

A Research on Metaphors for the “Future” Created by High School Students*

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Abstract. Adolescence is a period of significant changes, during which the individual makes various plans for the future. Some researches reveal that individuals in adolescence may also be prone to making wrong decisions, if they are deprived of the necessary guidance during this period. That's to say, it can be a problematic period for the individual, parents, friends, relatives and so on. Thus, the researchers think that the results of this study will guide future studies. This period coincides with high school period taking The World Health Organization's definition of adolescence, grade levels and ages of students in our country into consideration. Moreover, metaphors which have an important place in daily life and are widely used, can be a topic of research in various disciplines. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to reveal the metaphors produced by high school students about the future. The research data, have been collected from 144 high school students living in Turkey and analyzed by means of content analysis. At the end of the research, 96 metaphors have been created in fifteen categories on four themes. Finally, the findings have been discussed, taking the results of various studies in the literature into consideration, and some suggestions have also been made.

Keywords: Future, Metaphors, High school students

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1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, students typically prepare for life through a variety of formal or informal experiences. These experiences can be education, vocational training, and various activities allowing them to explore their interests and abilities (Rafelli & Koller, 2005, p. 249).

Although different sources offer various age ranges, The World Health Organization defines adolescence as the period of life between childhood and adulthood, and it ranges from ages 10 to 19 (Adolescent Health, n.d.). This period is also a natural phase of learning and adjustment, especially as far as long-term goals and desires are concerned (Crone & Dahl, 2012, p. 636), and this period coincides with high school education which usually covers children of 14-18 years old in Turkey (EURYDICE, n.d.).

Researches show that the adolescence period can be thought as the period of thinking about the future and preparation for adulthood, and these thoughts about the future influence adolescents' later life (Nurmi, Poole & Kalakoski, 1994, p. 472). People create a perception of the future by thinking about what they will encounter, what they will be able to do, and what will make them happy in the future. These perceptions of people create a trace in their consciousness (Yam, Çetinkaya, & Kurnaz, 2018). On the other side, some people think that young adolescents are notoriously shortsighted, focusing on the immediate rather than the future, unwilling or unable to plan even the near future, and much less capable than adults at envisioning the longer-term consequences of their decisions and actions (Steinberg, Graham, O'Brien, Woolard, Cauffman & Banich, 2009, p. 28).

People always want to live in accordance with their desires. Expectations of adolescents from the future are one of the important factors determining the dynamics of a society, since they are a potential force for the society (Ehtiyar, Ersoy, Akgün & Karapınar, 2017). They can be regarded as the basic building blocks of development and change of societies (Yavuzer, Demir, Meşeci & Sertelin, 2012). Eryılmaz (2011) states that individuals with positive future tendencies are optimistic and hopeful about the future, and they strive to achieve their future goals compared to individuals with negative future tendencies (p. 210). On the other hand, researchers agree on the facts that adolescence is a critical period for the development of students' present and future identity and most of the time by late adolescence, students' mental representations of the future influence their academic motivation (Husman & Shell, 2008 p. 166).

Recently, there has been an increase in the number of studies dealing with metaphors in almost every discipline. Therefore, it is clear that studies on metaphors seem to have caught up the interests of scholars of diverse traditions and backgrounds (Leino & Drakenberg, 1993, p. 7). This increase may stem from the fact that metaphors enrich and illuminate concepts that would otherwise remain vague or maybe ambiguous (Bowdle & Gentner, 1999, p. 90). Metaphors have great effects on human behaviours and actions (Diekema, 1989, p. 17). Furthermore, metaphors can shed light on the speaker's unexpressed values, beliefs and assumptions (Steger, 2007, p. 4), and the metaphor a

person chooses in a specific event may even reveal his/her belief systems (Dexter & LaMagdeleine, 2002, p. 364).

Metaphors are very common in our everyday language, thought, action and writing, too (Denshire, 2002, p. 29; Leino & Drakenberg, 1993, p.8). However, it is always useful to bear in mind that metaphor is not just a matter of language, it is a matter of human thought processes (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 6). Richardson (1990) resembles a metaphor to the backbone of social science writing. Moreover, she adds that a metaphor like a real spine permits movement, links parts together into a whole, and is not visible at once. According to her, without metaphors, writing is spineless (p. 18).

