

# Metaphorical Understanding of ELT Students toward a Master's Degree

Nebile Uslu Kaplan\*, Gamze Erdem Coşgun\*\*

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## Abstract

This study aims to explore the opinions and metaphorical understanding of English Language Teaching students regarding pursuing a master's degree. The participants of this cross-sectional survey study were 34 fourth-grade English Language Teaching (ELT) students from a state university in Turkey. The findings showed that most participants expressed a desire to obtain a master's degree and provided various reasons for their willingness or unwillingness to pursue it, along with a metaphorical representation of their views. The findings also indicated that the participants had some knowledge about the requirements of a master's degree, and although they recognized the challenges involved, they were mostly willing to pursue it. Overall, the study suggests that English Language Teaching students in Turkey have a positive attitude towards obtaining a master's degree. However, further research is needed to examine the reasons for this positive attitude and to determine the impact of obtaining a master's degree on the students' competencies.


**Keywords:** English language teaching, master's degree, metaphor, student teachers


## İngilizce Öğretmenliği Öğrencilerin Yüksek Lisans Derecesine Yönelik Metaforik Anlayışları

### Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi öğrencilerinin yüksek lisans derecesi alma konusundaki görüşlerini ve metaforik anlayışlarını keşfetmektir. Bu kesitsel anket çalışmasının katılımcıları Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinin 4. sınıfında öğrenim gören 34 İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğrencisidir. Sonuçlar katılımcıların çoğunluğunun bir yüksek lisans derecesi elde etmek için istekli olduklarını göstermiştir. Ayrıca, katılımcılar görüşlerini seçtikleri metaforlar aracılığıyla neden istekli veya isteksiz olduklarını açıklamıştır. Bulgular katılımcıların bir yüksek lisans derecesinin gereklilikleri hakkında bilgi sahibi olduklarını ve içerdiği zorlukları fark etmelerine rağmen, çoğunlukla onu sürdürmeye istekli olduklarını göstermiştir. Genel olarak çalışma Türkiye'deki İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğrencilerinin yüksek lisans derecesi almaya yönelik olumlu bir tutuma sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Ancak bu olumlu tutumun nedenlerini incelemek ve yüksek lisans derecesi almanın öğrencilerin mesleki gelişimi üzerindeki etkisini belirlemek için daha fazla araştırmaya ihtiyaç vardır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İngiliz dili eğitimi, yüksek lisans, metafor, öğretmen adayları

\*Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Amasya, Türkiye, [kaplanebile@gmail.com](mailto:kaplanebile@gmail.com) ORCID: [0000-0001-8385-9475](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8385-9475) 

\*\* Amasya Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bölümü, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi A.B.D., Amasya, Türkiye, [gamze.erdem@amasya.edu.tr](mailto:gamze.erdem@amasya.edu.tr), ORCID: [0000-0003-4598-8799](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4598-8799) 

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## Introduction

Postgraduate education is a system that includes master's and doctorate degrees after undergraduate programs, and specialization is provided through scientific studies in many disciplines and branches of science (Balçın et al., 2013). The aim of postgraduate education is to train human power capable of solving problems with a way of thinking that produces, uses, and criticizes information (Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010). As one of the postgraduate education degrees, a master's degree has attained a prominent position within society, especially in the last decades, because of society's tendency to learn and the desire of people to improve themselves (Bozan, 2012). It is worth noting that the purpose of individuals who pursue a master's degree is to develop their theoretical and practical knowledge by making narrow but in-depth studies on a subject that attracts the attention of the individuals according to their own curiosity, and desire (Şen, 2013). Nas et al. (2016) emphasize that instead of talking about a common goal in master's programs, goals should be defined as variables according to stakeholder expectations and science fields, sector, economic, and social expectations.

The pursuit of a master's degree in English Language Teaching (ELT) has also gained significant prominence as consistent with the trend in other fields, due to the perception that having a postgraduate degree serves to enhance the teaching of English, as noted by Kırmızı (2012). The goal of a master's degree in ELT is to increase teachers' awareness of the things they can do to better the lives of their students and their fellow educators (Lopez-Pinzon et al., 2021). It allows teachers the opportunity to apply what they have learned in their curriculum (Stanley & Murray, 2013) and have the basic knowledge to argue, research, decide, and teach (Smith, 2001). The students pursuing a master's degree are required to take ELT courses, do research to partially satisfy each course's requirements, and write their theses (Kırmızı, 2012; Rahimi et al., 2019). Hence, master's degree students in ELT create their professional selves as academic scholars (Rahimi et al., 2019) and be "qualified teachers" who have a core set of talents and abilities (Stanley & Murray, 2013).

