special comparison. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 16(2), 133-142.
- DeLoach, T. F., Earl, J.M. Brown, B.S., Poplin, M.S. & Warner, M.M. (1991). LD Teachers' perceptions of severely learning disabled students. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 4(4), 343-358.
- Elbaum, B., & Vaughn, S. (2001). School-based interventions to enhance the self-concept of students with learning disabilities: A meta analysis. *The Elementary School Journal* 101(3), 303-329.
- Emanuelsson, I. (2001). Reactive versus proactive support coordinator roles: an international educational needs: issues and dilemmas for special needs coordinators in English inclusive education programmes: reframing their work as teacher leadership. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 9(2), 193-215.
- Erikson, E. (1956). The problem of ego identity. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 4, 56-121.
- Esen, A. ve Çiftçi, İ. (1998). Sınıf öğretmenlerinin öğrenme yetersizliği ile ilgili bilgilerinin belirlenmesi. (The defining of class teachers' knowledge about learning disabilities) *Journal of Education of the Pamukkale University*, 8, 95-101.
- Forman, B. R., & Liberman, D. (1989). Visual and phonological processing of words. A comparison of good and poor readers. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 22, 15-19. Fulton Publishers.
- Guerrero M. C. M. & Villamil, O. S. (2002). Metaphorical conceptualizations of ESL teaching and learning. *Language Teaching Research*, 6(2), 95-120.
- Jordan, A., Glenn, C., McGhie-Richmond, D.(2010). The Supporting Effective Teaching (SET) project: The relationship of inclusive teaching practices to teachers' beliefs about disability and ability, and about their roles as teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26 (2010) 259-266
- Hallahan, P.D., Lloyd, J.W., Kaufman, J.M., Weiss, P.M. & Martinez, E.A. (2005). *Learning disabilities: Foundations, characteristic and effective teaching*. USA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Kavale K. A., & Reese, J.H. (1991). Teacher beliefs and perceptions about learning disabilities: A survey of Iowa practitioners. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 14, 141-160.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Larsen S. (1978). Learning disabilities and the professional educator. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 1(1), 5-12.
- Mcmullen R. C., Shippen M. C., & Dangel H.L. (2007). Middle school teachers' expectations of organizational behaviors of students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 34, 19-23
- Moser, K. S. (2000). Metaphor analysis in psychology: Method, theory, and fields of application. *Qualitative Social Research*, 1(2), 25-27.
- Pattinson, S. (2005). Making a difference for young people with learning disabilities: A model for inclusive counselling practice. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 5(2), 120-130.
- Saban, A. (2004). Giriş düzeyindeki sınıf öğretmenlerini adaylarının "öğretmen" kavramına ilişkin ileri sürdükleri metaforlar. ( the metaphors of candidate teachers in the senior level about the concept of "teacher") *Journal of Turkish Educational Science*, 2(2), 131-151.
- Saban, A. (2008). Primary school teachers' and their students' mental images about the concept of knowledge. *Elementary Education Online*, 7(2), 421-455.
- Semerci, Ç. (2007). "Program geliştirme" kavramına ilişkin metaforlarla yeni ilköğretim programlarına farklı bir bakış. (The focus on metaphors about the new primary school curriculum on "program development") *The Journal of Social Sciences of Çukurova University*, 31(2), 125-140.

- Silver, L. (1998). *The misunderstood child: Understanding and coping with your child's learning disabilities*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- York-Barr, J., Sommerness, J., Duke, K., & Ghere, G. (2005). Special educators in primary schools. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 16(2), 85-97.

## Genişletilmiş Özet

Lakoff ve Johnson (1980)'a göre metaforlar sosyal davranışlar ile bilişsel yapı arasındaki ilişkiyi yansıtmaktadırlar. Bilişsel temelli bu yaklaşım metaforların bireylerin algıları, düşünceleri ve davranışları ile yakından ilgili olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Metaforlar bir lens, ekran ya da filtre gibi işlev görerek bireylerin düşüncelerine dayanak teşkil ederler. Örneğin “öğrenci beyaz bir kağıt gibidir” şeklindeki bir metafor öğrenen kişinin neye benzediği hakkında bilgi vermektedir. Bu durum metaforları öğreticiler için anlamlı bir malzemeye dönüştürmektedir.

İlkokul öğrencilerinin okulda geçirdikleri zaman düşünüldüğünde ilkökul öğretmenlerinin psikososyal gelişimlerinde önemli bir role sahip olduğu görülmektedir. Çocukların ilkökul yıllarındaki en önemli figür olan öğretmenlerin öğrenme güçlüğü olan öğrencilere yönelik algılarını anlamak kritik bir öneme sahiptir. Çünkü öğretmenlerin bu çocuklara yönelik metaforları onların öğrenme güçlüğü yaşayan öğrencilerine yönelik davranışları hakkında bilgi verebilecek niteliktedir. Ancak öğretmenlerin öğrenme güçlüğü yaşayan öğrencilere yönelik algılarını ortaya koyan çalışmalar oldukça azdır. Kavale ve Reese (1991) tarafından gerçekleştirilen bir çalışmada öğrenme güçlüğü ile ilgili eğitim almış olan ve bu eğitimle ilgili sertifikaya sahip olan öğretmenlerin öğrenme güçlüğü yaşayan öğrencileri ile ilgili algıları değerlendirilmiştir. Bu çalışmada katılımcıların eğitim geçmişleri nedeniyle oldukça bilinçli oldukları ve öğrencilerine yönelik olumlu tutumlara sahip oldukları belirlenmiştir.

