Metaphor components and usage in the fourth grade social studies textbook

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Abstract

Metaphor, as using to other disciplines, have a usable characteristic with comfortable and enjoyable way in education. Especially, social studies courses and textbook supplies a lot of opportunities fort this mean. To related with social phenomena, individual diversity and relations of social studies course, in the same time related with metaphor. Individual and socialization are examined by social studies, individual and communication are examined by metaphor. In this context, while the metaphor is a significant component of individual and society, significant for social studies courses and textbook. In this study, content analysis method was used to fourth grade social studies textbook. Metaphor components are determined in textbook. In addition to this, what goals and which ratio have been represented were described. It is expected that, this research findings is important in terms of metaphor usage and styles in fourth grade social textbook.

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1. Introduction

Humour is a kind of skill that reveals the humorous aspect of life. In other words, humour is the craft of illustration, caricature, speaking and writing that leads an individual to laugh. It is better to state that humour and works of humour are done, written and drawn not only in order to simply joke and make someone laugh but in order to express definite ideas as well.

Humour is a skill of realising the amusing aspects of situations and events rather than being constantly serious. Besides, amusement and tolerance take part on humour’s basis. Amusement is a social desire of human beings. Humour has taken its first form with the first entertainments in which conflicts among human beings come to an end, harmony prevails, and merriment and freedom get boundless.

Humour has a characteristic that it can be utilized easily and joyfully in education as well as in every field of life, for which, especially Social Studies subject provides extensive possibilities. Just as Social Studies is about social
events, individual differences and relations, it is related to humour as well. In Social Studies, there are human beings and socialization; within humour, there are human beings and communication, too. Accordingly, humour is indispensable for individuals and society.

Humour helps individuals communicate with others. Laughing strengthens togetherness, affection, warmth and friendship feelings. It helps relationships strengthen. It reinforces individual’s social relationships by decreasing his/her feeling of insecurity and helping his/her self-respect improve. Humour can function as a bridge between people who are different from each other on account of their cultural and cognitive features and their life experiences. Humour that has an affirmative influence on establishing long-lasting and reliable relationships, enables communication to be maintained more interestingly, strikingly and fluently when used in conversations (Miller, 1996). Individuals get in the independent and free atmosphere of amusement from their daily life via the elements of humour. Besides, humour that helps individuals communicate easily with one another facilitates social acceptance and makes it easy to adjust social control in social situations as well.

Using humour so as to boost students’ morale generally enables a positive influence on the activity of learning subjects. If students set a relation between the knowledge they have acquired and a permanent context in mind visually and emotionally, they may be more successful in remembering data because using jokes and anecdotes in classes is helpful to provide connotations.

It is known that length of attention is between 15-20 minutes on average. Listening to a course without participating for a long time causes the loss of concentration and boredom, so this affects the individual’s learning negatively. Humour can be used to increase the attention for the lesson. Humour increases learning by arousing students’ attention and making them focus attention. Techniques such as role playing and games enable learning by increasing teacher’s and students’ energy and having fun in class. When anxiety diminishes during learning process, students get more open to learning and they enjoy experiences more. Besides, humour develops rapport between the teacher and the student, which reinforces their social interaction.

Focusing on a deed for a long time in daily life causes loss of concentration and boredom for the individual, which affects his/her learning and productivity negatively. Humour facilitates learning process and remembering by collecting the attention of the individual. Besides, using humour in class encourages students to ask questions by diminishing their fear and stress (Ulloth, 2002), which leads to positive and efficient classroom atmospheres.

A teacher who uses humour as a teaching technique will consume more energy in class. Teachers who regard their students as curious, playful and creative beings rather than seeing them as ready- information receivers will witness that students often ask curious questions and sometimes utter humorous and witty words. Such a teacher will not present the thing he/she teaches as bare data learnt in only one way. He/she does not regard the time passing in class simply as a process in which something is taught. The reason why most of the teachers are unwilling to carry out such a flexibility in their teaching techniques or are afraid of it is that they will have to study more. Keeping the control and presenting evidence in such a multi dimensional association are much more difficult than one-dimensional association. However, the reward of this kind of teaching will be very substantial for both the teacher and the student. If we are concerned with individuals’ being educated more than conveying realities and experiences to students, we have no other solution except for adapting humour to education (Morreall, 1997). As a matter of fact, researches done related to using humour in educational environments are evident that humour has positive effects on education (Steele, 1998; Berk 1996; Zigler, Levine & Goulde 1981).

After that general information about humour, we should give information about humour and its elements in social studies course books. As it is known, education process is based on three main components: the teacher, the curriculum of the subject and the course book. Defining the content of a subject is fundamentally effective for determining the education process and the function of the teacher and the course book towards teaching in class.

