METAPHORICAL DESCRIPTIONS: STUDENTS' CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF TRANSLATION AND THE TRANSLATOR

Müge KALIPCI[*]

Fatemeh GHAVIDEL SEDIGH[**]

Abstract

This study explores how students define the notion of the translator and conceptualize the translation process, the translation challenges, and translation education through metaphorical expressions. The participants consisted of 99 university students enrolled in translation courses at a state university in Türkiye. The data were collected using an open-ended questionnaire designed to elicit metaphorical descriptions. Thematic analysis was conducted, and the metaphors used by the participants were categorized according to their functional similarities. The findings demonstrate that students do not view translation as a mere linguistic transfer, but they conceptualize it as a creative, guiding, nurturing, and cultural process. The participant responses describe the translator through various metaphors, such as artist, bridge, detective, engineer, or guide, indicating that the role of the translator is perceived as multilayered and requiring both technical and intuitive skills. Similarly, translation education is described mostly as a developmental, practice-based, exploratory, and guidance-oriented process. Taken together, the study proposes that metaphors are an effective cognitive tool in understanding students' mental frameworks about translation. In this respect, it is concluded that metaphor-based analyses could contribute to translation pedagogy and be utilized in developing student-centered instructional approaches.

Keywords: *Metaphorical descriptions, student perceptions, metaphor analysis, translation pedagogy, metaphorical conceptualization*

METAFORİK BETİMLEMELER: ÖĞRENCİLERİN ÇEVİRİ VE ÇEVİRMEN ÜZERİNE KAVRAMSAL ALGILARI

Öz

Bu çalışma, öğrencilerin metaforlar aracılığıyla çevirmen kavramını nasıl tanımladıklarını ve çeviri süreci, bu süreçte karşılaşılan zorluklar ve çeviri eğitimini nasıl kavramsallaştırdıklarını incelemektedir. Araştırmanın katılımcılarını Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinde çeviri dersleri alan 99 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Veriler, metaforik tasvirleri ortaya çıkarmak amacıyla tasarlanmış açık uçlu bir anket kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Tematik analiz uygulanmış ve katılımcılar tarafından kullanılan metaforlar işlevsel benzerliklerine göre kategorize edilmiştir. Bulgular, öğrencilerin çeviriyi yalnızca dilsel bir aktarım olarak görmediklerini, aksine çeviriyi yaratıcı, yol gösterici, besleyici ve kültürel bir süreç olarak kavramsallaştırdıklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Çevirmen figürü ise öğrenciler tarafından sanatçı, köprü, dedektif, bahçıvan, mühendis veya rehber gibi çeşitli metaforlarla tanımlanmış; bu da çevirmenin çok boyutlu ve hem teknik hem de sezgisel beceriler gerektiren bir rol olarak algılandığını göstermektedir. Benzer şekilde, çeviri eğitimi katılımcılar tarafından çoğunlukla gelişimsel, uygulamaya dayalı, keşif odaklı ve rehberlik sağlayan bir süreç olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Tüm bulgular birlikte değerlendirildiğinde, çalışma, metaforların öğrencilerin çeviriyle ilgili zihinsel çerçevelerini anlamada etkili bir bilişsel araç olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, metafor temelli analizlerin çeviri pedagojisine katkı sağlayabileceği ve öğrenci odaklı öğretim yaklaşımlarının geliştirilmesinde kullanılabileceği sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Metaforik betimlemeler, öğrenci algıları, metafor analizi, çeviri pedagojisi, metaforik kavramsallaştırma*

1. Introduction

In today's information-driven era, translation education and practice are rapidly advancing. Understanding how students perceive the translator and the translation process is crucial for developing effective educational strategies and practical applications. Metaphors, as powerful tools for simplifying complex concepts and creating personalized meanings, play a significant role in shaping people's thought processes and understanding of the world. According to Newmark (1988), metaphors can range from simple metaphors, referred to as "single words," to "extended" forms such as phrases, sentences, idioms, proverbs, allegories, or even entirely fictional texts (p. 104).

Historically, metaphors were considered primarily as "a device of poetic imagination and rhetorical flourish" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.4). However, with the rise of research in metaphors through the end of the 20th century, the view of metaphors merely being tools used to embellish poetic

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

language evolved into numerous theories confirming them as a ubiquitous part of life that reflects how humans think, speak, and behave (Tendahl & Gibbs, 2008). The theory that revolutionized the definition and function of metaphors by establishing them as not just a fancy apparatus used in poetic ornamentation, but as a crucial part of everyday life and thoughts that shape reality, was the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) emphasize that the fundamental characteristic of a metaphor lies in understanding and experiencing one thing from the perspective of another, and that our conceptual grasp of metaphors and their logic is mainly at a subconscious level, influencing thought and behavior accordingly. Abstract concepts such as time, ideas, causation, and emotions are conceptualized into more concrete embodied experiences through metaphors. Metaphors are dependent structures that convey the message of elements and structures from a source domain (e.g. money) onto a target domain (e.g. time) (Tendahl & Gibbs, 2008). For instance, the conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY conveys the abstract idea of time to the more concrete concept of money. This demonstrates how most societies' everyday conceptual understanding of their surroundings and functioning in everyday life is metaphorical in its nature and how culturally significant shared ideas are shaped by familiar, concrete domains (Kövecses, 2015). CMT also underscores that these metaphorical mappings are so intricate and fine, but also balanced and simple that reversing the direction of the metaphor, such as MONEY IS TIME, produces entirely different conceptual relationships, which also demonstrates that these mappings are dynamic and function on a subconscious level.

Metaphors influence reasoning and decision-making by shaping how people interpret information and think about abstract or complex notions by extracting valuable source knowledge from unrelated domains semantically (Thibodeau et al., 2017). They play a pivotal role in shaping humans' cognition and communication manners by influencing individuals' awareness concerning fundamental connections between similar things that might otherwise seem different (Martínez et al., 2001). Thibodeau and Boroditsky's (2011) experiments on crime metaphors, such as CRIME IS A BEAST versus CRIME IS A VIRUS, demonstrate how metaphors guide people, their thoughts, and decision-making process. Participants exposed to the "beast" metaphor chose punishing procedures, and those exposed to the "virus" metaphor preferred preventative social reforms. This highlights metaphors' power to shape perceptions and influence actions, even when they are not explicitly and consciously acknowledged (Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011).

Metaphors also extend beyond mere linguistic components to visual representations. For instance, in research conducted by Birello and Pujolà (2023), prototypical examples of images of mountains, pyramids, ladders, stairs, and highways illustrated how the idea of "writing" is conceptualized as a process. In another example from the same study, the pre-service teacher metaphorically sees writing as

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

a watermill, because she accepts it as an essential and vital activity for the human being, similar to harnessing water, which expresses a positive concept of writing (Birello & Pujolà, 2023).

