

Saudi Female Teachers' Identity Through the Use of Metaphors

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Abstract

Metaphors provide a framework through which teachers may convey their beliefs about teaching and learning. Using metaphor analysis, this article reflects on the views of three experienced teachers in Saudi Arabia. The study examines the metaphorical images female Saudi teachers use about teaching and learning. The question guiding the research study is What metaphors do Saudi female teachers use about teaching and learning? A qualitative research design was deemed best for this study through a case study. The individual metaphor analysis captured the teacher's individual identity; the researcher discovered that each metaphor linked components of identity and teaching practice in distinct and diverse ways. A following cross-case study highlighted the numerous conflicts that instructors experience. The findings revealed that obligations and responsibilities vary between metaphors, profession-related ambivalence, and disputes in teachers' images. Both the individual and cross-case analyses show that metaphors have the potential to enrich professional development and teacher education to advise policymakers, school administrators, teacher educators, and teachers.

Keywords: Discourse analysis, language, metaphors, Saudi teacher identity

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Introduction

Metaphor is a vital technique for uncovering identity that can give unique insights compared to other identity-related approaches, including interviews, journal reflections, and narrative inquiry. Metaphors are a tool for understanding a phenomenon in terms of another according to the definition (Lakoff & Johnson 2003, p. 5). In addition, Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) explained that teachers might use metaphors to share their experiences about teaching and convey their beliefs.

According to Ahmed and Samed (2018), metaphors help teachers to discover the sense and meaning of self. It can also describe their professional and personal growth throughout their lives and careers. These metaphorical symbols have the power to reveal hidden information about emotion, teaching, and teacher roles (Lynch, & Fisher-Ari, 2017). As a result, metaphors are recognized as an archetype of teacher identity in addition to serving as proxies for professional thought (Fenwick, 2013; Saban 2006).

Metaphors help to organize activities. Holliday (2017) explained that we act following our perceptions of the world. Our metaphors through teaching and learning enable or limit some behaviors. Thus, using the conventional image of learning as filling one's brain with knowledge, prescribe instructional acts emphasizing knowledge transmissions, such as tutorials and lectures. The banking model of education, as articulated by Paulo Freire, is one where students simply receive knowledge deposits from their teachers (Freire, 1968). Furthermore, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) describe that metaphors are built on shared experience and cultural images that allow us to view one object as similar to another. Metaphors are culturally unique since they rely on shared understandings.

Metaphors, in this sense, serve as instruments for critical thought. They assist us in comprehending aspects of experience, such as teaching and learning, that are difficult to understand in their own right. Indeed, studies demonstrate that “teacher talk” is rich with metaphors. Teachers employ metaphors not just to convey topics to students, but as well as to characterize and comprehend their job as educators (Garcia, 2013). As a result, in ways that more candid discussion cannot, metaphor may be able to help us disclose our standard, sometimes nameless views and ideas.

Exploration of metaphors can help us understand teachers, along with their identity, which Anspal, Eisenschmidt, and Löffström (2012) illustrate as ‘character in context’. The challenge of understanding teacher identity is acknowledged by Beauchamp and Thomas (2009). Context and connections have a role in this (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). It is an inconstant meaning-making endeavor that pursues stasis (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). This raises the topic of how a successful or failing teacher may act under more favorable or challenging situations, and how their metaphor choice might reflect or influence that. Teacher identity, according to Beauchamp and Thomas (2011), is a product and a process, as well as disruptive and destabilizing. They identified agency and community as the two most essential variables in creating and forming a teacher's identity, as well as the acceptance of that identity by the teacher (Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä, & Paloneimi, 2014).

In studying Saudi female teachers' metaphors, teachers have the opportunity to reexamine their own teaching. Since most of the studies regarding teachers' identity through their use of metaphors have been conducted in foreign countries, the fact that this study was conducted in Saudi Arabia will certainly contribute to the existing research. The objective of this research is to examine the images Saudi female teachers use about teaching and learning through metaphors to better understand their identity. Therefore, the following research questions were asked:

What metaphors do Saudi female teachers use for teaching and learning?
How do Saudi female teachers' metaphors unravel their identity?

The following sections in the study include a literature review on identity, metaphor, and language. Then the research methodology and rationale for the choice of methods are explained. It will include a description of the research instruments and data collection and analysis techniques. The study setting, participants and sampling techniques are also described. After that, analysis of the data is presented. Followed by the findings of the study. The paper ends with the limitations that were inevitable to the study and the implications and recommendations for future studies.