Bu araştırmada, ilkökul öğretmenlerinin öğrenme güçlüğüne sahip çocuklarla ilişkileri hakkında ipuçları vermesi beklenen metaforlarını ortaya koymak amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaçla bu araştırmada ilkökul öğretmenlerinin öğrenme güçlüğüne sahip çocuklarla ilgili metaforlarını metafor analizi yolu ile belirlenmesine yönelik bir çalışma yürütülmüştür. Bu çerçevede aşağıdaki araştırma sorularına yanıt aranmıştır:

1. Öğretmenler öğrenme güçlüğüne sahip öğrencileri tanımlarken hangi metaforları kullanmıştır?
2. Öğretmenlerin ürettikleri metaforlar hangi kategoriler altında sınıflandırılmıştır?
3. Öğretmenlerin ürettiği metaforları içeren kategoriler öğretmenlerin cinsiyeti ve kıdemine göre farklılık göstermekte midir?

Bu araştırma 2007- 2008 akademik yılında Eskişehir’de görev yapan 171 ilkökul öğretmeni üzerinde gerçekleştirildi. Katılımcıların %40.9’u erkek, %59.1’i kadın olup, %88.9’si lisans, %9.9’u yüksek lisans ve %0.6’sı doktora derecesine sahiptir. Katılımcıların %21.1’i 1-5 yıl, %20.5’i 6-10 yıl, %11.8’i 11-15 yıl, %11.7’si 16-20 yıl ve %31’i 21 yıl ve üzerinde kıdeme sahiptir. Bununla birlikte katılımcıların %90.6’sı öğrenme güçlüğüne sahip öğrencilere sahip olduklarını bildirmiştir.

Öğretmenlerin algılarını belirlemek için öğretmenlere “öğrenme yetersizliği olan öğrenciler ..... gibidir. Çünkü .....” yazılı bir ibare verilmiş ve tamamlamaları istenmiştir. Böylece öğretmenlerin metaforları ile birlikte bu metaforlara dayanak oluşturan sebeplerini de yazmaları beklenilmiştir. Veri toplama aşamasında öğretmenlere 20 dakika süre verilmiştir.

Sonuç olarak bu araştırmada öğretmenlerin öğrenme güçlüğü olan öğrencilerle ilgili toplam 106 metafor ürettikleri belirlenmiştir. Bu metaforlar sekiz kategoride sınıflandırılmıştır. Bu metaforlarda öğrenme güçlüğüne sahip öğrencilerin yavaş öğrenen, zayıf hafızalı, uygun tepkiler veremeyen, normal gelişimde kusurları olan, sabır ve dikkat gerektiren, etkisiz, sosyal ve duygusal bakımdan gelişim geriliği sergileyen ve olgunlaşmamış bireyler olarak tanımlandıkları ortaya koyulmuştur.

Bu araştırma öğretmenlerin öğrenme güçlüğüne sahip öğrencilerle ilgili algılarını ortaya koyması bakımından önemlidir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları öğretmenlerin öğrenme güçlüğüne sahip çocukları tanımlarken olumsuz özelliklere vurgu yaptıklarına işaret etmektedir. Bu bulgu, Kavale ve Reese (1991)’in araştırması ile tutarsızlık göstermekle birlikte öğretmenlerin öğrenme güçlüğüne sahip çocuklar ile ilgili bilgilendirilmesinin ve eğitilmesinin önemini ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca bu çalışmada ulaşılan metaforlar öğretmenlerin öğrenme güçlüğüne sahip öğrencilerle ilişkilerini de yansıtmaktadır. Öğretmenler, öğrencilerine ayırdıkları emek ve çabanın karşılığını alamadıklarında hayal kırıklığı yaşayabilmektedirler. Bu durum öğrenme güçlüğüne sahip

çocuklara ilişkin algılarını etkileyebilmektedir. İlkokul yıllarında akademik becerileri yaşıtlarından farklı bir gelişim gösteren öğrenme güçlüğüne sahip çocukların çoğunlukla öğretmenlerinin beklentilerini karşılayamadıkları ve buna bağlı olarak içe kapanma, izole olma, şiddet eğilimi sergileme, öz güven yitimi ve olumsuz benlik algısı geliştirme gibi riskler ile karşı karşıya kaldıkları belirtilmektedir. Bu nedenle okul psikolojik danışmanlarına önemli görevler düşmektedir. Özellikle bu tip çocukların öğrenme stilleri, öğrenme potansiyelleri, yeteneklerinin keşfedilmesi ve geliştirilmesi gibi konularda öğretmenleri bilgilendirerek olumlu tutum geliştirmeleri sağlanabilir. Ayrıca okul personelinin öğrenme güçlüğüne sahip çocuklara başarıma fırsatının yaratılabileceği bir okul atmosferinin oluşturulması konusunda işbirliği yapmaları önemlidir. Gelecekte, öğrenme güçlüğüne sahip çocukların yaşadıkları duygusal, davranışsal, sosyal ve akademik problemleri ile öğretmenlerin öğrenme güçlüğüne sahip öğrenciler için kullandıkları öğretim yöntemlerini belirlemeye yönelik çalışmalar yapılabilir.

**Citation Information:**

Özabacı, N., & Ergün-Başak, B. (2013). A metaphor analysis of teachers' perceptions of students with learning disabilities. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi [Hacettepe University Journal of Education]*, 28(1), 269-280.