One can come across different definitions of metaphors. Philosophers, linguists or psychologists may define a metaphor in their own terms (Glucksberg & McGlone, 2001, p. 3). However, in short, the word metaphor, coming from the Greek word “metapherein” meaning transference, can be described as a word or phrase that is used to describe something it does not literally denote (McGlone, 2007, p. 109).

Youth, in other words the adolescence, is undoubtedly the most important and active period of human life. From this point of view, youth as a phenomenon, and its problems are important (Ehtiyar, Ersoy, Akgün, & Karapınar, 2017). The expectations that young people have about work, relationships and lifestyles in adolescence are also the determinants of their lives in adulthood. These expectations and perspectives towards the future shape young people’s identities, as well. Therefore, researches on future are thought to be important (Şimşek, 2012, p. 39). It is believed that this research will be useful in determining the feelings and thoughts of the young about the future. It is also thought that rapid changes in the social structure, technological developments, education, job opportunities and living conditions affect the future perceptions of high school students. Considering the literature, the limited number of researches on determining the future perceptions of high school students also increases the importance of this study.

In brief, by combining characteristics of the adolescence period and metaphors, this research is expected to provide insights into what kind of interests or worries adolescents have about the future. With this aim in mind, they hope to find answers to the following questions:

1. Which metaphors do high school students in Turkey use for the future?
2. Under which conceptual categories can the metaphors that high school students created for “the future” be categorized in terms of common features?
3. How can the distribution of metaphors in the conceptual categories be created?

2. METHOD

This research aims to reveal the metaphors for the “future” created by high school students in Turkey. This is a qualitative research and, as a research design, phenomenology has been adopted. Qualitative researches entail making meaning of

lived experience or experiences (Lander, 2000, p. 149). In fact, phenomenology is a philosophical movement focusing on the experiences from the point of view of the person experiencing the phenomenon. Therefore, a researcher adopting the phenomenological design is expected to examine the qualities or the essence of an experience through qualitative data collection tools like interviews, stories, or observations (Connelly, 2010, p. 127). Considering the principles of the phenomenological design it is clear that participants in the research must be the ones who have already experienced the phenomenon under study. In this research, perceptions of high school students about “the future” in Turkey, the meanings they attribute to it and the expressions they put forward as the reasons for creating and those metaphors have been studied.

Participants

Ethics committee approval for this study was obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research Ethics Committee of Necmettin Erbakan University with the decision dated 09/07/2021 and numbered 2021/409. Similar topics may be studied by different researchers in diverse contexts on different populations, using different research methods, and probably resulting in different findings (Suri, 2011, p. 63). Therefore, sampling has, definitely, a critical role in the results of any research. During the data collection of this research, the convenience sampling technique has been adopted. This technique involves the selection of the most accessible subjects (Marshall, 1996, p. 523). In other words, through this data collection technique the researcher does what is fast and convenient (Patton, 2002, p. 242).

Participants of this research are high school students in Turkey who took part in the research voluntarily. Table 1 below shows the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1

Demographic information of participants

		f	~%
Gender	Male	47	33
	Female	97	67
	Total	144	100
Age	15 years old	33	23
	16 years old	23	16
	17 years old	32	22
	18 years old	32	22

19 years old	24	17
Total	144	100

Although the sample size is generally an important matter owing to generalizability issues in quantitative researches, the principles regarding the sample size in qualitative researches are quite different. While there are rigid rules regarding the sample size in quantitative researches this is not the case for qualitative ones. Therefore, the adequacy of sample size in a qualitative research is often relative (Sandelowski, 1995, p. 179).

Data Collection

Data collection has been carried out through Google forms by means of a semi-structured interview form. Semi-structured interviews can be described as a kind of conversation in which the researcher has a set of questions for the participants, however, there is no definite answer to these questions and they can vary considerably from one participant to the other (Fylan, 2005, p. 65). In the interview form, the participants have been asked to complete the phrases, "Future is" "because" In the form, the first phrase asks the participants to make an analogy and the second phrase asks them to write the reason for their analogy. Since the form allows no missing values, all the participants completed the form thoroughly.

