



EFL TEACHERS AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS' ROLES THROUGH METAPHOR ANALYSIS AT A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract:

The use of metaphor in analyzing teachers' identity of their profession and their roles has been explored in many studies. However, the investigations into teachers' and students' perceptions of the roles of EFL teachers are rare. This descriptive study with a qualitative approach examined the perceptions of 200 students and 30 teachers towards teachers' roles through Metaphor Analysis at a private university in the Mekong Delta. The data were collected through a questionnaire and semi-structured interview in which the participants were asked to use metaphors to identify teachers' roles. The results indicated that participants image English teachers in a wide range of metaphors, for example, "a chef", "an artist", "a compass", "a mother", "a star", and "a bridge". This study not only provides opportunities for students to reflect on the images of teachers and teaching but also highlights some implications for education and further exploration.

Keywords: metaphors, teacher roles, professional identity

1. Introduction

In recent years, English language pedagogy has rapidly shifted to keep up with the socio-economic development. English teaching and learning are considered the primary aim of education in high schools, vocational schools, and universities in Vietnam. Educators determine learners as the central element in language teaching. Consequently, teachers are required to identify their new professional roles concerning their current contexts. About this, studies have been conducted to investigate the teachers' roles in English teaching. The importance of teachers' roles was emphasized in Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, and Johnson's (2005) research, which confirmed that *"to understand language*

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teaching and learning we need to understand teachers; and to understand teachers, we need to have a clearer sense of who they are" (p.22). There are numerous methods that researchers can apply to identify teachers' and students' conceptualizations and understanding of English teaching and teachers' roles. One popular method is metaphor analysis. Metaphors have been employed as a tool for teachers' professional identity in various research (Alger, 2009; Farrell, 2011; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011; Zhao, Coombs, & Zhou, 2010). This analysis provides the personal reflection of people's experiences and the perceptions of professional identities. From these mentioned reasons, it is extremely necessary to utilize metaphor analysis for investigating the EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of English teaching and teachers' roles in some high schools in Cantho city.

This study aims to explore the perceptions of non-English majors and teachers at Nam Can Tho University regarding the role of teachers in teaching English through the metaphor method. By examining different roles of teachers in English classrooms, it seeks to provide insights into how enhancing the teaching methods can make language learning more effective, ultimately contributing to better academic outcomes.

2. Research Aims and Research Questions

2.1 Research Aims

This present study aims to explore the perceptions of non-English major students and teachers in Nam Can Tho University regarding the role of teachers in teaching English through the metaphor analysis.

2.2 Research Questions

This study attempts to investigate Nam Can Tho University EFL teachers and students' perceptions of teachers' roles through metaphor analysis and to explore whether those perceptions of students and teachers are different. Therefore, the study was designed to find out the answers to the following questions:

- 1) What are Nam Can Tho University EFL teachers' perceptions of teachers' roles in teaching English through metaphor analysis?
- 2) What are Nam Can Tho University students' perceptions of teachers' roles in teaching English through metaphor analysis?
- 3) Do teachers differ from students in terms of their perceptions of teachers' roles in teaching English?

3. Literature Review

3.1 Definitions of Metaphor

The term "metaphor," originating from the Greek word, means "to transfer" (Nikitina & Furuoka, 2008). So far, metaphors are widely understood as a figure of speech applied in literature field to identify the similarities between two objects. Shiff (1979) defined it as *"a bridge enabling passage from one world to another"* (as cited in Lin, 2012, p.183). Besides,

psychologists and linguists have established new conceptualizations of metaphors. Recently, metaphor has been advocated as a research instrument in different studies. According to Oxford et al. (1998), metaphor “involves employing a familiar object or event as a conceptual tool to elucidate features of a more complex subject or situation” (p.4). Yob’s (2003) study points out that “*a metaphor is employed when one wants to explore and understand something esoteric, abstract, novel or highly speculative*” (p.134). Zhao, Coombs, and Zhou (2010) added that metaphor is “*a psychological modeling experience leading to new forms of conceptual insight*”. Particularly in educational research, metaphor has been recognized as “an archetype” of teacher professional identity (Saban, 2006).