While CMT provides a foundational work for understanding how abstract concepts are systematically mapped onto concrete experiences and focuses on fixed conceptual mappings, Relevance Theory developed by Sperber and Wilson (1995) offers a complementary perspective by suggesting that human thinking naturally focuses on information that feels most relevant and meaningful in a given context (Tendahl & Gibbs, 2008). In communication, the listener assumes every utterance has a purpose and interprets it as the most relevant message conveyed by the speaker. This idea applies to metaphors as well, where listeners use contextual clues to uncover deeper meanings. Rather than seeing metaphors as entirely new creations, this theory, along with cognitive linguistics, views them as a natural part of how people think, speak, and understand the world around them. To illustrate, in a conversation when someone describes a dedicated colleague as "a soldier," listeners infer this as discipline and loyalty without needing further explanations (Sperber & Wilson, 2002, pp. 19-20).

The increasing use of metaphors in the field of educational research reflects a growing interest in exploring how mental representations are reflected through metaphorical thinking (Löfström et al., 2015). Kittay (1993) argues that metaphors, which are an essential way of conceptually organizing knowledge and experience, lie at the heart of our learning abilities and are central to our thoughts. Contemporary educational approaches emphasize the significance of student-centered learning and understanding individuals' cognitive processes. This educational perspective, which considers the learner as the focal point rather than merely prioritizing knowledge, stresses that the true foundation of education and success is the learner (Sezgin, Koşar, Koşar, & Er, 2017). Mental models and concepts of learning shape how students see themselves, how they evaluate their learning environment, interpret learning tasks, their study approaches and motivations, as well as which learning strategies they prefer (Richardson, 2011). Wegner et al. (2020) argue that metaphors like "learning is eating some lukewarm meal from the can" or "a giant tsunami" often become superficial approaches toward education and feature emotional struggles while metaphors like "learning is extending the library in your head" or focus on the acquisition and transformation of knowledge, thus promoting the student's greater ownership and preparation for future challenges. This shows how metaphors can impact students' understanding of and approach to learning.

As Boers and Demecheleer (2001) argue, metaphors are cognitive tools that individuals use to make sense of and organize complex concepts. This structuring process plays a critical role in making complex ideas more understandable and accessible (Gentner & Bowdle, 2008). This also pertains to translation processes. Metaphors in translation education also assist in understanding and conceptualizing this more abstract concept: the concept of translation. So many common metaphors, such as TRANSLATION IS BRIDGE-BUILDING or TRANSLATION IS A JOURNEY, can lead a

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

learner to understand translation as both a cultural and communicative act. These metaphors emphasize the role of the translator as a bridge-builder between languages and cultures, causing reflections on the ethical and creative aspects of the profession, which, in turn, encourages learners to understand translation as not merely transforming language but as a whole process requiring critical thought, linguistic competence, wisdom, and cultural mindfulness (Gebbia, 2023). Additionally, as Shuttleworth (2014) observes, less conventional metaphors such as TRANSLATION IS CANNIBALISM and TRANSLATION IS SMUGGLING point out the complexity of the profession and emphasize ethical aspects of the translator's role. As instruments that transfer messages of abstract notions into familiar domains, metaphors play a significant role in shaping mental models. This, in turn, remarkably influences how students perceive the concept of "translator", the process of "translation", and "translation education".

Translation is both a cognitive and cultural process that goes far beyond just the give and take of words between languages. Interestingly enough, the words "metaphor" and "translation" share a common etymological root meaning movement or transfer from one place to another, emphasizing their shared function in conveying meaning (Shuttleworth, 2014). Metaphors ensure a deeper conceptual reflection of the mind by going beyond the literal meaning and therefore connecting new concepts to meanings, which is an indispensable skill in the act of translation. Metaphors in education act as "blueprints of thinking", influencing both teachers and students in how they think about teaching and learning (Martinez et al., 2001). As noted by Hastürkoğlu (2018), taking the insight of cognitive linguists into account in the realm of education allows educators to help students grasp the subtle nuances of metaphorical conceptual mappings. In this sense, the metaphors students use to describe translators, or translation, can influence how they perceive and approach their given tasks.

Despite significant theoretical work on metaphors in cognition and language, there remains a notable gap concerning students' perspectives on conceptualizing translation and the role of the translator through metaphors. This leaves a limited understanding of how metaphorical thinking impacts students' perceptions of translation processes and their roles as translators. In this respect, this research aims to explore students' conceptual framings of the translator and the translation process through metaphorical descriptions, by addressing the following questions:

- What metaphors would students use to conceptualize the role of a translator?
- What metaphors would students use to define the act of translation?
- What metaphors would students use to express the translation challenges encountered during the process?
- What metaphors would students use to define the translation education?

2. Methodology

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

This research employs a qualitative approach (Cresswell & Poth, 2017) to gain a deeper insight into the topic under study. The data are primarily gathered through a metaphor-elicitation questionnaire, which asks participants to develop their own metaphorical descriptions of the role of the translator, the translation process, the challenges encountered, and translation education. Since metaphors are powerful cognitive tools that have an impact on the way people interpret phenomena (Botha, 2009), it is expected that the metaphors used by students to define the translator, the translation processes, the challenges, and translation education will reveal valuable insights into how they approach the task.

2.1. Participants

The study was conducted during the 2024–2025 academic year with a total of 99 third-year undergraduate students enrolled in translation courses at a state university in Türkiye. Participants were selected on a voluntary basis, with purposive sampling employed to ensure relevant background knowledge and experience in translation. All participants were actively attending translation classes and possessed varying degrees of familiarity with translation practices. Thus, they were considered suitable for the study, as they were expected to provide meaningful insights into the translation process.

2.2. Data collection

Following the approval of the university's ethics committee, a pilot study was conducted to test and refine the metaphor-elicitation questionnaire. Once the final version of the instrument was established, participants were provided with informed consent forms that clearly outlined the purpose of the study, emphasized the voluntary nature of participation, and the assurance of confidentiality. Upon receiving written consent, the questionnaires were distributed, and the data collection phase commenced.

Participants were asked to respond to the following open-ended questions:

- How would you describe a translator through a metaphor?

- How would you define the act of translation through a metaphor?

- What metaphors would you use to express the challenges and difficulties faced during the translation process?

- How would you describe translation education through a metaphor?

Participants were also encouraged to elaborate on their metaphors through extended explanations, allowing for a deeper understanding of their conceptualizations.

2.3. Data analysis

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

The collected data were analyzed through content analysis in several stages to identify recurring patterns and conceptual structures within participants' responses. First, the participant sheets were numbered from 1 to 99 and checked for appropriateness. Incomplete or irrelevant data and responses that do not include metaphors were excluded from the dataset. The rest were examined carefully, and the data were transcribed into a digital format to facilitate a structured analysis (Heritage, 1984). Then, each metaphor was coded systematically to determine thematic categories. Metaphors that share conceptual similarities were grouped together. To identify patterns and derive themes to reveal mental models and conceptual frameworks in the following stages of the analysis, data organization and coding were conducted with utmost care and checked several times (Strauss & Corbin, 1988).