Analysis of Data

Choosing the appropriate analysis method is of utmost importance for the findings of any research. In the analysis of the research data, the qualitative content analysis has been used. Qualitative content analysis is a flexible method of data analysis and is widely used in the analysis of textual data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1277). In this analysis technique the researcher picks out the similar textual data, groups, and codes them. Later on, the researcher counts the frequencies of the codes in order to be able to get a sense of what is in the data (Morgan, 1993, p. 114). The aim of qualitative analysis, rather than making generalizations as in quantitative studies, is to get an idea about the phenomenon under study (Forman & Damschroder, 2008, p. 41).

During the analysis of data, first, participants' answers to the phrases "Future is ...because ..." have been considered as metaphors. Then, similar expressions have been grouped and themes have been created. In the light of these themes, categories have emerged.

In qualitative researches, validity can be expressed as the observation of the phenomenon under study as it is, and as unbiased as possible (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006, p. 255). For this reason, the researchers avoided making explanations that would lead students to write certain metaphors or think in a certain way. What's more, to find out the reliability of the research, a consistency analysis has also been done. With this aim in mind, the researchers created the conceptual categories. Then they asked an expert on

qualitative studies to match the metaphors with the conceptual categories. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), reliability analysis in qualitative studies can be calculated by (Reliability = Number of agreements / Number of agreements + disagreements) formula (As cited in O'Connor & Joffe, 2020, p. 8). Moreover, Miles and Huberman suggest that the interrater agreement should not be less than 90% (Leclerc & Dassa, 2010, p. 83). According to this formula the interrater agreement has been found as %94. Finally, 15 categories on 4 themes have come out.

3. FINDINGS

This study aims to determine the metaphors produced by high school students about the future. Accordingly, 144 high school students produced 96 metaphors for the "future". 69 of the metaphors have been produced just once. The metaphors and their frequencies are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Metaphors produced by high school students about "Future"

Metaphor Number	Metaphors	f	%
1	An effort	5	3,47
2	A lottery	5	3,47
3	A road	5	3,47
4	Obscurity	4	2,78
5	A sapling	4	2,78
6	The past	4	2,78
7	Uncertain	3	2,08
8	A black hole	3	2,08
9	Anxiety	3	2,08
10	An exam	3	2,08
11	A book (Uncertainty)	3	2,08
12	Luck	3	2,08
13	A mirror	2	1,39
14	A blank notebook	2	1,39
15	A gap	2	1,39
16	A mystery	2	1,39

17	The sky	2	1,39
18	Life	2	1,39
19	A high-speed train	2	1,39
20	A rope	2	1,39
21	A closed box	2	1,39
22	A book (Process)	2	1,39
23	A gamble	2	1,39
24	Musical notes	2	1,39
25	A dream	2	1,39
26	The wind	2	1,39
27	A hope	2	1,39
28	Bitter chocolate	1	0,69
29	A bank	1	0,69
30	A baby	1	0,69
31	Waiting	1	0,69
32	Me	1	0,69
33	A glimmer of hope	1	0,69
34	Bitcoin	1	0,69
35	The stock exchange	1	0,69
36	A vain hope	1	0,69
37	A blur	1	0,69
38	A cloud	1	0,69
39	A pit	1	0,69
40	The sea	1	0,69
41	Fenerbahçe	1	0,69
42	A football match	1	0,69
43	Immigration	1	0,69
44	A rose	1	0,69
45	An illusion	1	0,69
46	The place where my dreams meet the light of hope	1	0,69

47	Preparation	1	0,69
48	A gift box	1	0,69
49	Excitement	1	0,69
50	Exciting	1	0,69
51	Nothing	1	0,69
52	A second chance	1	0,69
53	Living without knowing the future	1	0,69
54	A song listened to for the first time	1	0,69
55	An anonymous letter	1	0,69
56	A cactus	1	0,69
57	The black box	1	0,69
58	Darkness	1	0,69
59	Tangled wool	1	0,69
60	A lost key	1	0,69
61	The thing that does not come on its own	1	0,69
62	Fear	1	0,69
63	Sand	1	0,69
64	An hourglass	1	0,69
65	A maze	1	0,69
66	A fruit	1	0,69
67	Müge Anlı	1	0,69
68	Cooking pomegranate syrup	1	0,69
69	Play dough	1	0,69
70	A teacher	1	0,69
71	Death	1	0,69
72	A fairy tale	1	0,69
73	A piano	1	0,69
74	An art teacher	1	0,69
75	Chess	1	0,69
76	A choice	1	0,69