3.2 English Language Teachers’ Roles

English teacher roles are diverse because of being determined by different views of the evolution of ELT methodology. The communicative language teaching (CLT) teachers are supposed to take responsibility for many important roles: a needs analyst, a language counselor, a group process manager, a controller, a role model, an input provider, a facilitator, and an assessor-feedback provider.

3.2.1 Need Analyst

Needs analysis involves gathering information to determine what learners already know and what they still need to learn (Brown, 1995). Brown (1995) also highlighted that needs analysis can serve as a foundation for developing tests, materials, teaching activities, and evaluation strategies (p.35). Essentially, needs analysis is a critical component in setting language teaching goals and objectives that are tailored to learners' needs. Given that learner-centeredness is central to the CLT approach, needs analysis is crucial in helping teachers accurately identify the learners' central role. In the context of CLT, teachers act as needs analysts, conducting and interpreting needs analysis to design lessons that meet learners' language needs. Teachers can carry out needs analysis informally by asking students about their learning goals, learning styles, and proficiency levels. Additionally, it can be conducted more formally using tools like questionnaires, interviews, tests, and observations. The information gathered through needs analysis enables teachers to create effective and beneficial curricula.

3.2.2 Counselor

In the CLT approach, the role of a counselor is another important function of teachers. In this capacity, teachers are responsible for supporting, assisting, and advising learners to help them overcome language challenges. Additionally, the teacher-counselor promotes language use and provides effective guidance to enhance learners' communication skills. For instance, before asking students to engage in a conversation on a specific topic, teachers often supply helpful structures, vocabulary, and sample dialogues to aid students in completing the task successfully. Afterwards, teachers may offer feedback, suggest appropriate expressions and grammar points, and provide scaffolding to help learners improve their performance.

3.2.3 Group Process Manager

In the CLT approach, teachers are also expected to serve as group process managers. This role involves being responsible for organizing communicative activities within the classroom. Since group and pair work activities are emphasized in CLT, teachers must be adept at effectively facilitating these activities. Littlewood (1982) and Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2014) suggested that as group process managers, teachers should monitor, encourage, and provide necessary vocabulary, grammar rules, and communicative strategies. During group activities, teachers observe students' strengths and weaknesses in communication to offer feedback and suggestions later. Additionally, teachers assist groups in discussions aimed at self-correction.

3.2.4 A Controller

In this role, teachers have the authority to determine what students need to do, which language forms they should use, and how and when they should speak. However, teachers must ensure that their control does not negatively impact students' learning. Brown (1994) emphasized the importance of creating an environment where spontaneity can flourish, where students can use unrehearsed language, and where their freedom of expression allows for unpredictability in what they say and do (p. 167).

In essence, a teacher acting as a controller should carefully determine the initial input for students, wisely select appropriate techniques, provide clear directions, and manage the time allocated for each activity. Effective classroom control is indeed "*an important element of successfully carrying out interactive techniques*" (Brown, 1994, p. 167).

3.2.5 A Facilitator

Facilitation in learning is considered "*a less directive role*" (Brown, 1994, p. 167). This role requires teachers to help students discover their paths to success. As facilitators, teachers value students' intrinsic motivation and respect their ownership of the learning process, allowing them to explore the language with the teacher's scaffolding and guidance. In other words, facilitators encourage learning by supporting the learning process rather than directly teaching the language. For instance, a facilitator might help students understand new vocabulary by using pictures, real objects, synonyms, or antonyms instead of directly translating the words. This method of eliciting meanings not only motivates students but also enhances their intellectual abilities. In summary, a facilitator promotes student-centered learning.

3.2.6 A Knowledge Provider

According to Brown (1994), the role of a knowledge provider is "*the least directive role*" (p. 168). Traditionally, teachers have been seen as the primary source of information and knowledge in lecture-based contexts, acting as experts in their field responsible for conveying knowledge to students. However, this role does not imply that all knowledge is simply passed from teacher to student in a one-way manner. Instead, teachers must support students in interpreting and discovering knowledge by using appropriate

educational strategies. Brown (1994) emphasized that teachers can "*allow the students to proceed with their linguistic development*" (p. 168).