Literature Review

Identity, metaphor and language

Our identities are the roles we act on. In the stories we tell, we create and construct who we are (Hiver & Whitehead, 2018), in which "a sense of self" is created (Kerby, 1991, p. 6). Personal self-perceptions are shaped by institutional, social, and cultural factors (Hordvik, Fletcher, Haugen, Engebretsen, & Moller, 2021). They are linked with the societal responsibilities one feels bound to carry out (Berlak, 2014). Therefore, identity is defined as "the unspeakable stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history and of a culture" (Hall, as cited in Ecclestone, 2007, p.122). Metaphors are also mini-stories that are derived from human imaginations and subjective experiences (Turner, 1996). They give voice to our identities by organizing the numerous meanings of one's individual and social experiences into logical ideas. Metaphor is "a window into teacher identity" (Nguyen, 2016, p. 68). It is a helpful medium for instructors to reflect on their identities since "a large part of self-understanding is the search for appropriate metaphors that make sense of our lives" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 232–233). Teachers can explain what would otherwise be indescribable (Thornbury, 1991) through verbalizing the complex construct in a concise and vivid language (Craig, 2018; Portaankorva-Koivisto & Grevholm, 2019), revealing the diversity as well as the complexity of teacher identity. As a result, metaphor is a valuable study tool for examining teacher identity (Arvaja, 2016; Baş, 2021; Zhu, Rice, Li, & Zhu, 2020).

Identity can be expressed in many different ways, and the most evident is through language. Vygotsky believed that tools and signs mediate human activity (Rushton, 2021; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995), and language is the primary means through which humans communicate and, as a result, evolve. Language, according to Bakhtin, gives voice to forces moving toward real verbal and intellectual unity and centralization, which grow in critical relation with the process of cultural and sociopolitical centralization. Put simply, language signifies the joint ideological and verbal worlds of a speaker, and thus portrays her as a part of various sociocultural processes. A person's words,

when said, are symbolic reflections of who she is, what she aspires to be, and where she has been. People have social group languages, professional, genetic languages, as well as generational languages (Bakhtin, 1981). These discourses within figured worlds would be used to navigate through various social situations and events. Bakhtin (1981) continues to assert, "The word in language is half someone else's" (p. 293). Thus, to make one's language, we would depend on others' use of language to create links and connections.

In schools, teachers share a distinctive genre of language established in shared figured worlds (Goble & Stafford, 2022). They depend on one another to form shared goals and interests in socially situated groups. This dependence results in the emergence of speech genres that show the intersection of ways of being, speakers, and ideas. Speech genres become familiar and can consist of precise terms and phrases within a particular school, but probably seem strange to someone outside of the education speech genre (Nakamura, 2021). To become part of this community, teachers must adopt the discourse used by the other teachers and thus, build an identity within the community.

Many elements in the school can contribute to a teacher's sense of belonging and discourse beyond language (Burner & Osler, 2021). For instance, the acceptable dress code in the building, the setting arrangements in the teachers' lounge, and the way meetings are run; are all practices of performed belonging to a school community. Failing to adapt to these social ways might lead to a sense of exclusion and isolation. Schools form their way of performing and speech genres in their communities. A teacher's discourse, in a Bakhtinian sense, represents the speech genres used in the school halls, the unique qualities of the school, and its community of professionals, in an ever-changing and fluid manner.

In the footsteps of Bakhtin, Gee (2011) used Discourse with a capital D to refer to the discrete connections between social groups and language. He explained that a Discourse with a capital 'D' is made up of unique methods of speaking and listening, as well as unique ways of writing and reading. These unique methods of speaking, listening or reading, and writing are accompanied by unique ways of acting, engaging, valuing, feeling, thinking, and believing (Gee, 2011). Gee's description emphasized that individuals' ways of acting and interacting are outcomes of their social ways of being. Discourses are socially recognized identities manifested through how one acts and speaks.

Through interacting with others, teachers acquire the discourse of their school from those around them. As Gee (1996) stated, "Discourses are not mastered through overt instruction but by enculturation 'apprenticeship' into social practices" (p. 170). Thus, they are apprenticed by their peers into norms, discourse, and behaviors in their professional community building. This creates a sense of belonging and community as well as a rigid structure that cannot be worked against. Accordingly, it is vital to comprehend the roles of identity and discourse in a school setting, as well as how these concepts symbolize a school community's social ways of being and the speech norms that regulate speech in schools.

Although there is existing research pertaining to the nature of teachers' discourse and the use of metaphorical images in their discourse (Barger, 2022; Nguyen, 2022), limited research

studies examine Saudi teachers' identity, and even less research if none exists in studying female Saudi teachers use of metaphors to understand their identity. Studying teachers will provide insight into what they believe about identity and how they make instructional decisions within the classroom. Also, it will help determine how teachers derive those beliefs around their identity.

Methods

This study followed a qualitative research design. The researcher tried to interpret an important phenomenon from Saudi female teachers' viewpoints while working as a data gathering instrument to construct data in written form (Hatch, 2002). The researcher used a small number of participants to analyze and interpret the data thoroughly.

Consequently, the main objective of this study was to explore Saudi female teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching through metaphors; therefore, a qualitative research approach was deemed applicable. The researcher mainly chose case study design to allow participants' voices to be heard.

The researcher extorted metaphors from three Saudi female teachers and then analyzed them. Throughout this study, the researcher portrays descriptions of the three participants, data sources and their collection, and how the data was analyzed.