77	Boring and worrying	1	0,69
78	A veil of secrecy	1	0,69
79	An endless staircase	1	0,69
80	A sportsman	1	0,69
81	Water	1	0,69
82	A surprise	1	0,69
83	A surprise egg	1	0,69
84	A field	1	0,69
85	A flying balloon	1	0,69
86	Flying	1	0,69
87	A cliff	1	0,69
88	Unreachable	1	0,69
89	Despair	1	0,69
90	A competition	1	0,69
91	An investment	1	0,69
92	A newly launched movie	1	0,69
93	Reaching for the stars	1	0,69
94	Cycling downhill	1	0,69
95	A dice	1	0,69
96	An obligation	1	0,69
Total		144	100(%)

Table 2 shows that 144 high school students produced 96 different metaphors. From these metaphors an effort, a lottery, a road have been produced five times; obscurity, a sapling and the past have been produced four times; uncertain, a black hole, anxiety, an exam, a book (in the category of the quest), and luck have been produced three times; a mirror, a blank notebook, a gap, a mystery, the sky, life, a high speed train, a rope, a closed box, a book (in the category of temporary), a gamble, musical notes, a dream, the wind, and a hope have been produced twice, and the remaining 69 metaphors have been produced just once. The metaphor of "a book" has been produced for two different categories, "the quest" and "temporary", which are on the theme of "Future as a source of uncertainty".

Table 3

Themes for the Metaphors for "Future"

Themes	f	%
Future as a source of criterion or task	48	33,33
Future as a source of uncertainty	44	30,55
Future as a source of expectation	31	21,53
Future as a source of negativity	21	14,58
Total	144	100%

Considering Table 3 it is clear that the metaphors produced by the participants are grouped on themes as "Future as a source of criterion or task" (33.33%), "Future as a source of uncertainty" (30.55%), "Future as a source of expectation" (21, 53%, and "Future as a source of negativity" (14.58%) respectively. Reviewing the themes, it is obvious that the concept of future includes such features as expectation, uncertainty and negativity, and the participants draw attention to some aspects of the future depending on certain choices, tasks or criteria. The metaphors produced by the participants on the theme of "Future as a source of criterion or task" have been categorized depending on their common characteristics. Table 4 below shows the metaphors in categories, their frequencies and percentages.

Table 4

Categories and metaphors on the theme of "Future as a source of criterion or task"

Theme	Category	Metaphors	f	%
Future as a source of criterion or task (%33,33)	Action	an effort (5), a sapling (4), the past (4), an exam (3), a mirror (2), a blank notebook (2), a bank, a baby, the stock exchange, preparation, exciting, a fruit, play dough, a field, an investment	29	60,41
	Perseverance	musical notes (2), a flying balloon, a rose, cooking pomegranate syrup, a competition, reaching for the stars	7	14,58
	Determination	a road (5), chess, a choice	7	14,58
	Awareness	a cactus, tangled wool, the thing that does not come on its own, a maze, a second chance	5	10,41
Total			48	%100

The theme "Future as a source of criterion or task" refers to what needs to be done for awareness, determination, action and perseverance in planning the future. From the metaphors high school students have produced on this theme which has the highest number of metaphors consisting of action, perseverance, determination and awareness categories, it can be thought that they have a certain level of awareness for getting prepared for the future.

The participants produced 29 metaphors in the "action" category such as an effort (5), a sapling (4), the past (4), an exam (3), a mirror (2) and a blank notebook (2). Students think that the future is a thing that requires effort, such as raising a baby, growing saplings or getting prepared for an exam. They also think that it is like a task they have to do, such as shaping play dough or filling an empty notebook. Some examples of the metaphors in this category and the reasons for their production are given below.