To ensure validity, records were kept meticulously, and all analysis steps including coding decisions and theme determination were described in detail (Noble & Smith, 2025). The resulting categories were cross-checked with the literature for conceptual consistency. In addition, data were coded independently by two researchers and checked for agreement and refinement afterwards by employing the *Reliability = Agreement / (Agreement + Disagreement)* formula (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The comparison generated %94 agreement between the coders.

For anonymity, each participant is assigned a number, and participant quotes in the Findings section are labelled with assigned participant numbers (e.g. P4) to ensure traceability. The frequency of each metaphor within its respective thematic category is also presented. The findings are interpreted to reveal how participants cognitively frame the translator, translation process, and their perceptions of challenges encountered and translation education.

2.4. Ethical approval

This research was found ethically appropriate with the decision of Erciyes University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee, as per their decision dated 24/09/2024, with reference to the application number 396.

3. Findings & Discussion

The study was guided by established approaches in metaphor research (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Martínez et al., 2001; Boers & Demecheleer, 2001), and the analysis revealed an insightful set of metaphors, presented across four thematic tables separately.

3.1. Findings addressing the first research question

The first research question that aimed to reveal how students' understanding of the translator through metaphors was formulated as "What metaphors would students use to conceptualize the role of

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

a translator?". Table 1 displays the identified themes, metaphor examples, and frequencies regarding the function of the translator, followed by interpretive insights and a selection of student excerpts.

Table 1. Translator Metaphors

Theme	Metaphors	Frequency
Connecting Function	messenger (2), bridge (13), magnet (1), time traveller (1), carrier pigeon (1), airport (1), glue (1), fire (1)	21
Creative Agency	singer (2), artist (6), composer (3), painter (2), musician (2), sculptor (1), stage performer (1)	17
Guidance & Leadership	tour guide (2), driver (2), conductor (2), pilot (1), teacher (3), cartographer (1), light keeper (1), journalist (1)	13
Nurturing Nature	fertile soil (1), gardener (6), mother (1), parent (1), sea (2), river (1), sea wave (1)	13
Craftsmanship	alchemist (1), architect (2), steel master (1), blacksmith (3), tailor (2), builder (1)	10
Strategic Thinking	chess master (1), seeker in the game of hide and seek (1), watchmaker (1), doctor (1), detective (1), war strategist (1), commander (1), captain (2)	8
Reflective Role	fortune teller (1), prism (1), sunshine (1), mirror (1), master of mirrors (1)	5
Mediation Role	ambassador (2), judge (1), relationship therapist (1)	4

Connecting Function

Connecting Function was the most frequently occurring theme, with 21 instances, which points out the translator's primary role as a communicator between cultures and languages. Metaphors such as

bridge (13), *messenger* (2), *magnet* (1), and *airport* (1) illustrate this perception. Students consider translators as fundamental intermediaries that act as a bridge for connecting and establishing understanding between individuals and societies. To illustrate, P72 states,

> "The translator is like a bridge. He/she provides the connection between two languages so that communication can be established. At one end of the bridge is the receiver. He/she uses an understandable language without causing any gaps or shifts in meaning between the two languages".

Similarly, P85 conceptualizes the translator as an *airport* because it "brings people who have no connection to each other to a common point" and "provides people with a cultural journey". The heavy emphasis clearly suggests that students see the translator as something of a connecting figure, helping overcome language barriers and thus ensuring cross-cultural communication.

Creative Agency

The theme of *Creative Agency* accounted for 17 metaphors, indicating that students perceive translators not merely from the viewpoint of pure linguistic engineers but rather as creative agents who re-imagine meaning from an aesthetic point of view. Metaphors like *artist* (6), *singer* (2), *composer* (3), *painter* (2), and *sculptor* (1) characterize the translation process as a creative act. P4 articulates this by stating, "A translator is like an artist, taking colors of one language and painting a new picture in another; they shape words and phrases, creating a masterpiece that is both familiar and new". P14 likens a translator to a *composer* who "re-composes a piece with different instruments" while maintaining "the spirit of the original piece". This view helps interpret the translator's function as one that requires creative thought, stylistic adaptation, and reformulation of meaning, especially in literary translation, where interpretation plays a crucial role.

Guidance & Leadership

The theme of *Guidance & Leadership* included metaphors such as *tour guide* (2), *driver* (2), *teacher* (3), and *pilot* (1), emphasizing the participants' perception of the translator as someone who leads readers through unfamiliar textual and cultural landscapes. P16 compares the translator to a *tour guide*, explaining that "while the places to be visited symbolize different languages and the culture behind them, the guide acts as an intermediary and facilitates understanding". P42 also states that the translator is a "teacher*"* who makes "words and expressions comprehensible" and takes into consideration "cultural and grammatical differences". These responses shine a light on the translator's task and talent in clarifying complex, confusing, and perhaps unknown information.

Nurturing Nature

In a similar vein, the theme of *Nurturing Nature*, with 13 occurrences, reflects an idea of translators as entities that give care, nurture, and cherish. The metaphors such as *gardener* (6), *fertile soil* (1), *mother* (1), and *parent* (1) articulate the idea that the task of the translator requires patience, empathy, sensitivity, hard work, and perhaps a humane touch. P53, for instance, compares the translator to a gardener who "makes the necessary moves to the seed under the right conditions" to ensure its growth. Such an image suggests the notion that translation is not a mere technical task but a process that requires profound knowledge, care, sensitivity, and a wise engagement with cultural and linguistic data.

Craftsmanship

The metaphorical concept of *Craftsmanship*, noted in 10 responses, depicts how students view the translator as a professional with skill and technical precision in translation. Metaphors like *alchemist* (1), *architect* (2), *blacksmith* (3), and *tailor* (2) portray the translator as an artisan, which justifies the chosen category perfectly. P12 sees a translator as "an alchemist" whose aim is "to turn a substance into something different and more desirable, like gold" by converting "source text into target text, like turning stone into gold." P21 makes a parallel between a translator and "a tailor who works with the fabric of a text," cutting, shaping, and sewing words into "a new garment that fits a different audience" while retaining the "original style." This suggests that translation requires knowledge of linguistics, as well as craft skills and the ability to pay close attention to detail when shaping the final product.

Strategic Thinking

Strategic Thinking (eight instances) reveals the translator as a problem-solver and decision-making agent surrounded by very complex circumstances of linguistic and cultural origin. The competence referred to by metaphors such as *chess master* (1), *detective* (1), *war strategist* (1), and *commander* (1) points to the cognitive processing needed in the profession. P1 compares the translator to a chess master, explaining that

> "Just as chess pieces are arranged according to a rule... the chess master knows that each move affects the next and must act extremely meticulously and carefully accordingly... just as a successful translator is careful not to disrupt the integrity of meaning".

On the other hand, P47 calls the translator a *detective*, who "searches for a criminal or tries to solve an incident or problem," which makes them a person who meticulously chooses words and expressions to convey the meaning effectively. Such views emphasize the need for translators to analyze meticulously and think critically to navigate and resolve issues, and make informed choices in the translation process.