The study was conducted during the first semester 2022 in Hail city in Saudi Arabia. Participants in this study were Saudi female teachers who taught at elementary schools. The sampling of these participants was purposeful (Staller, 2021). The researcher purposely chose to examine teachers with a wide range of teaching experience. The teachers' years of classroom experience ranged from 19-30 years. The researcher believed that teachers with more experience could explain their assumptions more than novice teachers.

Asma

Asma is a fourth-grade Arabic Language Arts teacher. She taught for 30 years and considered herself a learner. Asma taught language arts as well as the Quran. According to Asma, her principal was very helpful and listened to teachers' needs. She encouraged her to write about the teaching strategies she created and send teachers to the Ministry of Education to learn about the *101 Active Learning Strategies*.

Sarah

Sarah taught for 28 years in many different schools ranging from elementary to high school. During data collection, she was teaching sixth-grade Arabic Language Arts, *Hadith* (the sayings of Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him), and History. Sarah taught students from different nationalities, such as Syrians and Egyptians.

Monerah

Monerah was a fourth-grade teacher who taught in a school near her house. Monerah had a Diploma degree, which is a two-year teaching degree. However, she continued her studies to earn a Bachelor's degree in the Arabic language. She mainly taught first grade for 19 years. She was elected by her principal and advisors to lead the school and is now a principal. The school she

taught in is located in a neighborhood that tends toward high-income families. This was a neighborhood where parents focused on their daughter's education.

Research Instruments

The data in this study consisted of the metaphors generated by the participants. Before beginning the study, ethical approval was obtained from the University of Hail. Unlike many earlier studies, this study did not generate ideas for possible metaphors for the participants (e.g., Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011), nor were metaphors assigned (e.g., Berliner, 1990), or constructed collectively (e.g., Martínez, Saule, & Huber, 2001). Instead of purposefully leading participants toward metaphorical expressions of their identities, the researcher employed semi-structured interviews as the primary data collecting instrument to extract participants' subconsciously used metaphors. This will aid in avoiding data distortions during direct metaphor inquiry (Hille & Phillips, 1968). For each semi-structured interview, participants were asked about their teaching instructions, difficulties they encountered, teachers' role, their future views, and suggestions for the Saudi educational system.

To avoid leading them, tremendous effort was taken to guarantee that they could express themselves completely without interruptions from the interviewer. As the participants expounded on some areas, follow-up questions arose, either for a more in-depth understanding or to elaborate certain elements.

Teachers participated in five interviews for at least 45-minute. Three teachers were chosen to participate in semi-structured interviews. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. In addition, the researcher acquired documents and artifacts from teachers that represent their use of metaphors for learning and teaching. Such artifacts and documents included student work samples, lesson plans, and copies of activities. The researcher also asked teachers to take photos of their classrooms. As the researcher collected data, she used a journal to reflect and write ideas while interacting and listening to the participants during the interviews.

Validity and Reliability

To increase reliability and validity, the researcher used several methods. Firstly, she triangulated the data collected from the interviews and artifacts. Secondly, she reported all the research study stages in detail. Thirdly, she occupied the direct quotations from the participants without destroying their originality (Eldh, Årestedt, & Berterö, 2020). Thus, the metaphors used by the participants were quoted directly and were explained in detail in the findings.

Analysis

The analysis process was done in two different phases. The researcher investigated and analyzed each teacher's metaphor independently during the first phase, then used a cross-case analysis of all participants' metaphors. The study's findings on the individual metaphors were examined in the second phase.

Individual Metaphor Analysis

In this phase, the researcher followed Armstrong, Davis, and Paulson (2011) in collecting and analyzing metaphors. The researcher started by looking for metaphorical phrases in the

transcriptions. For example, in the teachers' narration, "good manufacturing of teachers does not exist" "good manufacturing" is a metaphorical statement in which the target domain is the teacher of this figurative term. Because certain metaphors were "implicitly embedded," transcriptions were read cautiously (Oxford et al., 1998). The data also includes metaphorical expressions about students, teaching, and school linked with the target teacher domain. Next, each metaphor was titled to "map source domain onto target domain" (Armstrong et al., 2011). "Good manufacturing," for example, refers to the Craftsman source domain. The teacher is mapped to the characteristics of craftsmen, such as "built themselves" and "need to practice their craft," and the term is titled Teacher Is A Craftsman. As a result, teacher identity is derived from essential elements in the source domain as they relate to a specific linguistic context. Finally, the researcher organized the metaphorical expressions into subcategories by grouping them together. "When a craftsman creates ten of these cups (points to the cup in her hand), it's not like a craftsman who only makes one cup," and "good manufacturing of teachers does not exist" are two examples of Teacher Is A Craftsman.