Curriculum should be renewed within developing and advancing time because it is to keep up with the times by containing innovation. Accordingly, curriculum has been started developing since 2004 in our country. All the curriculum of first and second grade of primary education has been changed; all the things related to the change of curriculum have become different.

On curriculum studies carried out by the ministry of national education and the board of education and discipline, generally those changes are done (Selçuk, 2005):
1. It is based on constructivist program approach.
2. Active learning and activity based education strategies are proposed.
3. Connections are set between main disciplines and interlude ones.
4. The wholeness of primary education and links between disciplines are taken into account.
5. Measurement and evaluation approach based on process is put forward.

As stated in the social studies curriculum (MEB, 2004), the general aims, vision and mission of the social studies curriculum have changed as well. The changes in social studies curriculum have reflected upon our course books. In previous term, there were not humour items such as even a caricature, anecdote, riddle and so on in course books; but now, it is possible to come across them in almost every unit since the change occurred in the curriculum allows this situation and the curriculum defends that use of humour will provide effective education. (MEB, 2004)

We can express what the differences between new course books and the old ones are like this:

Firstly, the course books used in first and second grade of primary education have been formed as a set consisted of three books, which are the course book, the student workbook and the teacher’s manual. Course books have changed considerably in terms of content within the frame of curriculum. Writers of the course books have dealt with the topics taught in the course book within the constructivist approach principles and they have changed not only the content, but also the physical form of the course books. These changes have been realized in the direction of criteria determined by the Board of Education and Discipline.

2. Method

The course books are prepared by private publishing houses and the commission of book writing which works depending on the ministry of national education. The prepared course books are examined by presenting to the board of education and discipline, and the one that is regarded as successful and efficient becomes entitled to be used in classes. The book analysis commission of the board of education and discipline examines the course books according to the criteria determined beforehand. The course books are examined with regard to three aspects: 1. In terms of the content, 2. In terms of the visual quality, 3. In terms of language and dictation. Therefore, as it is the topic of our research, the content analysis applied to social studies 4. grade course books has been applied to the content of the course books and their visual items. Besides, the course books consist of a course book, a student work book and a teacher’s manual. For this reason, a student work book has been included in the scope of the research of the course book.

If we give information about “The Content Analysis” which is a research method in social studies, and which is used in this study as well, we can say these:

According to Metren (Aktaran: Gökçe, 2006), “the content analysis is a method that researches social reality via making inferences from the definite features of social reality about the indefinite features of the content.” With the help of this definition, as the aim of the content analysis, we can say that it is to attain basic propositions towards social reality by deriving from available contexts (Gökçe, 2006). Besides, Berelson defines the content analysis in this way: The content analysis is that the visible content of communication is described through objective, systematic and quantitative ways (Aktaran: Bilgin, 2006).

The content analysis is based on inference. It bears the aim of making interpretation from the point of items observed and described (Bilgin, 2006).

In Turkey, a set of course books which are prepared by the ministry of national education and a set of course books which are prepared by a private publishing house (Kolukışa, Oruç, Akbaba & Dündar, 2006) are used in social studies subject. For this reason, both sets of course books are included in the scope of research, and the course books and student work books of both sets of course books have been examined.

3. Findings and Interpretation

In the study, the social studies course book and student work book of the ministry of national education and the social studies course book and student work book of the private publishing house have been examined firstly in terms of visual items with the content analysis method. The visual items found in the books have been counted one by one and afterwards they have been categorized according to their features. The visual elements in the course books are like this: Posters, photographs, reports, graphics, maps, humour items, stamps, pictures- shapes, symbols and tables.

Because the improvement resulted from the curriculum change in Turkey is aimed at the course books, the contents of especially social studies course books have changed substantially. The change of content has resulted in
significant changes in constructions done during the preparation of the course books as well. In the course books prepared according to the previous curriculum, informative and plain texts are generally used whereas in the course books used nowadays contain various and effective constructs.

Construct types in the constitution of the course books and student work books of 4. grade social studies are these: documents, information notes, plain text, literary works (story, poem etc.), photographs, reports, diaries, maps, conversations between individuals, humour items, pictures-shapes.

It is better to explain shortly some of these constructs, the names of which we have determined. “Documents” are used in the course book and work book of social studies. These documents have the quality to attract the students’ attention, and they are used in order to realize curriculum achievements. The questions related to the document and the data presented about the explanation of the document have caused differences in teaching the subject.

Information is directly given in Information Notes and this construct functions as supportive and explanatory information in teaching the subject.

Social studies extensively make use of literary works such as stories, poems, novels, epics, tales and so on by its nature. For this reason, literary works are extensively used in the course books and liven up the books.