Reflective Role

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

The *Reflective Role*, mentioned five times, pictures the translator as an individual who simultaneously mirrors and slightly alters the spirit of the source text. Metaphors such as *mirror* (1), *prism* (1), and *sunshine* (1) suggest an idea of transformation, maintaining loyalty to the source. P11 views the translator as a *mirror* because they "reflect the target culture" and "transfer and reflect the message of the source language into the target language." P39 portrays the translator as "a prism catching the light of one language and reflecting it into another, preserving brilliance while altering the hues to suit the eye of a new audience," thus revealing an awareness of the translator as an interpreter who makes the source text intelligible and culturally appropriate for the target audience.

Mediation Role

Lastly, the *Mediation Role* (with 4 instances) hints at the in-between nature of the translator's role toward languages and cultures. The metaphors, such as *ambassador* (2), *judge* (1), and *relationship therapist* (1), speak of balancing views and harmonious communication. P35 sees a translator as "an ambassador acting as a messenger between two countries helping them communicate," further noting that "people always doubt the translator first". On the other hand, P37 likens the translator to a *judge* who "listens to both sides and evaluates them," and who has to be "fair and impartial when making a decision". This theme underscores the significance of the translators' role in negotiating conflicts or misunderstandings that may arise from cultural and linguistic differences into clear and just communication.

These metaphors collectively demonstrate that the students perceive the translator as a highly complex, multidimensional in personality and intelligence, and a multiskilled individual in their profession.

3.2. Findings addressing the second research question

To explore students' conceptualizations of the translation process, the second research question was posed as "What metaphors would students use to define the act of translation?". Table 2 presents the findings regarding how students conceptualize the translation process and the notion of translation itself through metaphors. These metaphors reveal students' cognitive frameworks and highlight the perceived nature, demands, and complexities present in the act of translation.

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

Table 2. Translation Process Metaphors

Theme	Metaphors	Frequency
Creativity & Craftsmanship	cooking (6), painting (2), recipe (2), architect (1), building (2), garment produced in a factory (1), colors on the palette (1), work made by a good artist (1), making yoghurt (1), musical piece of art (1)	18
Exploration & Discovery	journey (8), travelling (1), trip (1), map (1), being on the road (1), thousand roads in the vast planet (1), way (1), place waiting to be discovered and told (1), excavation (1), falling in love at first sight (1)	17
Connecting & Bridging	key (3), steel rope (1), the point where the sea meets the land (1), river flowing between two lands (2), family meal (1), plane (1), road (1), taking a group of people across the river intact (1), symphony (1)	12
Strategic & Analytical	puzzle (4), strategy game (1), playing chess with a stronger opponent (1), war (1), extreme sport (1), boxing tournament (1), coding (1), surgical procedure (1), knitting (1)	12
Nurturing & Growth	colorful garden (1), plant raised with great efforts (1), tree (1), seed (1), seed of a fruit tree (1), flower (2), planting a huge field (1), rebirth (1)	9
Reflection & Interpretation	mirror (3), prism (1), poem (1), game of word of mouth (1)	6
Mediating & Balancing	marriage (1), courtroom (1), equal arm scale (1),	3

Creativity & Craftsmanship

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

Creativity and Craftsmanship, being the most common theme, consisted of 18 metaphors, amongst which *cooking* (6), *painting* (2), and *building* (2) were prominent, followed by *factory-made garment* (1) and *colors on the palette* (1). These metaphors suggest that students recognize translation as an act of creation, which demands not only technical skill and meticulous attention to detail but also an artistic touch and personal style. The frequent use of culinary metaphors, like *cooking* and *recipe*, illustrates a view of translation as a process of combining various ingredients (language, culture, meaning) according to certain guidelines to produce a coherent and palatable dish (the translated text), which also shows the personal touch of the translator while still sticking to the guideline, or the recipe in this case. For instance, P7 stated,

> "Translation is like cooking a traditional dish, just as there is a specific recipe to follow when preparing a particular meal, one must adhere to certain guidelines to render a text in fluent and natural language. If the recipe is not followed and different spices or ingredients are added, the original essence of the dish is lost".

While this perspective focuses on staying true to the recipe, P21 stood somewhat apart with translation leaning more towards the creative process:

> "Translation is like a recipe, it takes the ingredients such as language and culture, mixes them into something new. The translator adds spices like idioms, measures grammar carefully, and serves the final dish so it tastes delicious to the new audience".

The metaphors of *painting* and *musical piece of art* demonstrate the concept of translation as an aesthetic and interpretive art, while also hinting that a translator paints with words or composes a new piece, giving it a unique rhythm and tone but also preserving the original essence. These insights imply that the act of translation is a creative pursuit requiring aesthetic judgments, which in turn provides the understanding of the translator's position as one who reconstructs meaning and form in the most imperfectly perfect way.

Exploration & Discovery

The theme of *Exploration & Discovery* followed closely with 17 responses. Metaphors such as *journey* (8), *travelling* (1), *map* (1), *being on the road* (1), and *falling in love at first sight* (1) characterize translation as a quest into unfamiliar territories and discovering novel meanings. This perspective emphasizes that translation goes beyond mere linguistic conversion, involving the active discovery of hidden meanings, cultural nuances, and the intricate relationship between and within languages. P91 articulated this complexity by saying,

> "Translation is like setting out on a long journey. We are excited about the beauties and adventures that we will experience on this journey. Similarly, in translation, you keep up with

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

the excitement of new information or a new story to be learned. There may also be difficulties on this journey. For example, a car may break down, and we may be stranded on the road. We need repairs to continue our way. Just like a car breaks down, there may be defects in translation. The aim is for the reader to compensate for these defects and continue reading on their way."

P49 described it as this adventurous and thrilling, but eventually comforting experience into the unknown:

"Translating is like falling in love at first sight. At first, you don't know anything about the person in front of you, but the passion for learning makes your heart beat faster. You want to read, know, and get to know them. After getting to know and learn about this foreigner, you think about how to fit them into your own soul and life. Similarities and opposites come together at one point. When your soul starts to know, you will no longer feel like a foreigner. Just like the comfort you feel when you read your translation in your own native language.".

These metaphors express the need for translators to be resourceful and curious investigators, flexible navigators, and culturally sensitive explorers.

Connecting & Bridging

Connecting & Bridging was represented by 12 metaphors, which all illustrate the act of translation as a crucial link between different elements. Metaphors like *key* (3), *the point where the sea meets the land* (1), *river flowing between two lands* (2), *family meal* (1), *road* (1), and *symphony* (1) depict translation as a medium that enables understanding and interaction across linguistic and cultural diversities. The *key* metaphor suggests translation unlocks a way to understanding. P16 stated, "Translation is actually the key to a safe... Without the key, we cannot understand that language, we cannot communicate". The *river* and *road* metaphors emphasize the fluent flow of meaning between languages and the creation of a way for communication. P90 captured this by comparing translation to "a river flowing between two lands. It brings the meaning of the source language to the target language". These conceptualizations propose the idea that students recognize the concept of translation as an intermediary act that ensures cross-cultural communication and mutual understanding. These metaphors highlight an eye-opening aspect of translation, which is the significance of intercultural communication competence and the ethical responsibility of transferring meaning effectively.