With these insights in mind, metaphor, as one of the most significant and comprehensive categories of figurative language (Kesen, 2010; Parvaresh, 2008), allows individuals to understand a concept by comparing it to another concept and creating a mental representation (Saban, 2008). Hornby (1997, p. 928) defines metaphor in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as "the use of a word or phrase to indicate something different from (though related in some way to) the literal meaning." In addition, it is also defined as "any comparison that cannot be taken literally" (Bartel, 1983, p. 3). Metaphors play an important role in human cognition, helping to structure meaning and guide behavior, Kesen (2010) and Lin et al. (2012) discussed. They allow us to convey one idea while expressing another, as explained by Ortony (1993). Thus, metaphors are one of the most effective ways to make individuals declare what they want to say in other ways. Fainsilber and Ortony (1987) describe metaphors as used for three main purposes: mentioning things that are

difficult to express, briefly describing what is meant to be said, and drawing a richer and more detailed picture of what is meant. As a result of all these benefits, metaphors have become a crucial component of research on beliefs and values, including in educational settings (Kesen, 2010; Lin et al., 2012; Parvareh, 2008). Additionally, metaphors are highly important in the field of English language teacher education to help teachers express themselves more effectively (Lin et al., 2012; Ma & Gao, 2016; Saban, 2006). They offer insights into the intricacies of teaching by reflecting instructors' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Metaphors provide a logical framework for the human mind and language and serve as a flexible tool for comprehending various educational aspects. Through the use of metaphors, educators can successfully explore instructors' perspectives on education, textbooks, schools, and literacy (Lin et al., 2012; Shaw & Mahlios, 2011).

Considering the increased significance of pursuing a master's degree in the field of ELT, it is essential that students should be aware of their thoughts and attitudes toward pursuing a master's degree before graduation. Recent studies show that metaphors are one of the effective ways to delve into the student teachers' way of thinking (Çuhadar, 2022; Fang, 2015; Göloğlu Demir & Çetin, 2022; Seferoğlu et al., 2009). McGrath (2006, p.316) also asserts that "even one-stage metaphor studies" are effective in uncovering teachers' professional development needs in local contexts. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to investigate 4<sup>th</sup>-grade ELT students' thoughts and metaphorical understanding of pursuing a master's degree by addressing the following research questions.

1. What are the opinions of ELT students regarding pursuing a master's degree?
2. What are the preferences of ELT students in pursuing a master's degree?
3. What are the metaphorical understandings of ELT students regarding the pursuit of a master's degree?

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

Since this research aims to investigate the thoughts and metaphorical understanding of 4<sup>th</sup>-grade ELT students on their master's degree, the cross-sectional survey design was employed in which data are gathered simultaneously from people at a single point in time (Busk, 2005; Kesmodel, 2018). In this specific design, the sample is chosen from the target population, and data are collected through a questionnaire, interviews, or other data collection methods. Within the scope of this study, a questionnaire including open-ended questions was used, as qualitative research is conducted to understand people's attitudes, interactions, behaviors, and beliefs and they can give interventional studies a fresh perspective that cannot be achieved solely through the measurement of variables (Kalra et al., 2013).

## **Context of the Study**

The study was realized at a state university in Turkey at the department of ELT during the first semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. The ELT program had active undergraduate and graduate (master's) degree programs. The undergraduate program has been accepting students for nine years and the master's program has been accepting students for three years. Undergraduate students did not have direct interaction with master's level students on a regular basis. However, the professors in the department were teaching both graduate and undergraduate-level students and master-level students sometimes interacted with undergraduate-level students to collect data for their research studies. Thus, undergraduate students had a chance to observe and get some knowledge about master's degree. Moreover, one researcher was a master's degree student and the other was a professor in the department. The professor was also the academic advisor of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students at the time of the study and on a regular basis (once a month), students and the professor came together to talk about their future careers and possible plans. Thus, they got knowledge about master's degree during these meetings and shared their thoughts with each other.

## **Participants**

The participants of the study were 34 4<sup>th</sup>-grade ELT students from a state university in Turkey. They were selected through the convenience sampling method for practicality issues (Etikan et al., 2016; Stratton, 2021). The demographic analysis of the participants revealed that the participants' ages ranged from 21 to 28 years old. Among the participants, 20 of them were female and 14 of them were male. Students were all volunteered and an informed consent form was taken from the participants.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

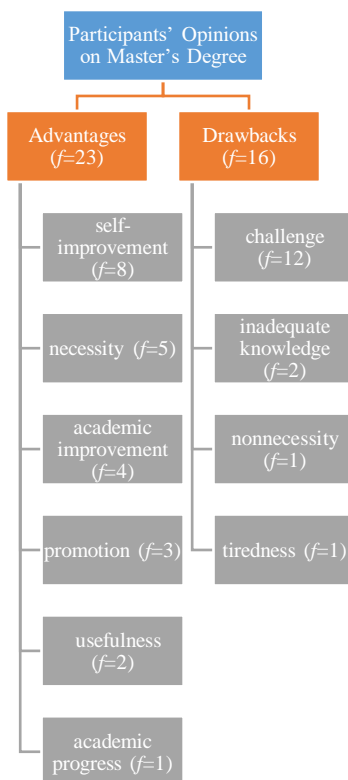
Data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire in the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. The questionnaire included two parts. The first part included demographic questions, including participants' age, class, and gender. In the second part, there were three open-ended questions concerning participants' opinions on a master's degree in English language teaching. The first question aimed to investigate EFL students' opinions concerning a master's degree. The second question aimed to get students' preferences in pursuing master's degree after graduation, and the last question intended to explore their metaphorical understanding through a metaphor that they wrote to understand their thoughts concerning the pursuit of master's degree. For the third question, the students answered the question "Pursuing a master's degree in ELT is ..... because.....". Meanwhile, similes that are written with words such as "like" or "as" were also considered metaphors within the scope of the study as even if there were linguistic differences, conceptually they convey a comparison similar to metaphors (Fang, 2015).