Although the transcriptions were coded individually, the researcher analyzed each metaphor in its linguistic context after each phase. The researcher then analyzed the data based on the metaphorical categories. In the conceptual metaphor, we do not choose a random source domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), and the most efficient employment of metaphor represents the core dominant conceptual association (Evans, 2019). As a result, changes in metaphor frequencies are an essential predictor of changes in teacher identity.

In this process, the researcher studied each participant's metaphors one at a time and inspected each phrase. After that, the researcher reviewed my coding with the participants to verify my interpretation. The researcher used a priori categories from positioning theory to code each metaphor: plotlines, roles, assumptions, and obligations (Harré & Langenhove, 2003). Plotlines were indicated through their statements on how a teacher lives her life, how she interacts with students, how they arranged teaching or learning, and how they created classroom settings. Comments that indicated teachers' beliefs about how they compensated colleagues, students, and parents, and the teaching profession were categorized as obligations statements. Teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning were identified using roles as a code to identify statements in which they expressed what they thought to be the act of teaching and what they expected of students. Responsibilities were used as a code to identify statements that highlighted teachers' beliefs about what they are responsible for in the classroom as well as what students or other classroom culture contributors are accountable for.

Cross-case Analysis

After interpreting each individual metaphor, the researcher conducted a cross-case analysis. Throughout this phase, the researcher applied a holistic examination for each metaphor, and then identified themes that occur across all metaphors.

Merriam (1998) advocated for the conduct of multiple case studies in two stages: first, the "within-case analysis" followed by "cross-case analysis." (p. 194). Data was collected and analyzed separately, conclusions were drawn, and findings were presented. The cross-case analysis begins once each case has been thoroughly examined. The objective of qualitative, inductive,

multi-case research is to develop abstractions between cases (Merriam, 1998). The researcher constructs a broad explanation that fits each of the particular situations, even though the cases will vary in their details (Yin, 2009).

Cross-case analysis, according to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2018), is complex and requires a close examination of complicated process configurations within each case. The cross-case analysis differs from data analysis in a single qualitative case study (Merriam, 1998). The results might range from a consistent description throughout cases, suggesting consistency, to emergent themes or concepts, to theoretical constructs produced from an overarching framework.

In this study, the researcher completed, categorized, summarized, and analyzed the individual cases to compare and provide insight for the cross-case analysis. The variety of cases offered new insights and reconsideration of the categories.

Findings

Findings from the individual metaphors

Caretaker metaphor

Monerah said she always tries to nurture her students by caring for them. She explicitly said, "A teacher is a nurturer"; she explained that she tried "to care for them [her students] after her classes by asking them about their lives at home and if they need any help whatsoever." This, she said, "help[ed] me in understanding how I can connect their pace of learning with what is happening in their lives." In that sense, she was concerned with the emotional well-being of her students, but this, of course, brought mixed feelings from within her students and her own thought processes. Monerah expressed her concern for her young students' sensitive nature. She then explained what she does to establish learning settings that are both safe and conducive.

Monerah noted this when she revealed that she was mindful of "feelings and causes of feelings with students." Despite her feelings, Monerah specified that a teacher should be very careful with her feelings as parents might not know the basis of those feelings. She indicated, "I always ask student teachers who come in my classroom not to ask students a lot of personal questions and not to hug my students." She then explained, "a nurture needs to know the fine line between excessive emotion and nurturing." The plotline she tries to enact in her classroom is one in which the instructor creates the classroom environment to promote each student's learning. The teacher, like nurturers, spends her life attempting to create an 'ideal' atmosphere conducive to great learning and growth. Throughout her speech, Monerah demonstrates her underlying commitment to student learning as her primary obligation as a teacher.

Here, Monerah recognizes the importance of human communication, behavior, and thought in the teaching profession. Moral and emotional aspects of development, relationships, and values are prioritized. She promotes the child's growth as a human being.

She also views teaching as gardening. She stated, "I'm trying to plant something." A gardener, as we know, tries to generate ideal growing circumstances. She draws a border, the greatest area for nourished growth. She cracks even the toughest pans to give seeds room to grow. She removes a few large boulders from the field. The farmer's responsibility, therefore, becomes

twofold: to feed nutrients to the growing plants, as well as to prune and weed as needed. The remainder is taken care of by the plants. Teachers develop, feed, hydrate, and nurture their students' brains rather than pouring material into them for them to learn how to learn. Our goal is to create lifelong learners, not just information collectors.

This shows that she believes it is the primary job of teachers to provide possibilities for students' progress. A teacher's duty is to further her own development as a person who understands and nurtures the development of others as well as to give all that is required for this to happen. Furthermore, the teacher creates an environment where the student works hard to learn and contribute.

Monerah's identity as a teacher is exposed. She describes herself as a believer in the ability of all children to learn if they are encouraged and cared for. She works hard to expand her knowledge so that the teaching atmosphere can be improved over time. It is the teacher's obligation to guarantee that all circumstances for efficient growth and learning are in place.