Strategic & Analytical

The *Strategic & Analytical* theme, represented by 12 responses, includes metaphors such as *puzzle* (4), *playing chess with a stronger opponent* (1), *war* (1), *boxing tournament* (1), *coding* (1), *surgical procedure* (1), and *knitting* (1). These metaphors portray translation as a complex intellectual challenge that calls for careful planning, strategic thinking, and problem-solving. The *puzzle* metaphor, as

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

expressed by P98, exemplifies the need to meticulously assemble and combine different elements that come with each language to form a coherent whole: "Translation is a puzzle. It is composed of separate pieces in language. These pieces are culture, cultural elements, grammar, words, and idioms, etc. To create a whole meaningful piece, we need to have all separated pieces to get them together." The other metaphors such as *war*, *extreme sport*, *boxing tournament, surgical process*, and *playing chess with a stronger opponent*, highlight the confrontational or highly delicate nature of the process, where a single mistake can have significant consequences and constant caution, perfection, and strategic intelligence are required. P86 likened translation to a *surgical procedure* where "a mistake made during the operation can even cause the death of that person. For this reason, mistakes made during translation can cause great damage to the text". This theme indicates that students view translation as an intellectually challenging activity that requires a combination of analytical and critical thinking, and the ability to foresee and resolve complex problems.

Nurturing & Growth

The *Nurturing & Growth* theme was divided into nine subcategories of metaphors that included *colorful garden* (1), *plant raised with great efforts* (1), *tree* (1), *seed* (1), *flower* (2), and *rebirth* (1). These metaphors view translation as a process of development and growth, which needs to be cultivated and nourished so that it can grow and produce valuable results. P9 observed, "Translation is like a plant that is raised with great effort. Raising a plant requires a lot of things, which are supposed to be done meticulously." Other metaphors, such as *seed* and *tree*, identify an already established base which, if nurtured well, will grow into something rich in meaning. The idea of *rebirth* completes this notion by suggesting that translation restructures the source text, thereby giving it a new life in its new context. This is articulated in the idea of translation by P83:

> "With translation, we can see new words, idioms, etc. Through the translation process, translators become new authors of their work. With this, they can change all the work with their translation. We can say that this is the second birth of this work."

Reflection & Interpretation

The *Reflection & Interpretation* category had six responses, with metaphors such as *mirror* (3), *prism* (1), *poem* (1), and *game of word of mouth* (1). These metaphors reveal how the students recognize translation as the representation or transformation of an original work with a focus on the aspects that, interestingly enough, emphasize subjective interpretation or the alteration of meaning. The mirror metaphor implies reflecting the original with partial distortion. P47 expresses this idea particularly well:

> "Translation is a misty mirror. When we translate the source language into the target language, no matter how much we try to reflect the same, sometimes it may not be exactly the same. Even if we can reflect the emotion completely, the expressions may be different".

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

P33 described translation as a *prism*,

> "refracting a single beam of light into a spectrum of colours in the target language. Just as a prism does not change the light itself but transforms it by revealing its multiple dimensions, a translator does not alter the essence of the original message but uncovers and reshapes its nuances to fit the new linguistic and cultural context".

These themes depict translation not just as an objective reflection of a language to another, but how it needs nuanced subjective reflections of the self, the culture, and even the translator.

Mediating & Balancing

Finally, the theme of *Mediating & Balancing* was represented by three metaphors: *marriage* (1), *courtroom* (1), and *equal arm scale* (1). Though less frequent, these metaphors underscore the apparent need for careful negotiation and the maintenance of balance between competing demands, such as faithfulness to the source text and fluency in the target text. P35 linked translation to *marriage*:

> "Just like how you need to find a balance between the ST and TT so that you don't offend either party and create something that would satisfy everyone, in a marriage you need to tread just as carefully in order not to upset your spouse or your family".

Similarly, P88 used the *equal arm scale* metaphor, stating that "the translator tries to equalize this by putting the target language on one side and the source language on the other. However, the scale can never be 100% equal". This theme is representative of the context set for translation as a delicate act of negotiation where the translator finds balance among various linguistic and cultural demands to produce an acceptable and effective result, maintaining equilibrium.

In short, students' metaphorical conceptualizations suggest that they see translation as a demanding process involving the integration of creativity, exploration, and critical thinking; they also interpret it as the careful nurturing of a work and a delicate interpretation. This rich, diverse, and flexible kind of understanding has led students to view translation as an act that extends beyond mere mechanical transfer of words. To the students, translation is a dynamic act of interpretation, a complex, and often challenging art form that demands a multidimensional skill set and a nuanced approach to language and culture.

3.3. Findings addressing the third research question

The third research question addressing the way students' metaphorical understandings illustrate their perceptions of the translation challenges was posed as "What metaphors would students use to express the translation challenges encountered during the process?". Table 3 portrays a detailed analysis

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

of the metaphors conceptualized and used by participants to describe the challenges encountered during the translation process.

Table 3. Translation Challenges Metaphors

Theme	Metaphors	Frequency
Navigating Complexities	puzzle (5), acrobatics (2), sailing across the ocean without a compass (1), malfunctions that occur in a product during production (1), trying to paint a picture in low light (1), walking on broken glass (1), patient (2), getting lost in a forest (1), furniture setup (1), navigating through a wild forest (1), labyrinth (3), being a psychiatrist (1), getting lost in an unfamiliar city (1)	21
Obstacles to Overcome	a baby that has just started to crawl (1), mountaineering (2), mountain with peaks (1), crossing river on stepping stones (1), a locked door (2), storm (2), ship on a stormy sea (2), insects that invade the garden (1), diseases (1), bad weather conditions (1), playing a story-based computer game (1), a tree that fell down the main road (1)	16
Conflict & Balance	war (4), applying the same eyeliner to both eyes (1), a person torn between family and spouse (1), marriage counsellor (1), holding a bird in your hands (1), cooking/ baking process (4), tightrope walking (2), waltz (1)	15
Uncertainty & Risk	making a necklace out of fragile shells (1), the dilemma of whether the chicken came first or the egg (1), a wrong scalpel movement during surgery (1)	3

Navigating Complexities

The most frequently occurring theme among metaphors for translation challenges was *Navigating Complexities*, consisting of 21 instances with metaphors, such as *puzzle* (5), *labyrinth* (3), and *getting lost* (3). These metaphors generally express how inherently complex and mentally demanding the translation process is, to the point that it feels like solving a difficult problem requiring constant attention and navigation.

While conceptualizing the challenges in the translation process, students generally chose journey-based metaphors to make sense of the confusion and difficulty in finding the right path in general or something as specific as an equivalent for a cultural or linguistic element. For instance, P4 described the challenges of translation as "like getting lost in an unfamiliar city, some words are dead ends leading you nowhere, while others are shortcuts that lose their meanings when you try to take them". Similarly, P55 characterized them as "finding the exit in a huge labyrinth. One might come across a dead end while translating... the translators should go back the way they came and find another way". This metaphor points to how some students conceptualize translation not as a linear process, but rather of an exploratory nature, often necessitating trial, error, adjustment, and strategic deviation along the way.