A sapling. *If you take care of it now, you will get its fruits in the future, if you don't take care of it, all you have will be its dry branches (P. 14).*

A field. *You reap what you sow (P. 93)*

A blank notebook. *It's your job to fill it in (P. 135)*

A baby. *The way we spend our time will shape our future. In a similar vein, we raise a baby, when he/she becomes a teenager he/she does what he/she learned (P. 88).*

A fruit. *Success and a good future can only be achieved by working hard (P. 78).*

Play dough. *Whatever shape you give, it takes that shape (P. 26)*

The participants produced 7 metaphors in the "perseverance" category such as musical notes (2), a flying balloon, cooking pomegranate syrup, a competition, and reaching for the stars. Students think that while getting prepared for the future, they need to make a constant effort to achieve harmony and maintain consistency, and that they should always keep their patience in the face of difficulties. Some examples of the metaphors in this category and the reasons for their production are given below.

Musical Notes. *You have to practice musical notes until you get the harmony (P. 70).*

A rose. *You need to endure the difficulties of thorns so that you can experience the beauty (P. 91).*

Cooking pomegranate syrup. *Even if you are a second late when cooking pomegranate syrup, its structure can change right away (P. 101).*

A competition. *The more you prepare for the competition, the better the result will be (P. 29).*

Reaching for the stars. *You have to struggle hard to have the future you want (P. 19).*

The participants produced 7 metaphors in the “determination” category which are a road (5), chess and a choice. With the metaphors they produce in this category, the students think that a better future depends on the moves and choices they make. Some examples of the metaphors in this category and the reasons for their production are given below.

A road. *On this uncertain road, our map consists of our choices, and every beauty we live is a reward of our choices, and every evil is the cost of our choices, too (P. 116).*

Chess. *Whether you will be happy is determined by your life and your moves (P. 119).*

A choice. *Because we know our past and we have the present, we can have unlimited options by learning from our mistakes and shaping our emotions (P. 48).*

The participants produced 5 metaphors in the “awareness” category which are a cactus, tangled wool, the thing that does not come by itself, a maze and a second chance. It is clear that, with the metaphors they produce, students are aware of the difficulties they may face in the future. Some examples of the metaphors in this category and the reasons for their production are given below.

A cactus. *If we don't know that the cactus is a plant, it pricks all over us, but if we know, there is water in it, it depends on how we use it (P. 27).*

Tangled wool. *If it is not used, it stays the same, but if we use it, we can write our own future (P. 115).*

A maze. *The one who finds the right path reaches the exit, the one who follows the wrong path gets lost (P. 89).*

A second chance. *It allows us to make up for things we regret not being able to do (P. 82).*

The metaphors produced by the participants on the theme of “Future as a source of uncertainty” have been categorized depending on their common characteristics. Table 5 below shows the metaphors in categories, their frequencies and percentages.

Table 5

Categories and metaphors on the theme of “Future as a source of uncertainty”

Theme	Category	Metaphors	f	%
Future as a source of uncertainty (%30,55)	The quest	a book (Uncertainty) (3), a dream (2), the wind (2), a lost key, Müge Anlı, excitement, waiting, a football match, living without knowing the future, a veil of secrecy, flying, a pit, the black box, immigration	18	40,90

The result	obscurity (4), a glimmer of hope, an illusion, sand, piano, an endless staircase, a cliff, a newly launched movie	11	25
Temporary	a book (2), a rope (2), an hourglass, water, the sea, unreachable	8	18,18
Flexible	a mystery (2), the sky (2), a cloud, me, an anonymous letter	7	15,90
Total		44	%100

The theme of "Future as a source of uncertainty" is related to the uncertainty experienced by high school students about the future. The metaphors on this theme, which has the second highest number of metaphors, show that students experience some uncertainties about the future due to some internal and external reasons. The categories on this theme are the quest, the result, temporary and flexible respectively.

The participants produced 18 metaphors in "the quest" category such as a book (uncertainty) (3), a dream (2), the wind (2), and a lost key (2). The metaphors produced by the participants show that they experience some uncertainties about the future, and that they are in search of dealing with those uncertainties. Some examples of the metaphors in this category and the reasons for their production are given below.