Craftsmen Metaphor

When the researcher asked Sarah her opinion on “why some teachers do not have a complete understanding of the importance of meaning as well as fluency, why is it that teachers mainly focus on fluency rather than meaning?” Sarah expressed, “...generally, good manufacturing of teachers does not exist, we simply do not have a creative manufacturing of the teachers”. Her choice of words was interesting as she was explaining teacher preparation during her college years. The manufacturing metaphor, in contrast to the image of a craftsman, lowers the teacher to a tool of an overarching bureaucratic authority that aims to control every step of the process through standardized scientific techniques. However, in her metaphor, it was clear that she associated manufacturing with creativity. Hence, in her point of view, there can be quality manufacturing, which is lacking in Saudi Arabia.

In another instance, Sarah assured, “...effective teachers are few because they are the ones who built themselves to become teachers, meaning they were not built to be teachers, meaning it's by her primitiveness that she is a successful teacher...”. Again, the image of building oneself to improve teaching captured an industrialized vision of education and teacher training. From Sarah's standpoint, colleges and universities do not train teachers to be good, effective, and prosperous; the teacher herself has to work toward that goal. Sarah, here, criticized teacher preparation and the lack of good preparation for educating Saudi teachers.

On the other hand, Sarah's image of a student was different. When asked, “in your opinion, how does reduced curriculum content affect students, especially with reading?” Sarah stated, “skills require practice, which is obtained via repetition. Your abilities improve as you practice more. Students are craftsmen who must sharpen their skills. A craftsman who makes 10 of these cups is not the same as a craftsman who only makes one cup.” Teaching was compared to a glassmaker working with hot glass in the craft metaphor. The master craftsman's sense of feeling allows him to know when to increase or decrease heat, when the product is close to completion and what more work is needed, or when to admit that this specific object is a failure and that it's time to start over.

These metaphorical terms reflect a narrative in which the teacher involves her students in the experience of learning as fellow teachers and learners. She anticipates that both she and they will continue to grow in knowledge and abilities. Her metaphor depicts a teacher dedicated to learning as a continuous and reciprocal process. She imagines the teacher and the students moving on parallel adventures that the teacher has planned, but that they all learn and develop due to their experiences. The teacher has a responsibility to continue learning, documenting developing knowledge and abilities, and achieving the learning objective of the students. She provides the necessary knowledge to students; however, it is their responsibility to participate in the learning process. Her ambition is that her students would go beyond her and explore new territory, even though it is up to them to make that choice.

Sarah's portrayal of her teaching identity leads her to believe that teachers influence the learning experience, learning theory, and speed in the classroom. Teachers and students alike become learners and teachers in the classroom. Sarah's concept of teaching is primarily about establishing a space where she may continue to grow as a teacher, and she expects students to follow her in her search for knowledge naturally.

Authority Metaphors

When asked about the kinds of assessment she might use in the classroom, she indicated, "I cannot play in the field and fight if I do not have trained soldiers; the pivot of education is on the teacher." This war/military metaphor bridged a socio-cultural disposition of aggression to construct meaning and understanding (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Dower, 2010). Uniformity, toughness, and conformity were the themes conveyed by this metaphor (Badley & Hollabaugh, 2012). Many teachers shared this ultimate goal of uniformity, viewing schools as factories whose goal was to produce uniform and productive individuals. It is understood that a student comes prepared with books, writing instruments, sits in a separate seat, responds to cues and signals from the teacher, and the teacher communicates the activities and topic for class time. Order is related to the delivery of instruction and the content of teaching. For teaching to occur, there must be a structure, organization, and set of rules that are explicit or otherwise understood so that subject matter is delivered and meaning is constructed. These rules were implicit in Sarah's talk to get students on task.

Her use of such a metaphor is an indication that teaching is not an easy task and that teachers need to be prepared to handle issues that can be difficult and hard to battle. On the other hand, teachers as soldiers might mean that they follow orders from higher figures such as advisors and principals. Furthermore, this might imply that teachers just regurgitate what they have been taught. Teachers may lose their jobs if they do not follow instructions. Although the researcher believes this is not what Sarah intended behind her use of such a word, this might come to the reader's mind.

Furthermore, the teacher as an authority metaphor might be considered self-centered and power hungry. Sarah's emphasizes the teacher's role as a public servant. She believes in education as a method of preparing future people to serve the public good as public servants. In Sarah's metaphor, a teacher works hard to cultivate learning and a respectful environment. She encourages

students to become "intelligent citizens" and "future leaders" by working with them. Yet, she argues that this must be in a climate of order and discipline; she argues,

We should build the classes according to our culture. A disciplined culture. I mean, when you enter the mosque, you enter into discipline. When you describe the disciplined classes, the imam before he starts praying, says 'plugged the defect.' The process is disciplined. In our councils, we sit in much discipline. If we have to respond to this culture, any change in the situation the student will understand as a state of chaos, he will not use freedom of movement, he will understand it as disorder; I mean we have to respond to our culture and deal according to our cultural formation.