Beyond the spatial and journey imagery, other expressions conveyed the delicate and precise nature of the task. For example, P14 imagined translation as **"walking on broken glass,"** stressing the need for extreme caution when handling cultural nuances. P21 went on to describe it as "trying to paint a picture in low light," and indicated the difficulty in distinguishing subtle aspects of meaning when clarity is buried and waiting to be excavated. These metaphors collectively suggest that students perceive translation challenges as something that requires meticulous attention, strategic thinking, and a constant awareness of the fact that potential missteps or misinterpretations may occur during the process.

Obstacles to Overcome

The *Obstacles to Overcome* theme was the second most recurrent, with 16 instances. These included metaphors from natural phenomena or extreme physical activities, such as *mountaineering* (2), *storm* (2), and *crossing river on stepping stones* (1). These metaphors depict the challenges of translation as external obstacles or demanding circumstances that require the strength, effort, and resilience of the translator.

The students frequently used metaphors of struggle against difficult situations or confrontation with obstacles. P7, for example, described translation as "crossing a river on stepping stones," emphasizing that "each step must be carefully placed to avoid losing the meaning or failing off course". P58 likened problems to "obstacles while hiking in the mountains," meaning that a translator must "prepare for it" and realize that "it will not be easy". Touched upon by P83 and P98, the *storm* metaphor also highlighted the unpredictable nature of the journey, where the translator, like a captain, must be

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

knowledgeable enough to handle the challenges successfully. Other metaphors, such as a *locked door* (2) or a *tree that fell down the main road* (1), presented challenges as literal obstructions that must somehow be avoided or removed. These responses reflect the understanding that translators inevitably face tangible difficulties such as unfamiliar words, idioms, or cultural concepts that do not have direct equivalents, and that navigating such challenges and overcoming difficulties requires skill, knowledge, and competence.

Conflict & Balance

The *Conflict & Balance* theme included 15 metaphors like *war* (4), *cooking/baking* process (4), and *tightrope walking* (2), which reflect the tension between competing demands in translation. Most of these metaphors depicted translation as a struggle of negotiation and finding a balance between faithfulness to the source text and naturalness in the target language.

The *war* metaphor consistently appeared, illustrating the supposed *battle of languages* caused by structural differences in linguistic systems and cultural expectations, where translators must fight to accurately convey the details. P95 elaborated on this, stating that "this battle can never end at the same time. Languages improve or change over time. Due to this, this battle needs different tactics". Such a portrayal of translation as a kind of battlefield where compromises are made sums up the dynamic and ongoing nature of the struggle in bridging the linguistic and cultural gaps.

The metaphors referring to culinary processes, such as *cooking* (4), point to the need for accurately measuring and adding just the right *spices* (cultural and linguistic elements) to get the *taste* (quality translation). P20 noted that "if there is too much salt in translated text as cooking, we would lose the appetite to eat or read," pointing to how an imbalance could ruin a quality translation. From a somewhat different perspective, metaphors of personal dilemmas, like P43's *individual... torn between their family and spouse*, or P35's *marriage counselor* effectively captured the translator's role as an intermediary caught between the source and target cultures, where appealing to one might anger the other. These findings strongly support the idea that overcoming the difficulties in translation is better approached by prioritizing knowledge and mastering how to walk through the conflicts and find balances via critical judgment and ethical decisions on common matters such as domestication and foreignization.

Uncertainty & Risk

With only three instances, the theme of *Uncertainty & Risk* was the least frequent. Although less frequent, metaphors in this category signify how fragile meaning can be in translation and the risks of how small mistakes can lead to a decrease in the quality of the translation overall.

P86 described translation challenges as a *wrong scalpel movement during surgery*, asserting that such an error "can lead to consequences that can endanger a person's life... Errors made in translation

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

can damage the essence of the translated text and kill its spirit". This imagery vividly portrays the responsibility put on the translator's shoulders and the potential for severe damage from the lack of precision. P93's metaphor of *making a necklace out of fragile shells* further emphasized the delicate nature of the source material, stating that translators "must be gentle and careful" to avoid "breaking the rules of sensibilities". Finally, P2's comparison of translation to *the dilemma of whether the chicken came first or the egg came first* exemplifies the conceptual ambiguities that make finding a definitive solution difficult. While less frequently mentioned, these metaphors uncover students' awareness of how vulnerable meaning is during transfer and how significant it is to carefully handle texts to ensure accuracy.

Overall, the students' metaphors indicate that they recognize translation challenges to be highly complex, cognitively demanding, and mostly unpredictable, requiring strategic thinking, precision, and balance. They see the process not as a straightforward task, but as one that needs problem-solving, cultural sensitivity, and critical thinking. Additionally, in overcoming the challenges, they perceive the translator's role to require both technical skill and sensitive judgment that come with being intellectually, culturally, and emotionally competent.

3.4. Findings addressing the fourth research question

To complete the scope of the present study and reveal participants' perception of translation education, the last research was posed as" What metaphors would students use to define the translation education?". Table 4 presents a detailed analysis of the metaphors used by the participants to conceptualize translation education.

Table 4. Metaphorical Categories Related to Translation Education

Theme	Metaphors	Frequency
Cultivation & Growth	garden/gardening (15), tree (1), growing up (1)	17
Craftsmanship & Skill Development	playing an instrument (2), cooking (3), learning to paint (1), orchestra (1), learning how to manicure (1), forge (1), first aid (2), learning	17

Theme	Metaphors	Frequency
	how to read sheet music (1), military training before war (1), martial arts training (3), training for a boxing match (1)	
Journey & Exploration	journey (4), sea (2), forest (1), climbing a mountain (1), labyrinth/maze (2), going to a new country for the first time (2)	12
Guidance & Mentorship	hospital (1), coast guard (1), prescribed medication (1), compass/map (3), motherhood (2), taming a parrot (1), hearing aids (1), a vocal training studio (1), mentor (1)	12
Scaffolding & Construction	car axle (1), building a structure (1), raising a child (1), bridge (1), skeleton (1), drills (1)	6

Cultivation & Growth

The theme of *Cultivation & Growth* emerged most frequently in this section, with 17 metaphors. This suggests a strong belief that translation education is not just a static process but rather a vibrant and ever-evolving journey. The metaphor of *garden/gardening* was the most popular, appearing 15 times, followed by *tree* and *growing up*, each mentioned once.