A dream. *It is not clear which dream will come true (P. 15).*

The wind. *You never know which way it will head for (P. 21).*

A lost key. *You don't know which door to open until you find the key (P. 109).*

Living without knowing the future. *We don't know what the future holds for us (P. 17).*

Flying. *You don't know what to expect, you just flap your wings (P. 112)*

Immigration. *You have to go to survive, but you don't know what will come your way (P. 40).*

The participants produced 11 metaphors in "the result" category such as obscurity (4), a glimmer of hope, an illusion, sand, a piano, and an endless staircase. The metaphors in this category show that students feel uncertainty because they do not know what situations they may encounter in the future and how they will end up for them. Some examples of the metaphors in this category and the reasons for their production are given below.

Obscurity. *You can't predict what might happen at any moment (P. 144)*

A glimmer of hope. *You never know how it will happen (P. 65)*

An illusion. *You don't know what will happen, good experiences are clear, bad ones are dark (P. 30).*

A piano. *We don't know the sound of the keys until it's time (P. 118)*

A newly launched film. *You do not know anything about the final (P. 35)*

The participants produced 8 metaphors in the “temporary” category which are a book (2), a rope (2), an hourglass, water, the sea, and unreachable. The metaphors produced in this category show that the students think that the future is flowing like water and sea and it is inaccessible. Some examples of the metaphors in this category and the reasons for their production are given below.

A book. *It ends when you read. (P. 110)*

An hourglass. *It moves quickly (P. 106)*

A rope. *It will be ripped over time (P. 94)*

Unreachable. *Because when reached, it is now, after reached, it becomes the past (P. 24)*

The participants produced 7 metaphors in the “flexible” category which are a mystery (2), the sky (2), me, a cloud and an anonymous letter. The metaphors produced in this category imply that the participants are experiencing uncertainty about the situations they may encounter in the future, which may change at any time in a positive or negative way. Some examples of the metaphors in this category and the reasons for their production are given below.

A mystery. *We don't know what to expect, anything good or bad can happen. (P. 123)*

The sky. *Each morning is bright, we set out with hopes, but finally evening comes. We lose our hopes in the dark (P. 37)*

A cloud. *Because it constantly changes shape. It turns from one image into another for those who try to cut it off. The rotation of the flowers we see in front of us in the threshing area depends on the wind, increasing its speed a little. The cloud has a soul. It breaks down quickly, gets angry quickly, and cries quickly; sometimes it closes up in its own room, and wants to be alone. It's a waste of time for us to stop and try to make sense of its actions. Just as it is better to support and keep up with someone than to give advice, it is to our advantage to take shape with them rather than trying to shape the clouds (P. 104)*

The metaphors produced by the participants on the theme of “Future as a source of expectation” have been categorized depending on their common characteristics. Table 6 below shows the metaphors in categories, their frequencies and percentages.

Table 6

Categories and metaphors on the theme of “Future as a source of expectation”

Theme	Category	Metaphor	f	%
<i>Future as a source of expectation</i> (%21,53)	Luck	a lottery (5), luck (3), a dice	9	29,03
	Hope	hope (2), life (2), the place where dreams meet the light of hope, a song listened to for the first time, Fenerbahçe, a dream	8	25,80
	Surprise	a high-speed train (2), a closed box (2), a gift box, a surprise, a surprise egg	7	22,58
	Versatile	a gamble (2), bitter chocolate, Bitcoin	4	12,90
	Job	a teacher, an art teacher, a sportsman	3	9,6
Total			31	%100

The theme of “Future as a source of expectation” is related to the expectations of the participants for the future. Considering the metaphors on this theme, it can be inferred that students think that their expectations for the future need luck, but they have hopes; that the future has many surprises, in other words, it is versatile. The categories on this theme are luck, hope, surprise, versatile and job respectively.

The participants produced 9 metaphors in the “luck” category which are a lottery (5), luck (3), and a dice. The metaphors produced in this category show that the participants think that the future mostly depends on chance. Some examples of the metaphors in this category and the reasons for their production are given below.

A lottery. *You cannot imagine what it brings (P. 79)*

Luck. *It's about still expecting when you know the lottery will never come up to you (P. 81)*

A dice. *You never know when life will bring you luck (P. 130)*

The participants produced 8 metaphors in the “hope” category such as a hope (2), life (2), the place where my dreams meet the light of hope, and a song listened to for the first time. The participants think that the future has promising qualities for them. Some examples of the metaphors in this category and the reasons for their production are given below.