These questions were prepared by the researchers considering the related literature in the field, and the questions were checked by two other experts in terms of clarity, pointedness, and brevity. Moreover, to comply with ethical issues, an ethical consent form was taken from the institution before data collection. The questionnaire was prepared via Google form and before sending it to the participants, the necessary information was given to the participants in the classroom environment. The approximate duration of the questionnaire was 35 min. The data collected from the participants were analysed using the content analysis method, which involved coding the data, categorizing it into themes, and organizing it based on the codes and themes via MAXQDA. The results were interpreted through figures and quotations to ensure reader-friendliness and clarity. Moreover, peer debriefing and member-checking were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## Findings

### English Language Teaching Students' Opinions on Pursuing a Master's Degree

Analysis of the question concerning ELT students' opinions on pursuing a master's degree showed that the participants considered pursuing a master's degree as both an advantage and drawback, as seen in Figure 1 below.



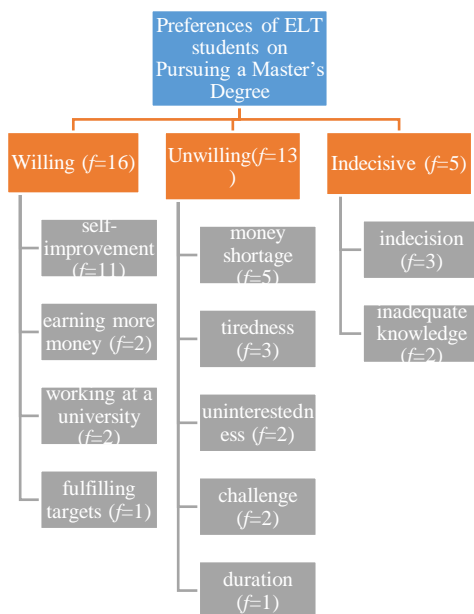
**Figure 1.** ELT students' opinions on pursuing a master's degree

The advantages included improvements in terms of personal, professional, and academic development. Concerning academic improvement, one participant expressed that "It is necessary to pursue a master's degree if you are interested in your field for self-improvement and do greater things related to your field (P1)". Another one uttered, "It's a good opportunity for you to improve yourself and advance to a higher level" (P2). Moreover, one participant stated, "I think it is a way to improve someone's proficiency, skill, and so on. I find this process useful and sensible" (P6). Additionally, one participant argued that "It is an academic process in which a person develops herself /himself by preparing a scientific article to specialize in the branch with the education received" (P16). Two of the participants also stated that they found a master's degree useful, and five of them saw it as a necessity as they emphasized in these statements: "It is necessary to be a university lecturer" (P28), "In my opinion, it is a must because every educator should be knowledgeable about his/her field and raise students" (P18).

Twelve participants who focused on drawbacks stated that a master's degree is a challenging process. Being tired of having such an education is another drawback. To exemplify, some participants shared that "I think it is a challenging process because it means two extra years as a student" (P33), "There is so much research and stuff to do during master's education. It's not for me" (P7) and "I don't want to do it because I'm tired of going to school" (P30).

**English Language Teaching Students' Preferences on Pursuing a Master's Degree**

Participants were asked about their preferences on whether they would like to have a master's degree or not and the reasons for their preferences. The findings showed that most of the participants were willing, 13 participants were unwilling and 5 of them were indecisive about having a master's degree. Participants' thoughts on the subject were categorized as willing, unwilling, and indecisive themes, as seen in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Participants' preferences on pursuing a master's degree

Most participants stated they were willing to have a master's degree. Findings indicated that eleven participants perceived a master's degree as a way of self-improvement. Self, professional, and academic development sub-themes were all related to self-improvement. For example, one participant said, "Of course, because I want to develop myself academically" (P16) and other participants said, "Yes, because it is necessary if you want to improve yourself" (P26), "Yes, I would. Because it is a compulsory step to become a qualified teacher in today's educational system" (P6) and "Yes, because I want to be more competent in my profession as a teacher" (P25). Two participants also stated that they would like to have a master's degree to earn more money or to work in a university: "Yes, because university instructors get higher salaries than teachers" (P29) and "Yes, because I would like to stay in university and continue my career there" (P19). Fulfilling targets was also among the reasons for participants to be willing to have a master's degree as one participant conveyed: "To fulfill my targets" (P10).