3.2.7 An Assessor-Feedback Provider

Feedback, as defined by Nightingale et al. (1996), is "*the information given to students on their progress in their course/unit*" (as cited in Berry, 2008, p. 130). Kennedy (1973) noted that "*correcting learners' errors helps them discover the functions and limitations of the syntactical and lexical forms of the target language*" (as cited in Chandler, 2004, p. 348). Additionally, Krashen & Seliger (1975) stated that "*error correction is especially useful to adult second language learners because it helps them learn the exact environment in which to apply rules and discover the precise semantic range of lexical items*" (as cited in Jean Chandler, 2004, p. 348). Clearly, feedback is crucial for helping students improve their learning. In second language classrooms, feedback is primarily provided through teachers' comments on students' performance on tasks. Language teachers use a variety of corrective feedback methods to help learners identify and address their problems. To effectively guide students in recognizing and correcting their errors, teachers must provide feedback that is meaningful, understandable, and informative (Berry, 2008). Additionally, teachers have the responsibility to offer motivational feedback that boosts learners' self-esteem and encourages their progress.

3.3 The Use of Metaphor in Understanding People's Perceptions of Teachers' Roles

3.3.1 Metaphor as a Window into People's Perceptions

Collins & Green (1990) determine that metaphors can be considered as a tool to form and reflect individuals' emotions, cognition, perceptions, expectations, and thoughts that affect his or her behaviors. Likewise, Lakoff & Johnson (2005) defined the basis of metaphors as "*understanding and experiencing one thing through the perspective of another thing*" (cited in Aytan, 2014). According to Nikitina & Furuoka (2008), people may base on metaphors to determine human cognitive processes and perceptions of reality. Recently, Zhao, Coombs, & Zhou's (2010) study suggests that "*metaphors are not just figures of speech, but constitute an essential mechanism of the mind allowing the modeling and reification of prior experience*". Kiseleva & Trofimova (2017) addressed "*metaphor as a cognitive-semantic device which can reveal intuitive mechanisms of the thinking process, thus filling the gaps in the sphere of logically objective human knowledge and opening the possibility to describe abstract concepts of the human mind*". In short, metaphors are recognized as a window into people's perceptions. From that aspect, educational researchers have considered metaphors as an effective research instrument to identify teachers' and students' perceptions of their roles and English language teaching.

3.3.2 Metaphor as a Window to Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Roles

Metaphors have also been utilized to explore students' views of their teachers and teaching practices. By comparing these metaphors, one can gain insight into how the

individuals who create them conceptualize the subject matter. For instance, Nikitina & Furuoka (2008) conducted a study with 23 Malaysian university students to investigate their metaphors for language teachers. The findings indicated that students viewed their teachers as “caretaker,” “essential element,” and “giver.” Similarly, Akbari (2013) explored the perceptions of Iranian non-English-major university students regarding EFL teachers' roles. Participants completed the metaphor prompt “An English language teacher is...because...” revealing roles such as “wet blanket,” “creator,” “machine,” “angel,” and “devil.” These results show a discrepancy between the idealized models of language teachers and the actual perceptions held by learners. Overall, metaphors offer valuable insights into how both teachers and students understand and define their professional identities.

3.4 Related Studies

A large amount of research has utilized metaphor analysis to examine students' understanding of teachers' roles.

Peculea (2017) carried out a study to investigate the potential of the method of metaphor analysis. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative metaphors developed on education, teachers, and teaching were analyzed. Different and valid metaphors were obtained from 101 first-year students participating in initial teacher training at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Considering their reasons, those metaphors were collected under 6 different categories for each concept. The findings of the study revealed that the metaphors developed by students reflect their opinions, expectations, and current psychological states.