Many students and teachers, including Sarah, hold this belief, which is strongly established in the Saudi educational system. This belief is still dominant in Sarah's belief system, despite the fact that the role of teachers has been pushed to move from authoritarian information transmitter to learner adviser and facilitator. She was sure that a teacher-centered classroom is more efficient in Saudi Arabia.

According to Sarah, a teacher performs a public service role in which she is expected to provide an education that would help future citizens thrive. A teacher does this by fostering an environment of mutual respect in the classroom, where the teacher is responsible for acting correctly, providing a high-quality curriculum, and holding students responsible for their learning. Students in this atmosphere participate in the content and conduct politely because they respect the teachers.

Holy figure metaphor

Although Sarah's use of metaphors focused on teachers as manufactured, Asma had a different metaphor. When asking Asma about the reason she couldn't say I do not know the answer to your students, she specified,

that students see teachers as a pyramid; if you tell the student that she is right and the teacher is wrong, she will not believe you because the teacher is like a messenger everything she says is true and correct. If you tell the student 'I do not know,' the image of a teacher will be shaken."

Asma vision the teacher as a glorified figure that cannot be wrong or out of knowledge. They are like pyramids, strongly built, firmly grounded, bear different climates, and have a significant cultural and historical status. These characteristics of pyramids can also be applied to teachers, which can be viewed as dehumanizing of the teacher.

Asma also believed that teachers are messengers. A messenger in Saudi Arabia is like a prophet. Some prophets in Islam are also called messengers because they carry the message of Allah and need to spread it around the world. This illustrated the tremendous responsibility teachers have when teaching students. Prophets changed humanity and the globe through their lives and words. People can learn about God by looking at them. If people obey the prophet and adequately manage the physical world, it can resemble a holy nation. The prophets provide the blueprint for correctly structuring it in their lives, teachings, and rules. Prophets issue laws, impart wisdom and spirit from a higher authority, equip their believers for the future, and undertake other duties comparable to those of a teacher (Clarcken, 1997).

Teachers can consider the following characteristics of prophets: prophets teach and demonstrate love, yet they have high standards for behavior. They are world authorities, yet they reflect a greater power. Prophets lead humanity away from its restricted beliefs and toward a higher and more fulfilling existence. This religious image can mean that teachers are more knowledgeable than others, and this is not always true. The researcher can see how the Saudi cultural view is affecting Huda's perception. In Saudi Arabia, there is a famous saying, "the one who taught me a letter; I do not forget his favor, I will be polite, loyal, and maintain amiability to him."

Findings from Cross-case Analysis

In this section, the researcher studies the findings in a cross-case analysis. The examined metaphors draw each teacher's individual views on learning and teaching. They specify the teacher's role, her duties, obligations, reward, and responsibilities. Interestingly, each metaphor brings teaching and learning practices together in distinctive and unique ways.

Obligations and Responsibilities Vary between Metaphors

The metaphors presented by the participants uniquely position teachers' identities, ranging from caregiver to craftsman, soldier, holy figure, and scaffolder. The heterogeneity in teacher identity plotlines, teacher and student roles, teacher duties, and beliefs about teaching and learning demonstrate the metaphors' specific traits connected to teacher identity. Variances in metaphors potentially lead to teaching differences.

We can easily notice how different the identity plotlines are when we compare teacher as caretaker to the teacher as a soldier, for example. The teacher as caretaker depicts a teacher who tries to minimize obstacles and distractions by concentrating all of her attention on providing a rich, stimulating atmosphere that nurtures and encourages students to develop their abilities and talents. The soldier, on the other hand, sees the teacher as a strong figure who reinforces mutual respect and obedience in her students. She balances between justice and compassion in her relationships with students. She values students' training as citizens and future leaders, constructing a curriculum that will help students acquire the skills and knowledge most beneficial to the community.

The use of metaphors reveals differences in teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning. The difference between a teacher as a craftsman and a teacher as a holy figure exemplifies this. The image of the teacher as a craftsman presupposes that the teacher and students are capable of and will learn independently, that students are responsible for their learning, and that they will have power over what they learn. As a holy figure, the teacher is expected to design learning, assess student work, and deliver exactly what the student needs.

Within the metaphors, there is also variation in the roles offered to students. When comparing a teacher's role as a caretaker to a teacher's role as a soldier, the students' roles are vastly different. Students are seen as dependent and fragile in the caretaker metaphor, and the teacher wraps them in a safe and insulated environment to ensure their learning. Students in the soldier metaphor, on the other hand, are prepared to contribute to society and are required to fulfill as responsible members of the classroom community.

Finally, the metaphors illustrate the teachers' obligations. We notice a lot of variation when we compare the metaphor of the teacher as a holy figure to the metaphor of the teacher as a craftsman. As a holy figure, the teacher has a responsibility to know her material as well as the breadth and sequencing of the curriculum. She creates learning experiences for her students that are both motivating and educational. Throughout her teaching career, a teacher's obligations as a craftsman metaphor change. The teacher eagerly pursues learning in the beginning. She isolates and shields herself as she gains experience, putting what she's learned into practice and steadily improving her teaching methods. Finally, as a teacher, she feels driven to share what she has learned to influence and steer the teaching of others.