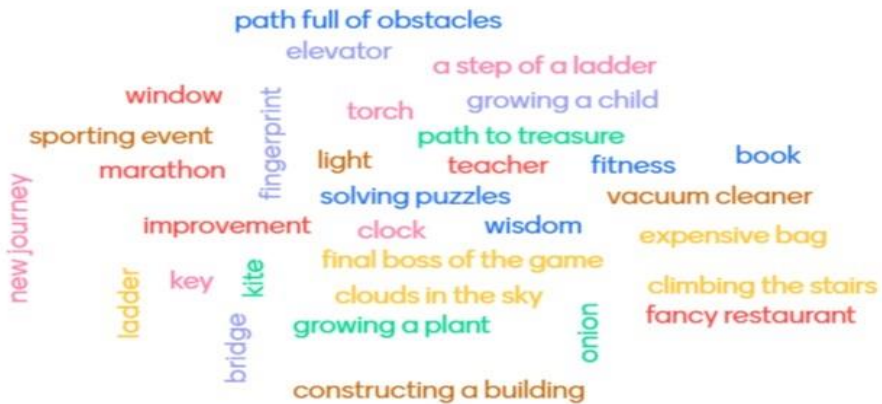
Concerning participants' reasons for being unwilling to have a master's degree, participants emphasized the challenges. Five of them focused on having difficulty in finding the necessary money to have a master's degree and three of them said that they were tired of being a student as can be understood from the statements: "No, because I am really tired and have no financial support" (P18) and "No, because I find it difficult" (P11). The duration of a master's education and not having interest were

also stated by the participants as their reasons for being unwilling to have a master's degree. About this challenge, one participant said, "The process is too long for me" (P4) and another one said, "No, because I have no interest. (P1)"

Except for being willing or unwilling, five participants were indecisive, arguing that "I might want to have a master's education but since I have not got enough information about that degree, I can't comment on it" (P12) and "Maybe. I don't have enough information yet. I will decide later" (P33). These statements suggest that those participants did not have enough knowledge or had not decided yet. Thus, they were indecisive about having a master's degree.

### Metaphorical Understanding of English Language Students on Master's Degree

Participants were also asked to write a metaphor concerning their thoughts on a master's degree and a possible explanation for choosing that specific metaphor. As can be seen in Figure 3, participants hold different metaphorical understandings of master's degree.

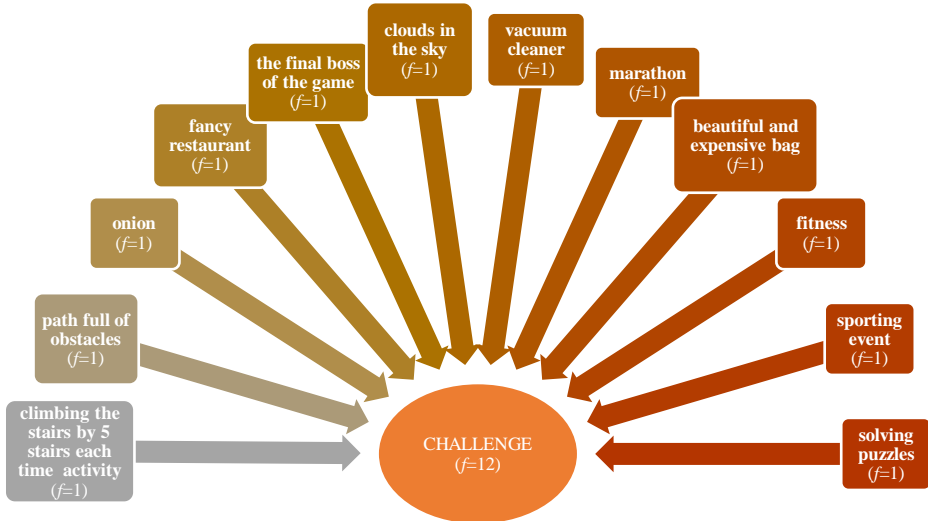


**Figure 3.** Metaphorical understanding of participants on master's degree

Findings showed that participants shared various metaphors on master's degrees. These metaphors were categorized under the themes of challenge, vehicle,



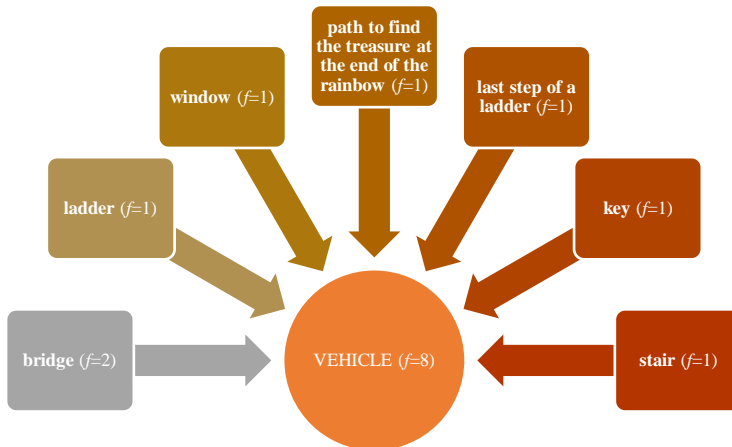
improvement, source, and nurturer. Figure 4 shows the metaphors under the theme of “challenge”.