Qiang (2017) conducted a study to investigate the roles of teachers in a communicative English course through questionnaires. The participants were 103 university students who had learnt a communicative English course at the university for at least one year. Students were required to use metaphors to indicate how they perceived their English. The results showed that the roles of teachers in the communicative English course mainly fell into four groups: the cognitive category of providing knowledge, the affective category of interesting students with authentic learning materials and interactive learning activities, the managerial category of assisting, guiding, monitoring the learning processes as well as designing learning activities for the class, and finally the fourth group of mainly negative perceptions.

Jitpranee (2017) investigated the metaphorical conceptualizations of English teachers by students in a university in Thailand and compared those conceptualizations with the metaphorical typology of language teachers produced by Oxford et al. (1998). An open-ended questionnaire was employed to gather data from 59 Thai university students. The results indicated that Thai students conceptualized their English teachers using 32 metaphors. These metaphors were categorized into five groups: a guide (32.20%), a resource (27.11%), a caretaker (25.42%), an authority (8.47%), and a navigator (6.77%). The data show both positive and negative perceptions of English teachers.

Azeez (2020) explored beliefs about EFL teachers' roles from both teachers' and students' perspectives through metaphor analysis. To collect the data, questionnaires were given to 30 teachers and 85 students in the University of Duhok, English Department. The questionnaire asked the subjects to provide their beliefs about English teachers' roles. Eight conceptual categories include: teacher as devotee, teacher as nurturer, teacher as provider/source of knowledge, teacher as cultural transmitter, teacher as authority, teacher as guide, teacher as a friend, and teacher as a nice, beautiful soul. All participants expressed the same conceptual categories, but still, they used different metaphors to express their views.

The above results advocate the idea that metaphors are considered a window into identity, and the studies of students' perceptions of teachers' roles contribute an important foundation to develop effective and modern teacher educational programs. Consequently, it is necessary to conduct this current study, which provides students with an in-depth understanding of "who English language teachers are".

4. Materials and Methods

4.1 Research Instruments

In the current study, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were utilized to collect the information to answer the research questions.

4.1.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire-based reflection was used in this study due to its efficiency in gathering a large amount of data within a short time frame (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). The current study's questionnaire was adapted from one previously used by Wan, Low, & Li (2011). In the original questionnaire, participants were asked to choose a single metaphor to describe English teachers' roles. However, in this study, participants were encouraged to generate one to three metaphors to express their perceptions of English teachers' roles. The more metaphors collected, the more insights were gained, allowing the research to capture the participants' diverse and reliable conceptualizations. The questionnaire was divided into two parts:

The first part included a clear statement of the research objectives, a request for personal information, and definitions and examples of metaphors used to describe teachers' roles in English teaching. Providing a clear definition of metaphors was essential to help participants understand how to use them.

The second part featured the metaphor prompt: "An English teacher is/likes...because...". Participants were asked to complete these sentences using specific metaphors and to explain their choices.

4.1.2 Interview

A semi-structured interview was also used to collect the data. The interview included three main questions, which further elaborated the ideas from the questionnaire: (1) What

does an English teacher do in English classes? (2) Can you think of a metaphor to identify the role of English teachers? (3) Why did you choose this metaphor?

4.2 Participants

The participants involved in this current study are thirty EFL teachers and two hundred students who are teaching and learning English in a private university in the Mekong Delta. The participants were divided into two groups: the teacher group and the student group.

The teachers invited for this study work as English teachers. Their years of teaching experience range from 5 to 16 years, and their age is between 24 and 47. All teachers received a Bachelor's degree in TESOL and a Master's degree in TESOL, and five gained the C1 level of the Vietnamese six-level framework of reference for foreign languages. Teachers with a wide range of teaching experience, proficiency level, and teaching areas were chosen in order to provide the overall and diverse perceptions of teachers' roles in English teaching. All teachers were asked to respond to the questionnaire, and six of them were interviewed.

The second group of participants is 200 students at a private university in the Mekong Delta. Among them, regarding gender, the proportion of female participants was higher than males, accounting for 65.5 % and 34.5 % respectively. Regarding the academic year, there were 67 juniors (33.5%), 48 freshmen (24%), 47 sophomores (23.5%), and 38 seniors (19%).