Hope. *Whatever it brings, you always desire good things (P. 7)*

Life. *We try to achieve many things in life, of course, one day we will realize our goals (P. 69)*

Fenerbahçe. *You know it will bring you nothing, but there's still hope in you (P. 90)*

A dream. *Because I'm trying to make my dreams come true (P. 68).*

The place where my dreams meet the light of hope. *I will bring together the light of hope and my dreams with my own efforts (P. 39)*

The participants produced 7 metaphors in the “surprise” category which are a high-speed train (2), a closed box (2), a gift box, surprise and a surprise egg. The metaphors in this category show that since the students do not know when and what will happen, they think that the situations they will encounter in the future involve surprises for them. Some examples of the metaphors in this category and the reasons for their production are given below.

A high speed train. *Actually, there is still some time, but it will come right away (P. 83)*

A closed box. *We don't know what will come out of it (P. 114)*

A gift box. *Full of surprises (P. 2)*

A surprise. *We don't know what will happen (P. 125)*

A surprise egg. *It is not clear what will come of it (P. 133)*

The participants produced 4 metaphors in the “versatile” category; a gamble (2), bitter chocolate, and Bitcoin. The students think that the future is versatile for them. Some examples of the metaphors in this category and the reasons for their production are given below.

A gamble. *You either lose or you win, but you usually lose (P. 131)*

Bitter chocolate. *It's bitter and sweet (P. 61)*

Bitcoin. *Nobody knows what will happen (P. 132)*

The metaphors produced by the participants on the theme of “Future as a source of negativity” have been categorized depending on their common characteristics. Table 7 below shows the metaphors in categories, their frequencies and percentages.

Table 7

Categories and metaphors on the theme of “Future as a source of negativity”

Theme	Category	Metaphor	f	%
Future as a source of negativity (14, 58%)	Despair	a black hole (3), a gap (2), a fairy tale, boring and worrying, despair, nothing, darkness, fear	13	61,90
	Anxiety	uncertain (3), anxiety (3), cycling downhill, death	8	38,10
Total			21	%100

The theme of "Future as a source of negativity" is related to the negative reflections of participants for the future. Considering the metaphors on this theme, it can be concluded that some students are worried and hopeless about the future. The categories on this theme are despair and anxiety.

The participants produced 13 metaphors in the "despair" category such as a black hole (3), a gap (2), a fairy tale, nothing, darkness, and fear. With the metaphors and reasons produced in this category the students reflect that they are worried about the future because of the possibility of not finding what they expect, an exam-oriented future, and idling their youth away. Some examples of the metaphors in this category and the reasons for their production are given below.

A black hole. *Because it can neutralize everything that is good (P. 108)*

A gap. *You cannot build a future on exams (P. 8)*

A fairy tale. *It's just a dream (P. 55)*

Despair. *There are many situations that make me lose my hope (P. 137)*

Darkness. *Because teens are wasted (P. 38)*

Fear. *Not getting what you hope for (P. 25)*

An obligation. *We should plan our future in a way that we can support ourselves, not what we want because of the conditions we live in (P. 139)*

The participants produced 8 metaphors in the "anxiety" category which are uncertain (3), anxiety (3), cycling downhill, and death. From the metaphors produced in this category it is clear that the participants are worried about the future. Some examples of the metaphors in this category and the reasons for their production are given below.

Uncertain. *There are too many unemployed and I'm worried that I won't be able to find a job (P. 105)*

Anxiety. *I'm afraid of not being able to fulfill my dreams (P. 18)*

Cycling downhill. *We get excited, but we fear of falling (P. 80)*

Death. *It is getting closer every second (P. 96)*

4. RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND SUGGESTIONS

This research has been done in order to determine the metaphors created by high school students for "future". It has come out that the metaphors produced by the participants can be grouped on four themes called future as a source of criterion or task, future as a source of uncertainty, future as a source of expectation and future as a source of negativity. 144 high school students produced 96 metaphors for "future" in this study,

69 of which were produced only once. The perception of future includes the plans, ambitions, expectations and concerns of the person about possible events in different areas of life in the near and distant future (Seginer, 1988). From the metaphors the participants have produced, it is obvious that students are aware of the difficulties they may encounter in the future. Therefore, it can be concluded that students have the idea that the future requires patience and effort, such as growing a sapling, raising a baby, filling an empty notebook, and that they think that the person's actions in the past and today shape the future.