These metaphors clearly show that students do not perceive translation education as merely memorizing facts; instead, they conceptualize it as a nurturing process that necessitates constant care and attention to flourish. The participants put a strong focus on dedication, hard work, and ongoing development. For instance, P60 stated, "Translation education is like a garden. Just as a gardener plants a seed and waters it every day for that flower to grow, a teacher teaches techniques and helps students strengthen and develop their translation skills with their help." This also highlights the teacher's role as a facilitator of growth and the student's responsibility to put in consistent effort. P42 added another layer by discussing the protective side of it, claiming the need to "protect it from insects and bad animals" in a garden, indicating that education also protects students from being on the wrong paths or falling into misconceptions. Similarly, P97 underlined the continuous nature of the process: "If you don't take care of the garden even for a day... your translation skills can also become dull". The *growing up* metaphor

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

(P78) supported the perspective that maturing and gaining skills is a natural yet difficult process, facilitated by education. All these point to the view of translation education as a holistic and progressive journey that evolves over time through personalized attention and a nurturing environment.

Craftsmanship & Skill Development

Equally frequent with 17 instances, the *Craftsmanship & Skill Development* theme reflects the perception that translation education is a process of gaining practical mastery by refining pre-existing abilities. This category contained diverse metaphors such as *cooking* (3), *martial arts training* (3), *playing an instrument* (2), *first aid* (2), *learning to paint* (1), *orchestra* (1), *learning how to read sheet music* (1), and *training for a boxing match* (1).

These metaphors collectively tap into the idea that translation education is practical, hands-on natured and they are portraying it as a discipline that requires training, repetition, and the development of technical proficiency. *Cooking* was a popular metaphor to present the idea that, like great cooking, great translation needs a recipe (rules), ingredients (language skills and cultural knowledge), and a lot of practice. P64 fittingly noted, "At first, students might not know how to mix the ingredients properly, and their dishes might not taste right. But with practice, they learn to balance flavours, adjust spices, and perfect the recipe". Metaphors like *martial arts training* (P6, P25, P83) and *training for a boxing match* (P93) emphasized the discipline, persistence, and continuous struggle required to improve, often linking it to overcoming challenges. P6 highlighted that "if we want to get better, we have to translate more". These considerations push forward the idea that students expect translation education to be highly practical, and it needs to focus on the acquisition of skills through deliberate practice with error correction and various problem-solving situations.

Journey & Exploration

The *Journey & Exploration* theme, with 12 metaphors such as, *journey* (4), *sea* (2), *labyrinth* (2), and *going to a new country for the first time* (2), conceptualizes translation education as a process of discovery, navigation, and continuous learning.

Such metaphors portray education as an experience in which one moves through unknown territory while facing challenges and gaining new insights along the way. P2 described it as "a bus journey where we do not know the final destination. An unknown path means more experience and knowledge". This underscores the unpredictable yet enlightening journey of learning. P14 dives deeper and uses the *new country* metaphor, stating that "everything seems very complicated and foreign" at the beginning, but with time and exploration, one "gets used to that country and becomes familiar with it". This implies that students expect to feel lost initially but also trust that their education will guide them toward clarity and familiarity. The *labyrinth/maze* metaphor (P49, P84) represented the complexity and how students are forced to "try all the ways" and face "dead ends" before finding the right way, which

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

can be interpreted as a trial-and-error style of learning. P99's *sea* metaphor almost perfectly captures the development:

> "When you start swimming from the shore, everything is beautiful. You enjoy the calm waters. But as you move further into the sea, the waves make things harder. You learn to overcome the waves. Moss and fish get tangled around your feet, making swimming more difficult. You have to learn to handle that as well. As you continue in that sea, bigger problems arise, but you must learn to face each of them and keep swimming.".

This thematic category proposes that translation education should promote adaptability, critical thinking, and independent problem-solving skills to prepare students for the exploration of the unknown and the navigation through the complex dimensions of languages and cultures.

Guidance & Mentorship

Also, with 12 instances, the *Guidance & Mentorship* theme reflects students' perceptions of translation education as a supportive system that offers direction, assistance, and expert insight. Metaphors included *compass/map* (3), *motherhood* (2), *hospital* (1), *prescribed medication* (1), *hearing aids* (1), and *mentor* (1).

These metaphors emphasize just how crucial it is to have an instructor and the structured guidance offered by the educational environment. For instance, P13 used the *compass* metaphor to explain how education "shows us a direction when we get lost in the text due to language differences and sometimes due to form differences". P56's *motherhood* metaphor shed light on the nurturing element, where "mothers show us how to behave...Translation education is like that too. They give us the rules; they show us how to proceed". P88 compares translation education to a *hospital*, suggesting that education heals along with improvement: "You should receive translation training, the person who gives the training is a doctor". These responses imply that students value the help, expertise, and structured guidance provided by educators.

Scaffolding & Construction

The *Scaffolding & Construction* theme was the least frequent, with six instances being *building a structure* (1), *car axle* (1), *raising a child* (1), *bridge* (1), *skeleton* (1), and *drills* (1). However, it still highlighted the foundational and structural aspects of translation education.

According to these metaphors, students view translation education as a framework that establishes a solid foundation by offering crucial tools and skills for their future professional practice. P1 compared translation training to *building a structure*, emphasizing the significance of "command of the language we are translating... to have a very good command of the structures in both languages so that the text we are translating can stand and be meaningful". This metaphor aims to highlight that theoretical knowledge

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

and linguistic competence are essential as the foundation. The *car axle* metaphor by P74 states that the right kind of education will link together all grains of knowledge because

"If you think of a car without the connection between all the parts, it would be impossible for a car to go as a solid system, without the proper education, translators always find trouble during the translation process. All of the knowledge he has will mean nothing in the end".

P71 reinforced the idea of a fundamental framework by stating that

"all the bones of this skeleton must be strong and compatible with each other. Otherwise, the skeleton will not be able to stand…everything in translation education must be strong and compatible with each other. Just as a person experiences incredible difficulties if even a single bone is missing in the human body, mistakes and errors made in translation education will cause greater difficulties in the future".

Although less frequent, these metaphors hint at the perception that translation education gives the substructure and core principles upon which a translator will function effectively. Being so, it implies that translation education should focus on providing a firm scaffolding and ensuring that students understand how one linguistic and cultural element interconnects with another.

To summarize, students consider translation education to be an evolving process in which, at one time, everything is developing or undergoing formulation; at the other time is the development of skills, exploration, and guided development. Through their metaphors, they imply that learning how to translate is not just about memorizing rules, but developing skills gradually, just like gardening or mastering a particular craft. They see it as an adventurous journey filled with open-ended discoveries and the learning process, where making mistakes is part of the learning, and getting better is a matter of getting practice and realizing the experience. Being so, they stress the significance of translation education that focus on providing firm scaffolding, ensuring that students understand how one linguistic and cultural element interconnects with another.

4. Conclusion

This study aimed to explore how students conceptualize the translator, the translation process, the challenges encountered during the translation process, and translation education through metaphors. Findings reveal that students do not perceive translation or the task of the translator as a transfer of words, but they view the process as multifaceted, dynamic, and meaning-making oriented.

The diverse metaphors crafted by the participants showcase that students internalize the translation both at a cognitive and emotional level. Frequent use of metaphors such as bridge, artist,

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

detective, gardener, mirror, journey, and puzzle highlights that the translator is conceptualized not only as a professional endowed with linguistic skills but also as a versatile individual with high levels of cultural competence, creative thinking, and the capability of guidance.