Table 4.1: Summary of the questionnaire participants

Participants	Categories	Group	Number	Percentage (%)
Students	Gender	Male	69	34.5
		Female	131	65.5
	Age	18–22	200	100
	Academic year	Freshman	48	24
		Sophomore	47	23.5
		Junior	67	33.5
		Senior	38	19
Teachers	Gender	Male	11	36,7
		Female	19	63,3
	Teaching experience	5-16 years	30	100

4.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis

In the current study, a questionnaire and semi-structured interview were utilized to collect the information to answer the research questions. The data collected from the questionnaire and the interview were analyzed to investigate the participants' perceptions of teachers' roles. First of all, the metaphors generated by students and teachers were presented verbatim to reflect exactly the participants' mental images of teachers' roles. Next, the researchers utilized the traditional method of metaphor analysis conducted by Cameron and Low (1999). The procedure included "*collecting examples of*

linguistic metaphors used to talk about the topic..., generalizing from them to the conceptual metaphors they exemplify, and using the results to suggest understanding or thought patterns which construct or constrain people's beliefs and actions" (p. 88). The researchers based on the metaphors and their entailments generated metaphorical categories.

5. Results

The responses that participants gave for their metaphors when asked to complete the given sentences about teachers' roles were carefully analyzed, and the metaphors were grouped into themes. Six main themes with metaphorical expressions used by the participants to identify teachers' roles are summarized in Table 5.1. Each theme is analyzed in detail to explore an in-depth understanding of teachers' roles. The similarities and discrepancies in teachers' and students' perceptions are also presented below.

Table 5.1: Metaphorical Conceptualizations of EFL Teachers' Roles

Metaphor Type	Metaphorical Images	Teachers	Students
Teacher as an instructor	Conductor, soldier, compass, team captain, torchbearer, lighthouse, navigator, ferryman	4	69
Teacher as a knowledge provider	Book, dictionary, scholar, house builder, blacksmith, construction engineer, architect	9	32
Teacher as a nurturer/caretaker	Gentle mother, gardener, doctor, friend, fairy, companion, farmer	7	43
Teacher as an inspirer	Sunshine, candle, star, DJ, inspirer, torch	3	19
Teacher as a culture transmitter	Tour guide, bridge, connector, ambassador	3	19
Teacher as an artist	Artist, craftsman, chef, actor, singer	4	18
Total		30	200

It can be seen from Table 5.1 that the first group of metaphors consists of 8 Metaphorical Images, the greatest number among the six themes. These metaphors were classified in the same group of "instructor" in that they were related to an aspect of instruction in the English classroom. 69 students and 4 teachers used metaphors such as "Conductor, soldier, compass, team captain, torchbearer, lighthouse, navigator, ferryman" to emphasize that they considered teachers as the guide, the authority, and the instructor who help students move toward their learning goals.

The entailments of this metaphorical conceptualization are illustrated below:

"During the learning process, students are like travelers setting out to explore an unfamiliar land, facing numerous challenges — from not understanding the lesson, fear of making mistakes, and lack of motivation, to feeling lost and uncertain about whether they are heading in the right direction. It is in such circumstances that the teacher appears as a compass — a tool that helps learners determine their direction, stay on course, and avoid getting lost. This guidance enables students to set appropriate learning goals and build a suitable path for their educational journey."

These metaphors show that participants see teachers as key figures who guide students both academically and personally. They reflect strong appreciation for the teacher's role, and this matches both traditional and modern views on teaching.

In the second theme, teacher as a knowledge provider, 7 metaphors were used to show the participants' perceptions of their teachers' roles. A total of 32 students and 9 teachers employed the images such as "book, dictionary, scholar, builder, blacksmith, construction engineer, and architect" to identify the teacher as the source of knowledge or experts who possess a great amount of knowledge and take responsibility for dispensing language knowledge to students. One student stated that:

"An English teacher is a dictionary because she provides knowledge of different fields for me and can interpret any content from English into Vietnamese and vice versa."