Profession-related ambivalence

Although Asma, Sarah, and Monerah were all very experienced teachers, they all highlighted that teacher preparation is poor in Saudi Arabia. Due to this, they all advised professional development, whether through taking a course or through educating oneself. Monerah took a course on reading using different voices; on the other hand, Asma educated herself through searching the Internet.

Teachers in the study all emphasized the need for structure in the instructional process. Asma, for instance, stressed on classroom behaviors. Sarah focused on discipline and classroom management. Monerah also paid particular importance to structure because students feel comfortable in knowing what will happen in the reading lesson. Despite their attention to structure, their beliefs regarding how reading is taught differed. For instance, Sarah stressed on decoding while Monerah stressed on comprehension.

The teachers' metaphor also helped shape how they view their professional roles. Monerah viewed herself as a nurturer cared for her students inside and outside the classroom. Her teaching resulted from her autonyms acts in instruction. Sarah viewed teachers as soldiers who could handle complex issues and work in order and system. Her teaching was consequent from her traditional viewpoint that agrees with the Saudi culture and takes into account the specialty of the Arabic language. She also viewed students as craftsmen who needed to practice their learning. Asma viewed teachers as pyramids, prophets, and messengers. They are always knowledgeable and do not commit wrong acts. She also considered the scripted curriculum as a Quran that cannot be changed. Asma's image of the prophet was different from her modernist viewpoint.

Through these findings, a connection was found between teachers' use of metaphors and their feelings, personalities, beliefs, and judgments. In Sarah's case, she generated metaphors that are balanced between positive and negative metaphors. She appeared to have neutral beliefs about teaching and learning. She sees herself as a compassionate and attentive person who wants to help her students. Meanwhile, Asma implied a stronger emotional attachment towards her beliefs on her role as a teacher and teaching. On the other hand, Monerah's metaphors were mainly connected to the ideas of community. She viewed herself as a nurturer whose students could depend on her for help and created a safe environment for the students. Certainly, teachers' metaphors portrayed that teaching is not a linear, one-dimensional job. For instance, teachers had to accommodate different learning styles of their students as well as adapt various learning and teaching situations.

The aim of analyzing teachers' metaphors was to employ a familiar image to investigate complex fields of meaning. However, no single orientation cleared this matrix. This was evident in the distinct metaphors teachers have created in this study. These many different metaphors support the multidimensionality of the teaching and learning processes.

Conflict in the Teacher's Image

There were tensions in what teachers believed the meaning of teacher in Islam throughout the data. It must be noted that there is a difference between what culture perceives as the role of the teacher and what Islam views. In Saudi culture, teachers are seen as intelligent individuals with the knowledge that must not be questioned. In addition, they are more experienced elders who are heavily respected. A form of respect in culture means not to ask questions because this might be seen as challenging the teacher, which is a form of disrespect. On the other hand, Islam requires Muslims to use thinking and questioning to guide them to find knowledge and truths. Teachers, however, confuse the role of the teacher in Saudi culture and Islam.

The researcher believes that the Ministry of Education should use Islam in guiding them to think about the importance of teachers' voices. Islam advocates heavily on gaining knowledge and critical thinking. Thus, it praises teachers for they are the ones who help develop and guide behaviors for individuals and communities. The Prophet (peace be upon him) valued teachers and showed their high status as he has "been sent as a teacher." In addition, he (peace be upon him) encouraged people to "Seek knowledge, even in China." Islam's advocacy for gaining knowledge is also evident in the Quran, which asks humans to think and ponder about the truth.

Furthermore, The Holy Quran emphasizes the importance of different sciences and is full of modern scientific facts, such as, the relativity of time, and the rotation of the earth (Roji, & El Husarri, 2021). This invites Muslims to critically think, reason, and reflect on these natural phenomena which will lead them to the truth. A verse in the holy Quran says, "Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allah sends down from the cloud, then gives life with it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals, and the changing of the winds and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth, there are signs for a people who understand" (Al-Baqara 2:164).

Accordingly, a Muslim teacher must ponder and think about the educational policies. This is opposed to what Asma believes, the curriculum is like a Quran that must not be altered. Teachers should question their role as a teacher and deserve to have a voice. The teacher's role should be a mentor and a guide to acquiring this information rather than the source of knowledge. As advocated in Islam, she must encourage using different learning skills such as reflection, reasoning, and critical thinking. This will create an environment that empowers free thinking, questioning, and dialogue, a practice that has not been done due to cultural reasons.