**Figure 4.** The theme “challenge”

It can be understood from Figure 4 that most of the participants perceived master’s degree as a challenge. Climbing the stairs by five stairs each time, a path full of obstacles, onion, fancy restaurant, the final boss of the game, clouds in the sky, vacuum cleaner, marathon, beautiful and expensive bag, fitness, sporting event, and solving puzzles are among the metaphors that the participants stated as a challenge. The theme challenge was used to refer to the difficulty of obtaining a master’s degree. Some participants mentioned only the difficulties of holding a master’s degree as can be seen from these statements: “Master’s degree is a climbing the stairs by five stairs each time activity because it is too tiring” (P3), “Master’s degree is a vacuum cleaner because it consumes your time and energy” (P24), “Master’s degree is a beautiful and expensive bag because you can’t get it even if you want it” (P28) and “Master’s degree is a path full of obstacles because it demands too much time and effort” (P32); some others stated that it was challenging but rewarding at the end through these statements: “Master’s degree is an onion because it makes you cry when you cut it and prepare the food but after that process the food taste amazing thanks to it” (P4), “Master’s degree is a fancy restaurant that only people who appreciate the value can eat there” (P10), “Master’s degree is a final boss of the game because when you beat it you feel the most satisfaction” (P12).

The second theme concerning the metaphors of participants on master's degree was "vehicle" indicating that pursuing that degree is a means for them for another purpose as can be seen in Figure 5.



**Figure 5.** The theme "vehicle"

The metaphors under the theme "vehicle" indicate that eight participants perceived a master's degree as a means. The key, ladder, window, path to find the treasure at the end of the rainbow, the last step of a ladder, bridge, and stairs were among the metaphors that the participants shared. The theme vehicle means that holding a master's degree moves them forward from where they were. Participants expressed their opinions with these sentences: "Master's degree is a key because it opens the doors of opportunities related to your field" (P1), "Master's degree is a window because when you open it, you let the new opportunities in" (P2), "Master's degree is a bridge because it's a means of transportation to unlimited knowledge" (P5), "Master's degree is a stair because it carries you to the next level" (P6), "Master's degree is a path to find the treasure at the end of the rainbow because it leads us success" (P14) and "Master's degree is a last step of a ladder because it lets you reach the professional life" (P26). Another theme concerning the metaphors on master's degree was "improvement" (Figure 6).

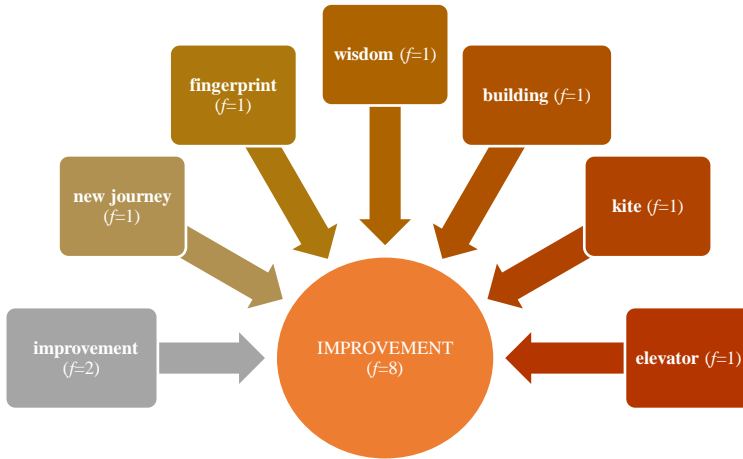


Figure 6. The theme “improvement”

Figure 6 indicates that eight participants perceived a master’s degree as a way of improvement. A building, new journey, fingerprint, wisdom, improvement, kite, and elevator are among the metaphors that the participants shared under the theme of improvement. The theme of improvement means that holding a master’s degree helps them to develop themselves as can be understood from the quotations of participants “Master’s degree is a new journey we need to try because it will improve us more” (P9), “Master’s degree is a fingerprint because each academic thesis or the area to be specialized is unique to the individual” (P16), “Master’s degree is a kite because it fosters you to get higher” (P29) and “Master’s degree is an elevator going up because it gives us advantages (P30). Another theme of concerning the metaphors on master’s degree was “source”. The metaphors under the source theme were given in Figure 7.

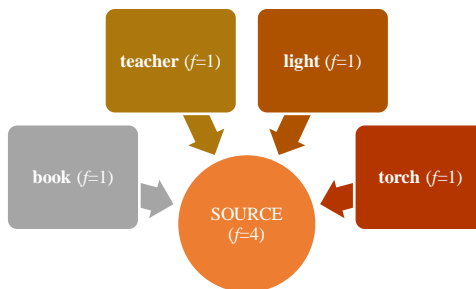
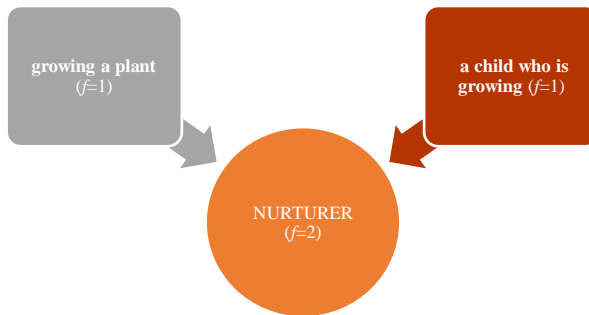