This group of metaphors reveals that participants stated that teachers were able to provide learners with knowledge in various fields and were capable of solving problems

In the third theme, teacher as a nurturer/ caretaker, 43 students and 7 teachers chose the images "affectionate mother, gardener, doctor, friend, fairy, companion, and farmer," to describe the teachers' roles. These vivid images implied that the teachers' responsibilities were taking care of students' learning, supporting their development, and nourishing the students' souls. As stated by the teacher and student participants:

"An English teacher is a gardener because he takes care of and nurtures 'knowledge trees' for students. Each student is a different plot of land, and the teacher needs to choose the right methods to seed the garden. Patience, devotion, and love are factors that help trees grow well."

"An English teacher is a companion. He's not only a knowledge provider who transfers knowledge to students but also a person who understands them to find suitable teaching methods."

The metaphors included in this theme showed that the participants highly appreciated both teachers' attribution of love in teaching and their professional qualifications. Indeed, both teachers' and students' understanding of the profession of teaching was positively and similarly.

The fourth group includes 6 metaphors. 19 students and 3 teachers used metaphors such as "sunshine," "candle," "star," "DJ," "torch," and "inspirer". These images emphasize the teacher's role in evoking and triggering students' interest and shed light on students' language learning. Interview data show that the teacher and student participants recognized the importance of learning motivation, which directly affects students' participation in learning activities. Two groups of participants stated:

"An English teacher is an inspirer because he needs to motivate students so that they can have interest or passion in learning and learn more effectively."

"An English teacher is like a torch. Her light is not only warm but also inspires students, helping students love the language. That light also illuminated my learning path, helping me to discover new knowledge and culture."

This group of metaphors emphasized the teacher's affective and motivational function in the classroom. Teachers are not only knowledge providers but also emotional leaders who inspire a love for learning among students.

In the fifth group, 4 different metaphors were used to reveal that teachers are those who not only teach language but also introduce students to the values, customs, and social norms of English-speaking countries. In this group, 19 students and 3 teachers used metaphors such as "tour guide, bridge, connector, and ambassador" to conceptualize the English teacher as a cultural transmitter. Two participants stated:

"An English teacher is a bridge to connect students to other cultures. In the teaching process, combining cultural aspects into the language lessons makes the lessons more interesting and students learn more effectively."

"An English teacher is a bridge between the mother tongue and the target language cultures. She helps students connect with the world around them through language, and the students have opportunities to know about different cultures."

This set of metaphors showed that both teacher and student participants regarded teachers as cultural transmitters and connectors. However, to fully meet students' needs, English teachers may need to integrate more intercultural content into their teaching practices, fostering not only linguistic competence but also cultural awareness and global citizenship.

Finally, in the sixth group, the teacher as an artist, 18 students and 4 teachers used five metaphors to reveal the roles of teachers. Metaphors such as "Artist, craftsman, chef, actor, singer" reflected the participants' beliefs in the significance and necessity of teachers' great efforts to engage learners. A teacher has to make efforts to involve students in lessons and always strives to make learning interesting. Furthermore, the participants particularly emphasized that teachers are like actors who can adapt themselves to new characters or roles in different circumstances. This means that teachers have to be flexible and adjust themselves to cope with students' diversified learning styles and goals. One participant stated:

"An English teacher is an artist. She has to be creative to design interesting lessons to stimulate students' creativity, engagement in language learning. Each of her lessons is a

work of art, requiring the combination of skills, knowledge, and creativity to convey knowledge to students effectively."

This metaphor identified that teachers took a complex role that always challenged them to perfect their various skills to capture learners' attention and motivation in learning, which is one of the significant factors contributing to their learning success.

6. Discussions

The results of the study revealed that the roles of English teachers fall into six themes: Teacher as an instructor, Teacher as a knowledge provider, Teacher as a nurturer/caretaker, Teacher as an interest inspirer, Teacher as a culture transmitter, Teacher as an artist. Such findings will then be discussed in relation to the previous studies in the field of metaphor analysis.