Photographs are the indispensable items of the course books. However, in the course books which are prepared according to the previous curriculum, photographs are used as if they are there only to embellish the books. A substantial functionality is not laid on the photographs. However, in the current social studies course books, photographs take a wide place and they are used quite functionally. The use of questions aimed at interpreting the photos is more appropriate for the effective teaching.

Reports are available in the course books that have been used before. However, they have become one of the indispensable materials and construct types in the current social studies course books. Reports which are quite convenient about social events and matters have taken their deserved place in the course books.

The diary construct in the course books enables to convey the subject through a student’s mouth. Thus students read in a different method and do not get bored while learning.

The construct of conversation between individuals found extensively in English course books has reflected upon social studies course books and become a different way of presenting information. Like photos, using picture-shape make the course books colourful and become one of the convenient constructs that help students visualize and internalize information.

The access of humour and humour items into social studies course books has created a very positive atmosphere. As it is seen in the tables below, humour has a very substantial place in the course books now. Although it is not sufficient and not at the intended level, the current use of humour shows the fact that humour has an important role in education is understood. What is meant by humour items found in the course books are caricatures, anecdotes, riddles, comic strips, jokes, comic icons and symbols.

2.1. Findings related to visual humour items found in 4. grade social studies course books prepared by the ministry of national education and a private publishing house

The 4. grade social studies course book being within the scope of research and prepared by the ministry of national education consists of 206 pages. The course book contains 8 units and 65 topics within the units. The 4. grade social studies course book being within the scope of research and prepared by a private publishing house consists of 228 pages. The course book contains 8 units and 60 topics within the units.
Table 1. The distribution of visual aids used in the 4. grade social studies course books prepared by the ministry of national education and a private publishing house

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The course book</th>
<th>Visual aids</th>
<th>posters</th>
<th>photographs</th>
<th>reports</th>
<th>graphics</th>
<th>maps</th>
<th>humour items</th>
<th>stamps</th>
<th>Pictures and shapes</th>
<th>symbols</th>
<th>tables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prepared by the ministry of national education</td>
<td>The number of the item found in the book</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepared by a private publishing house</td>
<td>The number of the item found in the book</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is seen in Table 1, 521 visual aids in total have been used and most of them are photographs in the course book prepared by the ministry of national education. Stamp is the visual aid used least. 21 humour items have been used.

715 visual aids have been used and most of them are again photographs in the course book prepared by a private publishing house. Graphics are the visual aids used least in this book. When compared to the other course book, there are more humour items in the course book prepared by a private publishing house. Throughout the book, after the photographs, humour items have been used most. The humour items used here are mostly caricatures and cliparts.

Table 2. The distribution of visual aids used in the 4. grade social studies student work books prepared by the ministry of national education and a private publishing house

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The student work book</th>
<th>Visual aid</th>
<th>Posters</th>
<th>Photographs</th>
<th>Reports</th>
<th>Graphics</th>
<th>Maps</th>
<th>Humour items</th>
<th>Stamps</th>
<th>Pictures and shapes</th>
<th>Symbols</th>
<th>Tables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prepared by the ministry of national education</td>
<td>The number of items found in the book</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepared by a private publishing house</td>
<td>The number of items found in the book</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 4. grade social studies student work book being within the scope of research and prepared by the ministry of national education consists of 190 pages. The student work book contains 120 activities and 8 performances. The 4. grade social studies student work book being within the scope of research and prepared by a private publishing house consists of 146 pages. The student work book contains 132 activities.

As it is seen in Table 2, there are 220 visual aids and most of them are photographs in the student work book prepared by the ministry of national education. Graphics and maps are the visual aids used least. Posters, reports and stamps have not been used. There are 26 humour items. After photographs and pictures, humour items are the ones used most.

There are 178 visual aids and most of them are photographs in the student work book prepared by a private publishing house. Posters and maps are the visual aids used least in this book. When compared to the other book, humour item are less in the student work book prepared by a private publishing house.
2.2. Findings related to humour items used as constructs in the preparation of 4. grade social studies course books prepared by the ministry of national education and a private publishing house

Table 3. Constructs used in the 4. grade social studies course books prepared by the ministry of national education and a private publishing house