Figure 7. The theme “source”

As can be understood from the metaphors under the theme source, four participants viewed a master’s degree as a source. Book, teacher, light, and torch were

among the metaphors that the participants shared under the source theme. These metaphors were used as a source of development as can be seen from the statements of the participants: “Master’s degree is a book because it enables us to learn more (P8)”, “Master’s degree is a teacher because it shows the way” (P15) and “Master’s degree is a light because it guides when you were on darkness” (P17). The last theme concerning the metaphors is “nurturer”. The metaphors under the nurturer theme are given in Figure 8.



**Figure 8.** The theme “nurturer”

Growing a child and growing a plant are among the metaphors that the participants stated under the theme of nurturer. Through the metaphor nurturer, participants expressed the demanding nature of pursuing a master’s degree. Concerning this metaphor, one participant uttered “Master’s degree is like growing a plant because it requires patient” (P22) and another one said, “Master’s degree is a child who is growing because it takes much effort” (P23).

### Discussion

The present study aimed to reveal the thoughts and metaphorical understanding of 4th grade ELT students on master’s degree and findings indicated that participants had various thoughts concerning the advantages and drawbacks of this process, and accordingly, they verbalized their choices whether they were willing or unwilling to have a master’s degree. Additionally, they also stated their opinions on the master’s degree via metaphors. More than half of the participants stated that they were willing to pursue a master’s degree and expressed different reasons for their willingness. They would like to have a master’s degree to develop themselves individually, professionally, or academically. Similarly, participants’ metaphorical understanding included some terms related to self-improvement. For example, they stated that they see a master’s degree as a building, a way of improvement, or an elevator that lets them develop themselves. Correspondingly, the metaphorical understanding of the participants included a vehicle, meaning something taking them from where they were and moving them forward, such as a ladder, a path to find the treasure at the end of

the rainbow, a bridge, or stairs. These metaphors were also related to improvement. Parallel to the findings, studies were present in the literature that supported the finding concerning participants' perceiving a master's degree as a way of self-improvement (Cottrell & Hayden, 2007; Dursun & Yıldırım, 2020; Er & Ünal, 2017; Kershner et al., 2013; Khalifa et al., 2018; Kowalczyk-Wałędziak et al., 2017; Leonard et al., 2005; Süleymanov, 2014; Şahin et al., 2015; Tekian & Harris, 2012; Turan, 2019; Vural & Başaran, 2021; Wellington & Sikes, 2006).

Findings also showed that one of the advantages of holding a master's degree was getting a promotion. Similar to this finding, studies by Cottrell and Hayden (2007) and Kahraman and Tok (2016) found that teachers were willing to have a master's degree to earn more money. Likewise, five participants stated that they are unwilling to have a master's degree because of money shortage. All these findings revealed that financial issues had both positive and negative effects on people's thoughts and decisions about having a master's degree. The reasons for participants' unwillingness to pursue a master's degree align with their perceived drawbacks of the program. Additionally, the participants' metaphors also included related concepts. To exemplify, twelve participants saw a master's degree as demanding and stated their reluctance to pursue it due to its difficulty level. In a similar vein, metaphors like climbing the stairs by five stairs each time, a path full of obstacles, an onion, the final boss of the game, a marathon, fitness, and solving puzzles were categorized under the theme of the challenge. Likewise, Toprak and Taşğın (2017) found that a master's degree demands a long-lasting and challenging education. These arguments indicated that participants' negative thoughts about a master's degree affected their willingness/unwillingness to have this education and their metaphorical understanding.

Moreover, three participants commented on their tiredness of being a student as their reason for being unwilling to have a master's degree. Consistent with the findings, participants in Er and Ünal's (2017) study shared that they found master's education tiring. Supporting this argument, as metaphorical understanding, some participants classified this education as nurturer to mean that it was demanding and required time and effort. The findings indicated a connection between the perception of a master's degree as challenging and individuals' motivations and attitudes toward pursuing it. The demanding nature of the degree influenced people's decisions and how they thought and viewed it. Another finding of the study revealed that two participants were not sure about having a master's degree because they did not have adequate knowledge, indicating that teacher education programs should make students aware of the importance of having a master's degree for their profession and self-improvement. However, two others stated that they were willing to have a master's degree because they would like to work in a university or fulfill their targets. Similarly, Baliuk (2017), Baş (2013), Cohen (2012), Gürel (2020), and Şahin et al. (2015) found that people desired to have a master's degree to have a career as an academican. All these findings showed that ELT students have different thoughts and

reasons about pursuing a master's degree and their metaphorical understanding of a master's degree varied.