In the first group, the metaphors like "compass, torch bearer, ferryman, and lighthouse" reveal that the teachers acted as instructors who guide students towards their learning goals. While a large number of student participants considered English teachers as instructors, only a small number of teacher participants did so. These findings are in line with those of Qiang (2017), who found that both Chinese teachers and students frequently used metaphors such as "captain", "guide", and "leader" to show the teachers' responsibilities in monitoring classroom activities. In the same vein, Jitpranee (2017) revealed that Thai students often regarded their teachers as "drivers", which emphasized teachers' leadership in classrooms. This role of "instructor" indicated that the teachers take the responsibility of finding the right track for the students and providing necessary assistance.

In the second group, the metaphors showed that the participants regarded English teachers as knowledge providers who convey linguistic knowledge to students. These findings correspond with many previous studies. In Peculea's study (2017), it was found that metaphors such as "book", and "library" were used by the participants to describe teachers' roles. Similarly, Sayar (2014) reported that Turkish EFL students considered their teachers as "knowledge banks". Aytan (2014) also suggests that preservice Turkish teachers consider teachers as a source of information. Therefore, the findings of this study and previous studies showed that providing knowledge is likely to be a necessary part of teachers' roles in language learning.

The metaphors in the third group showed that teachers played the roles of a nurturer/ caretaker. The teachers were like students' mothers and friends, so that the students could be supported with learning and emotions when facing difficulties in learning. Azeez (2020) and Jitparnee (2017) studied the roles of EFL teachers in Thailand and Nigeria by way of metaphor analysis and identified a similar role of teacher as nurturer/caretaker as well.

In the fourth group, participants used metaphors such as "sunshine, candle, star, and DJ". Data revealed that many student participants thought that their teachers played

a role in inspiring students, so that the students are likely to be motivated to learn. Likewise, Farrell (2006) indicated that successful language teachers act as motivators and “emotional conductors” to make students engage and passionate about learning. Some examples of these metaphors are in Huang (2017) and Azeez (2020). Their study found a similar role of EFL teachers: The teacher acted as “lights” who motivated students and encouraged students’ engagement.

In the next group, metaphors such as “tour guide, bridge, and connector, ambassador” reflected the roles of teachers as culture transmitters. Participants revealed that English teachers not only provided linguistic knowledge but also cultural knowledge in the target language so that the students can open up to the world. Similarly, Nikitina and Furuoka (2011) reported that students in Asian EFL settings often desire to be exposed to cultural content while their teachers focus on grammar and vocabulary. The same results were found in the studies by Sayar (2014), Huang (2017), and Jitpranee (2017).

Finally, the metaphors of “artist, chef, actor, and craftsman” indicated that the participants value the creativity and adaptability of teachers in teaching. Indeed, teachers have to be creative in choosing the right methods to make the class more interesting and appealing to students. This view supports Gao (2010), who emphasized that teachers had the role of performing on the stage. He stated that when it comes to motivating students and managing classroom activities, teachers have to act in different roles and have creativity to deal with different learning styles and classroom activities.

7. Recommendations

Further research is recommended to examine how teachers and students with different learning backgrounds, ages, and genders identify teachers’ roles through metaphors. Furthermore, future research needs to investigate how discrepancies in perceptions affect teachers’ and students’ attitudes and performance in both learning and teaching.

8. Conclusions

This study investigated teachers’ and students’ perceptions of their English language teachers’ roles through metaphor analysis. The results revealed vivid teacher images, grouped into six dominant themes: teacher as instructor/guide, knowledge provider, nurturer/caretaker, inspirer, culture transmitter, and artist. These metaphor clusters offer deep insights into participants’ perceptions of English teaching, shedding light on their expectations, values, and experiences within the EFL classroom.

Overall, the metaphors reflected largely positive perceptions of the teaching profession, emphasizing the teacher’s diverse roles not only as a knowledge provider but also as a motivator, emotional supporter, culture transmitter, and creative performer. Students frequently used metaphors that emphasized the teacher’s responsibility in shaping their academic path and personal development. It can be concluded that the role

of conveying knowledge is necessarily included as a constituent part of the CLT teacher role, and the teachers in CLT classes must design different learning activities and create an appropriate atmosphere to enable students to go through the learning process. It is also crucial for the teachers to assist, facilitate, direct, and monitor the learning processes.

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