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The course book prepared by the ministry of national education</th>
<th>The type of construct</th>
<th>Document s</th>
<th>Information Notes</th>
<th>Plain Text s</th>
<th>Literary works (stories, poems etc.)</th>
<th>Photo s</th>
<th>Report s</th>
<th>Diaries</th>
<th>Maps</th>
<th>Conversations between individuals</th>
<th>Humour items</th>
<th>Picture s and shapes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of the item found in the book</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percent of the item found in the book</td>
<td>%6</td>
<td>%29</td>
<td>%17</td>
<td>%17</td>
<td>%5</td>
<td>%7</td>
<td>%5</td>
<td>%0,5</td>
<td>%7</td>
<td>%2</td>
<td>%5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The course book prepared by a private publishing house</th>
<th>The type of construct</th>
<th>Document s</th>
<th>Information Notes</th>
<th>Plain Text s</th>
<th>Literary works (stories, poems etc.)</th>
<th>Photo s</th>
<th>Report s</th>
<th>Diaries</th>
<th>Maps</th>
<th>Conversations between individuals</th>
<th>Humour items</th>
<th>Picture s and shapes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of the item found in the book</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percent of the item found in the book</td>
<td>%3</td>
<td>%3</td>
<td>%5</td>
<td>%17</td>
<td>%6</td>
<td>%10</td>
<td>%1</td>
<td>%0,6</td>
<td>%28</td>
<td>%21</td>
<td>%4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is seen in Table 3, 176 constructs in total aimed at teaching the topics have been used in the course book prepared by the ministry of national education. Naturally, more than one construct have been used in teaching a topic. That is to say, while teaching a topic, the book may make use of both a report and a humour item, which is quite normal. Therefore, that the number of topics and the number of constructs are not proportional should not mislead.

As it is seen in Table 3, the information note has been used most in the course book prepared by the ministry of national education. 51 information notes comprise the 29 percent of the constructs. With the ratio of 2 %, humour items are one of the constructs used least in the book.

There are 146 constructs in the course book prepared by a private publishing house. Naturally, in this book again, more than one construct have been used in teaching one topic. Most of the constructs used in the book are conversations between individuals with the rate of 28 %. With the ratio of 21 %, humour items follow them, which indicates that the book makes use of humour considerably.
Table 4: Constructs used in the student work books of 4. grade social studies prepared by the ministry of national education and a private publishing house

| The student work book prepared by the ministry of national education | The type of construct | Documents | Photos | Reports | Graphics | Diaries | Stories | Humour items | Pictures and shapes | Question-answer | Tables | Writing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The number of the item found in the book | 4 | 8 | - | 3 | - | 6 | 3 | 31 | 24 | 19 | 46 |
| The percent of the item found in the book | %3 | %6 | - | %2 | - | %4 | %2 | %22 | %17 | %13 | %32 |

| The student work book prepared by a private publishing house | The type of construct | Documents | Photos | Reports | Graphics | Diaries | Stories | Humour items | Pictures and shapes | Question-answer | Tables | Writing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The number of the item found in the book | 8 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 15 | 24 | 38 | 32 |
| The percent of the item found in the book | %5 | %4 | %4 | %3 | %5 | %5 | %3 | %9 | %15 | %25 | %21 |

As it is seen in Table 4, in order to form the activities in the work book prepared by the ministry of education, 144 constructs in total have been used and most of them are writing activities. Graphic and humour items are the ones used least. However, the use of humour that is in the ratio of 2% cannot be ignored.

In the work book prepared by a private publishing house, 155 constructs have been used. The construct used most in this book is tables which are in the ratio of 25%. Humour has been used at the rate of 3%, which shows that humour takes a substantial place in course books.

3. Result and Suggestions

Many studies have determined that humour has cognitive benefits for students. Cognitive theory regards the improvement of sense of humour as the steps that enable high intelligence to develop. When used effectively and appropriately, humour helps students learn in many aspects (Steele, 1998, s.15).

Humour is an effective means in education and it can be used in order to relax students in class and in order to make learning procedure more enjoyable. As educators, we should be active participants in students’ smiles, so they will have a chance to communicate and get along with each other.

In our country, humour has started appearing in course books that have changed with the curriculum prepared according to constructivist approach. In course books of social studies, humour has been used to an extent which cannot be underestimated. This is a favorable improvement, but it is not sufficient since humour and humour products found in course books should be increased, and these products should be made more functional. Besides, the aim of using humour is not only to embellish course books and entertain students, but it is to enable them to attain different cognitive skills as well. That is to say, it is necessary that humour items found in course books should be used more functionally and more efficient functions should be laid on these items. On account of its structure, humour is efficient enough to carry more loads.

A research should be carried out towards identifying teachers’ and students’ views about humour and humour elements found in course books. Humour in the course books should keep its place and should be increased in terms of quantity.

It is possible to attain enlightening information about humour-education by doing researches towards teachers’ levels and strategies of using humour. In addition to that, it is possible to identify students’ attitudes towards humour (by using different variants).

As humour is a significant means for creating a positive learning environment, humour should be used easily in class (Hill, 1988).
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