Yam, Çetinkaya, and Kurnaz (2018) also concluded in their study that students have the idea that the future can be shaped by themselves, however, they need guidance, and that their expectations and dreams will form the future depending on the decisions they make today. Students also think that the future requires hard work like keeping consistency while cooking pomegranate syrup, taking the right steps, and catching harmony in musical notes, and resisting difficulties.

High school students express that they feel uncertain because the future has features that are unknown to them like a glimmer of hope, a blur, sand, an endless staircase, which can change positively or negatively at any time depending on time or situation; like a book it also ends when it starts or flowing like an hourglass, water and sea. According to the metaphors produced by the young people in Topgöl's (2017) study, it came out that the future contains uncertainty. Similarly, in the study done by Yam, Çetinkaya, and Kurnaz (2018), gifted students emphasized that they had a feeling of uncertainty about the future, because it contained many ambiguities and it was temporary. Rafelli and Koller (2005), in their study on the future perception of Brazilian street youth, also concluded that more than half of the young people think that their future is uncertain.

In addition to thinking that the future has an effort-requiring feature, students are in search of what kind of situations they may encounter in the future and what, how and when they will happen, and which way they need to choose. Students making plans for their careers (Kracke, 1997) think that the future depends on chance; it is open to surprises for them; there is always the possibility of losing, and they may face unexpected consequences.

Psychosocial outcomes (McCabe & Barnett, 2000), age, gender, socioeconomic status and cultural diversity can affect students' future expectations (Seginer, 2003). Besides, as Konate and Ergin (2018) stated, globalization, rapid change in social events and dynamics, communication and interpersonal relations gaining different dimensions, and technological advances may cause some effects especially on young people while they can affect their future expectations positively or negatively.

On the other hand, the students participating in the study think that they are hopeful for the future, no matter what it brings. This idea may be related to their preparation to meet their expectations and their self-confidence. In a similar vein, Büyük and Çelik

(2021), based on the results of their studies, think that although the current situations of the participants are disappointing, the students will achieve positive results when the necessary conditions are met. Similarly, in different studies, supporting the results of this study, it has been found that students perceive the future as promising and enlightening (Topgöl, 2017; Yam, Çetinkaya & Kurnaz, 2018). In Oğurlu's (2016) research done to determine hopelessness and future expectation in gifted middle school students, it was found that gifted students had a positive future orientation and they were not hopeless.

Few of the students participating in this research drew attention to the professional aspects of the future. This result is similar to the results of the research done by Konate and Ergin (2018). The results of Büyük and Çelik's (2021) research, too, show that people think that the success in their profession will contribute to their happiness and satisfaction levels, and even increase their quality of life.

The students participating in the study produced metaphors for the future such as a black hole, emptiness, a fairy tale, nothing, darkness and fear. The production of these metaphors can be caused by internal and external reasons such as the possibility of not finding what you expect from the future, having an exam-oriented future, idling young people away, anxiety about not finding a job, and fear of not being able to realize the dreams. As a result of all these, it can be said that the participants are in despair and anxiety. Likewise, Şimşek (2012) also concluded in his study that high school students have some hesitations about the future.

The results of this research are limited to the metaphors produced by 144 high school students participating in the research. In this study, with the metaphors they produced, high school students revealed the unknown, uncertain, positive or negative characteristics of the future for themselves, depending on time and situation. In addition, they have the awareness that the future brings along some difficulties, entails taking the appropriate decisions at the right time and resisting the unexpected difficulties, and they have the opinion that it has a patience and effort-requiring feature.

Lastly, it has come out that the students are in despair and anxiety due to reasons such as the fear of not being able to find a job in the future and not being able to realize their dreams. However, they think that the future gives them some hope, too, although it is full of surprises.

Based on the results of the research, the following suggestions have been made:

- The future perceptions of students should be well known to the stakeholders and these perceptions should be taken into account in career planning.
- Personal and professional guidance and family meetings should be held so that young people, who will have many roles as adults in the future, get to know themselves better and plan and prepare for their future life.

- Studies should be done including different variables such as class level, gender, socioeconomic status in order to determine the future perceptions of students in detail.

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