Similarly, metaphors such as cooking, journey, painting, and mirror show that students view translation as an artistically driven, creative process and an intellectual journey focused on discovering the unknown. On the other hand, translation challenges are mostly associated with metaphors like puzzle, locked door, war, and tightrope walking, which clearly demonstrate the existence of linguistic and cultural complexities, ambiguities, and cases requiring a good balance. This, in turn, points out that students possess a high level of awareness regarding the inherent intricacies of the translation process. In the case of translation education, with metaphors such as garden, cooking, map, and motherhood, progress is metaphorically equated with skill development, structured guidance, and a systematic learning process, which shows that students' expectations from translation courses are not limited to theoretical background but also include practice-oriented and facilitative learning environments. Their expectations of learning and mental models are crucially significant, as they provide a path for them to better understand themselves and their learning motivations, find preferred study approaches and strategies, and gain valuable insights into their learning environment overall (Richardson, 2011).

In light of these findings, it can be asserted that students' mental representations related to translation are quite rich, flexible, and multilayered, yet drawn from everyday experiences. This is in line with the idea that metaphors are deeply connected to our physical experiences, as metaphorical thinking is based on the brain's ability to link real-life sensory experiences with abstract ideas (Tendahl & Gibbs, 2008; Landau et al., 2010). For instance, when students describe the translation process or the challenges faced as a journey, they use physical experiences of travel to understand the abstract concept of the processes in the profession or the task.

It is understood that these metaphors are effective tools in reflecting students' experiences and modes of thinking. Given that metaphors in education may be considered as the "blueprints of thinking" (Martinez et al., 2001), their conscious use in designing translation courses, understanding mental modes, and the conceptual framework could contribute to increasing pedagogical awareness.

Taken together, the metaphors students employ could contribute to the structuring of translation pedagogy from a student-centered, practice-focused approach characterized by high cognitive awareness. From this perspective, it is suggested that metaphors serve as mental models helping students see through the unknown and find the familiar (Botha, 2009), and by taking these metaphorical descriptions into account and recognizing the students' perceptions, strengths, and aspects that need further improvement, instructors can develop appropriate strategies catered to students' needs.

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

This study has unveiled that understanding the metaphors students use can help instructors recognize how students conceptualize and approach the translation process, identify the areas they need support in, and how developing metaphorical awareness can contribute to their critical thinking and self-assessment skills. However, this study was limited to a specific group of students in a similar learning environment, therefore, the results may not be generalizable and applicable to all students of translation education. For this reason, further research should focus more on a versatile group of participants with diverse backgrounds and learning environments. Although this study does not directly aim to develop a pedagogical model, the findings provide a solid foundation for designing translation education with an empathetic, dynamic, and awareness-oriented approach. In this context, further research based on metaphor analysis shows potential for advancing the quality of translation education and fostering the development of students' professional identities by integrating students' metaphorical perspectives into translation course designs, so that translation education can become more reflective, constructive, and compatible with learners' cognitive and emotional abilities.

References

Birello, M., & Pujolà, J.T. (2023). Visual metaphors and metonymies in pre-service teachers' reflections: Beliefs and experiences in the learning and teaching of writing. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *122*, 103971. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103971

Boers, F., & Demecheleer, M. (2001). *A Cognitive Linguistic Approach to the Analysis of Metaphors in Translation.* Gruyter.

Botha, E. (2009). Why metaphor matters in education. *South African Journal of Education*, *29*(4), 431–444. https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v29n4a287

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.

Gebbia, C. A. (2023). Translator learners' strategies in local and textual metaphors. *Frontiers in Communication*, *8*, 1177658. https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2023.1177658

Gentner, D., & Bowdle, B. F. (2008). *Metaphor as Structure Mapping: A Study of the Metaphor System.* Cognitive Science.

Hastürkoğlu, G. (2018). Incorporation of Conceptual Metaphor Theory in Translation Pedagogy: A Case Study on Translating Simile-based Idioms. *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, *38*(4), 467–483. https://doi.org/10.1080/07268602.2018.1510728

Heritage, J. (1984). *Garfirikel and Ethnomethodology.* Polity Press.

Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi (DEÇ)
Journal of Academic Studies in World Languages, Literatures and Translation (WOLLT)

WOLLT, 2025; 6 (2), 129-156

Kittay, E. F. (1993). Metaphor and Theory of Mind. In A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and Thought: Analogical Reasoning in Creative Thinking* (pp. 27-50). Cambridge University Press.

Kövecses, Z. (2015). *Where metaphors come from: Reconsidering context in metaphor*. Oxford University Press.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by.* University of Chicago Press.

Landau, M. J., Meier, B. P., & Keefer, L. A. (2010). A metaphor-enriched social cognition. *Psychological Bulletin*, *136*(6), 1045–1067. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020970

Löfström, E., Nevgi, A., Wegner, E., & Karm, M. (2015). Images in research on teaching and learning in higher education. In *Theory and method in higher education research* (pp. 191-212). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Martínez, M. A., Sauleda, N., & Huber, G. L. (2001). Metaphors as blueprints of thinking about teaching and learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *17*(8), 965–977. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742051X(01)00043-9

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Sage.

Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation. Hertfordshire.* Prentice Hall International.

Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2025). Ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Evidence-Based Nursing.* https://doi.org/10.1136/ebnurs-2024-104232

Richardson, J. T. E. (2011). Approaches to studying, conceptions of learning and learning styles in higher education. *Learning and Individual Differences, 21(3),* 288–293. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2010.11.015

Sezgin, F., Koşar, D., Koşar, S., & Er, E. (2017). Öğretmenlerin öğrenciye yönelik metaforlarının belirlenmesine ilişkin nitel bir araştırma. *Uluslararası Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi, 6*(2), 104-119.

Shuttleworth, M; (2014) Translation studies and metaphor studies: Possible paths of interaction between two well-established disciplines. In: Miller, DR and Monti, E, (eds.) *Tradurre Figure / Translating Figurative Language.* (pp. 53-65). Centro di Studi Linguistico-Culturali (CeSLiC).

Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1995). *Relevance: Communication and cognition*. Blackwell Publishers.

Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (2002). Pragmatics, Modularity and Mind-reading. *Mind & Language*, *17*(1–2), 3–23. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0017.00186

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Sage

Tendahl, M., & Gibbs, R. W. (2008). Complementary perspectives on metaphor: Cognitive linguistics and relevance theory. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *40*(11), 1823–1864. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2008.02.001

Thibodeau, P. H., & Boroditsky, L. (2011). Metaphors We Think With: The Role of Metaphor in Reasoning. *PLoS ONE*, *6*(2), e16782. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0016782

Thibodeau, P. H., Hendricks, R. K., & Boroditsky, L. (2017). How Linguistic Metaphor Scaffolds Reasoning. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *21*(11), 852–863. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2017.07.001

Wegner, E., Burkhart, C., Weinhuber, M., & Nückles, M. (2020). What metaphors of learning can (and cannot) tell us about students' learning. *Learning and Individual Differences*, *80*, 101884. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2020.101884