Unfortunately, in Arab cultures, students don't question information given by the teachers, as they are viewed as high-status people who know better. Asma, for instance, assumes this view and believes teachers should never say 'I do not know' to their students. However, several of verses in

the holy Quran praised questioning and thinking, such as when God Almighty allowed prophets to ask him about faith, and his existence and God responded and accepted such questioning. Consequently, all questions are allowed and welcomed. In Sarah's case, she seems to advocate such questioning when she thinks about the figures that are represented in the textbooks. She wanted her students to think of other figures. She accepted the inquiry and encouraged it in her teaching.

The preceding is essential for many reasons. First, it encourages teachers to adhere more to the Islam ways of thought and less to the cultural hierarchy because it gives teachers more freedom in thinking and questioning. In addition, it creates a theoretical framework that guides the development of new educational policies that are rooted in Saudi culture. This framework can motivate Muslim teachers to use constructive thinking as they see the connection between Islam and new pedagogical practices. Applying Islamic teachings as a guide, can lessen the use of traditional educational methods that lack creativity and lead students to limited mentalities and abilities (Alghamdi & Li, 2012).

Discussion

This study provides convincing evidence for the use of metaphors to decipher teacher identity. It adds to earlier research by finding that teacher identity is social and individual, as well as, continuous and discontinuous. Teachers' identities were portrayed as ongoing and developing, as evidenced by their systematic use of metaphors. The metaphorical analysis demonstrated that former and current teacher identities have gone through dialectical negotiations, neither completely agreeing with nor completely denying each other.

Throughout the interviews, teachers used nearly the same set of metaphorical categories, as well as several subcategories, implying that their new and past experiences were highly interactive with one another (Arvaja, 2016), allowing their present and past selves to carry out a coherent whole (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). The varied applications of the subcategories and their expressions in specific settings, as well as the change in subcategory sequences, mirrored teachers' main identity changes, illustrating their discontinuous side of selves (Hong, 2010). The discontinuity is frequently intertwined with and fostered by shifts in their agency, emotions and beliefs (Hiver & Whitehead, 2018). As a complex and multidimensional construct, teacher identity is a process as well as an outcome (Cross, 2017), emphasizing a teacher's socio-cultural values and professional settings.

The different metaphorical categories and subcategories that teachers employed reveal that identities are culturally bound (Xiong, Li, & Qu, 2015) and contextually structured (Flores & Day, 2006). Metaphor use might emerge from an individual's quest to discover meaning in self within a specific situation (Stofflett, 1996); since metaphors can assist us in coping with the new and unknown. Teachers can employ metaphors to express their complicated identities that are contextually and culturally bound, resulting in identity discontinuity and traditional beliefs, leading to identity persistence (Gao & Cui, 2021).

Limitations

Throughout the study, the data obtained from the interviews was subjected to many limitations. The interview findings may have been influenced by personal bias and the participants' emotional state at the time of the interview (Patton, 2014). It is also possible that participants reacted in a self-serving manner (Patton, 2014).

It is impossible to generalize the findings to all teacher populations since the study's sample was not randomly selected. Instead, purposeful sampling was used to capture a suitable degree of diversity of teacher characteristics and to reflect the population of interest (Patton, 2014).

It should also be noted that when conducting interviews in Saudi Arabia, gender, for example, was an essential part of the socio-cultural environment to consider. The researcher only interviewed female teachers because Saudi Arabian education is gender segregated, making it impossible to interview male teachers. According to Shogren, Shaw, Raley, and Wehmeyer (2018), research procedures should be culturally sensitive, and methodology may be altered to meet the culture and context of the study.

Implications and Recommendations

While the researcher recognizes the study's limitations, because she only examined metaphors from three practicing teachers, the researcher believes that future studies with more teacher metaphors would give other researchers higher confidence in the findings. This research contributes to the knowledge of how teachers' metaphors reflect their teaching beliefs. In addition, Metaphors can help teachers position themselves regarding their identity, student interactions, and classroom practices. Teachers' metaphors might be carefully investigated to find leverage areas for change and development.

Future studies on teachers' metaphors should focus on determining the extent to which metaphors might assist them in reflecting on their identity. There are cases in which root metaphors alter [or hold] when students become instructors, as Cortazzi and Jin (2020) argue. What is unknown at this time is how teachers carry out the instructional practices that emerge from their cognitive systems. Researchers might conduct more longitudinal studies that examine teachers' metaphors from the time they enter a teacher education program to their first few years of practice.

Conclusion

The study looks at the metaphors Saudi female instructors employ to describe teaching and learning. What metaphors do Saudi female instructors employ regarding teaching and learning? is the research study's main topic. Through the use of a case study, a qualitative research approach was found to be the most effective. The researcher found that each metaphor connected elements of identity and teaching practice in unique and different ways after conducting an individual metaphor analysis on each instructor. A subsequent cross-case analysis brought to light the many tensions that teachers face. The results showed that duties and obligations differ across metaphors, profession-related ambivalence, and conflicts in teachers' perceptions. Metaphors have the ability to enhance professional development and teacher education through advising policymakers, school administrators, teacher educators, and teachers, according to both the individual and cross-case studies.

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