### **Conclusion**

The findings demonstrated that EFL students in the study considered having a master's degree as an advantage. However, they also mentioned certain drawbacks such as challenges and tiredness. Participants also shared their attitudes concerning pursuing a master's degree after graduation and they were grouped into three categories willing, unwilling, and indecisive. Additionally, their metaphorical understanding of having a master's degree reflected their opinions and five themes emerged as challenge, vehicle, improvement, source, and nurturer. The themes and their opinions concerning the master's degree indicated that EFL students saw value in having a master's degree even if they expected certain challenges during the process. However, some students were still unwilling or indecisive regarding pursuing a master's degree. Therefore, considering the importance of pursuing a master's degree for the academic development of EFL students, participants' negative opinions related to the master's degree should be taken into consideration by teacher educators and curriculum designers to support students in understanding the possible valuable effect of having a master's degree.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

For graduate and undergraduate students as well as educational institutions, the study's findings have a number of significant pedagogical implications. First and initially, undergraduate ELT students must get thorough information and assistance with career planning so they may decide for themselves whether to pursue a master's degree. To assist graduate students in navigating the difficulties and tiredness related to advanced academic pursuits, mentoring and support systems should be implemented. The creators of ELT curricula ought to consider including content that highlights the advantages of a master's degree, such as classes on advanced teaching techniques, research techniques, and career development. Reducing the cost of ELT professionals can be accomplished by offering financial incentives or support for additional education. Last but not least, establishing educational groups can encourage knowledge exchange and teamwork in problem-solving, allowing educators to receive support and direction from colleagues and reducing emotions of tiredness and uncertainty of ELT students on master's degree. The importance of educated decision-making and thorough support networks for ELT students is highlighted by these educational consequences, increasing their development as individuals as well as professionals.

### **Limitations and Suggestions**

The study has certain limitations, and the results should be interpreted by considering these. First, the number of participants was insufficient to generalize the results even

if the study aimed to understand EFL students' opinions concerning master's degree in dept to get more detailed information as suitable to the qualitative research paradigm. Second, the participant was selected through convenience sampling because of feasibility issues. As a result, the findings predominantly reflect the perspective of a specific population within a state university's ELT department. Third, the data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire. However, it would be better to use other data collection tools such as observations, and interviews to triangulate the data. Another limitation of this study is the fact that this study relies solely on participant self-reported data, which can involve response bias and social desirability issues. Additionally, the lack of data triangulation through various data collection methods limits the study's ability to verify and evaluate the self-reported data, potentially impacting the reliability and generalizability of the results.

### Declarations

**Acknowledgement:** The authors convey appreciation to the student participants who generously contributed to this study which was conducted as part of a master's course (Fundamental Concepts in English Language Teacher Education). The authors appreciate the time and effort that the participants invested in this study and are grateful for their valuable contributions.

**Data Availability:** Statement The data is not accessible to the public due to ethical considerations.

**Research Ethics Statement:** The study was conducted as suitable to ethical considerations and necessary permissions were taken before the study.

**Conflict of Interest:** No conflict of interest

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### Genişletilmiş Özet

Lisansüstü eğitim, lisans programlarının ardından yüksek lisans ve doktora derecelerini içeren ve birçok disiplin ve bilim dalında bilimsel çalışmalarla uzmanlaşmanın sağlandığı bir sistemdir (Balçın vd., 2013). Lisansüstü eğitimin temel amacı, bilgiyi üreten, kullanan ve eleştiren bir düşünce tarzına sahip problem çözebilen insan gücü yetiştirmektir (Karaman ve Bakırcı, 2010). Lisansüstü eğitimlerden biri olan yüksek lisans, özellikle son yıllarda toplumun öğrenmeye olan yatkınlığı ve insanların kendilerini geliştirme istekleri nedeniyle toplumda önemli bir yer edinmiştir (Bozan, 2012). Yüksek lisans yapan bireylerin amacının, bireylerin ilgisini çeken bir konuda kendi merak ve isteklerine göre dar ama derinlemesine çalışmalar yaparak teorik ve pratik bilgilerini geliştirmek olduğunu belirtmekte fayda vardır. (2013). Nas ve ark. (2016), yüksek lisans programlarında ortak bir hedeften bahsetmek yerine, hedeflerin paydaş beklentilerine ve bilim dallarına, sektörel, ekonomik ve sosyal beklentilere göre değişkenler olarak tanımlanması gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır.

Kırmızı'nın (2012) belirttiği gibi, lisansüstü derecenin İngilizce öğretimi geliştirmeye hizmet ettiği algısı nedeniyle, İngilizce Öğretmenliği (ELT) alanında yüksek lisans derecesi arayışı da diğer alanlardaki eğilimle tutarlı olarak önemli bir önem kazanmıştır. ELT'de yüksek lisans derecesinin amacı, öğretmenlerin öğrencilerinin ve eğitimci arkadaşlarının hayatlarını iyileştirmek için yapabilecekleri

şeyler konusundaki farkındalığını artırmaktır (Lopez-Pinzon ve diğerleri, 2021). Öğretmenlere müfredatlarında öğrendiklerini uygulama (Stanley & Murray, 2013) ve tartışmak, araştırmak, karar vermek ve öğretmek için temel bilgilere sahip olma (Smith, 2001) fırsatı verir. Yüksek lisans yapmak isteyen öğrenciler, ELT dersleri almak, her dersin gerekliliklerini kısmen yerine getirmek için araştırma çalışmaları yapmak ve tezlerini yazmakla yükümlüdürler (Kırmızı, 2012; Rahimi vd., 2019). Bu nedenle, ELT'deki yüksek lisans öğrencileri akademik bilgiler olarak profesyonel benliklerini oluştururlar (Rahimi ve diğerleri, 2019) ve temel yetenek ve yeteneklere sahip "nitelikli öğretmenler" olurlar (Stanley & Murray, 2013).

Bu bilgilerden hareketle metaforlar, bireylerin bir kavramı başka bir kavramla karşılaştırarak ve zihinsel bir temsil oluşturarak anlamalarını sağlar (Saban, 2008). Ortony (1993) de metaforların bir şeyi söyleyip başka bir şeyi ifade etmek için kullanıldığını ifade etmektedir. Dolayısıyla metaforlar, bireylerin söylemek istediklerini başka yollarla ifade etmelerinin en etkili yollarından biridir. Ayrıca Fainsilber ve Ortony (1987) metaforları üç ana amaç için kullandıklarını belirtmektedir: ifade edilmesi zor olan şeyleri ifade etmek, söylenmek isteneni kısaca anlatmak ve ifade edilmek istenenin daha zengin ve ayrıntılı bir resmini çizmek. Bu çalışma aşağıdaki soruları yanıtlıyarak 4. sınıf ELT öğrencilerinin gözünden yüksek lisans derecesine ışık tutmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu araştırma, 4. sınıf ELT öğrencilerinin yüksek lisans derecelerine ilişkin görüşlerini incelemeyi amaçladığından, insanlardan tek bir zamanda eş zamanlı olarak verilerin toplandığı kesitsel anket tasarımı (Busk, 2005; Kesmodel, 2018) kullanılmıştır. Bu özel tasarımda, örneklem ilgilenilen popülasyondan seçilir ve veriler bir anket, görüşmeler veya diğer veri toplama yöntemleri aracılığıyla toplanır. Nitel araştırma insanların tutumlarını, etkileşimlerini, davranışlarını ve inançlarını anlamaya yönelik yapıldığından ve girişimsel araştırmalara yalnızca ölçümle ulaşılamayacak yeni bir bakış açısı kazandırabileceğinden, bu çalışma kapsamında açık uçlu sorulardan oluşan bir anket kullanılmıştır. (Kalra ve diğerleri, 2013).

Araştırmanın katılımcıları, Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinde öğrenim gören 34 4. sınıf ELT öğrencisidir. Katılımcıların demografik analizi, katılımcıların yaşlarının 21 ile 28 arasında değiştiğini ortaya koydu. Katılımcılardan 20'si kadın, 14'ü erkekti. Katılımcılar, lisans eğitimlerinde İngilizce öğretimi ile ilgili pek çok teorik ve uygulamalı ders almışlar ve teorik olarak öğrendiklerini uygulamalı olarak uygulama fırsatı bulmuşlardır.

Veriler, 2022-2023 güz döneminde iki bölümden oluşan açık uçlu bir anket aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Birinci bölümde demografik sorular yer alırken, ikinci bölümde katılımcıların yüksek lisans derecesine ilişkin görüşlerini içeren üç adet açık uçlu soru yer almaktadır. Aracın güvenilirliği için İngiliz Dili Eğitimi alanında uzman iki kişiden görüş alınmış ve gerekli düzeltmeler yapılmıştır. Veri toplama sürecinden önce etik onay alındı. Anket google form üzerinden hazırlanmış ve katılımcılara gönderilmeden önce sınıf ortamında katılımcılara gerekli bilgiler verilmiştir.

Katılımcılardan toplanan veriler, MAXQDA aracılığıyla verilerin kodlanması, temalara ayrılması ve kodlara ve temalara göre düzenlenmesini içeren içerik analizi yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir.

Bir yüksek lisans derecesi almak ileri eğitim, kişisel gelişim ve toplumun ilerlemesi için çok önemlidir, çünkü eğitimsel büyüme için fırsatlar sunar ve uluslara katkıda bulunur. Bu nedenle, 4. sınıf İngilizce öğretimi öğrencilerinin bakış açılarını ve bir yüksek lisans derecesine ilişkin metaforik anlayışlarını ortaya çıkarmak önemliydi. Araştırma, öğrencilerin bir yüksek lisans derecesi almanın değeri hakkında benzer görüşlere ve metaforik anlayışa sahip olduklarını, yüksek lisans derecesine sahip olma konusunda belirli bilgilere sahip olduklarını gösterdi. Katılımcılar bir yüksek lisans derecesine sahip olmanın önemini farkındaydılar, ancak aynı zamanda bu sürecin bazı dezavantajlarını da dile getirdiler. Bu nedenle bulgular, öğretmen adaylarına yüksek lisans dereceleri hakkında yeterli bilgi verilmesi ve mesleki gelişimleri için yüksek lisans yapmaya motive olmaları gerektiğini ima etmiştir.