



METAPHORICAL PERCEPTIONS OF NON-ENGLISH MAJOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS TOWARDS SPEAKING ENGLISHⁱ

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Abstract:

This study aims to determine non-English major university students' metaphorical perceptions of speaking English at a state university in Istanbul, Turkey. This is a qualitative study with phenomenological design. Content analysis was used for interpreting and analysing the data. 31 non-English major pre-service teachers participated in the study and the data were collected from these participants through a semi-structured form by asking to complete a sentence of "speaking English is (like)... because.....". Since positive metaphorical perceptions of learners have a positive effect on speaking English, it is highly significant to determine the metaphorical perceptions of students. Through metaphor analysis, it is expected for students to provide an idea of how they perceive their experiences of speaking English and to demonstrate what kind of metaphorical perceptions they have towards speaking English. The participants of the study both developed a metaphor and explained why they used it. Students produced 30 metaphors for "Speaking English" and these metaphors were collected under 5 categories. One-third of participants produced positive metaphors and the concepts of which they mostly preferred to use were water, fun, being a new person. The study results reveal that students have mostly positive perceptions about speaking English. The study can be considered as a contribution to the literature since there is no study on the perceptions of non-English major students towards speaking English. The study findings can be implemented in language classrooms in order to understand how students interpret speaking English and some new ways can be tried to change their negative attitudes about speaking English. The study results may also help English teachers and curriculum developers to adjust their teaching practices by informing them about students' perceptions of speaking English.

Keywords: metaphor, perception, speaking English, non-English major university students

ⁱ İNGİLİZCE ALAN DIŐI LİSANS ÖĐRENCİLERİNİN İNGİLİZCE KONUŐMA ÜZERİNE METAFORİK ALGILARI

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Özet:

Bu çalışma, İstanbul, Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinde bölümü İngilizce olmayan lisans öğrencilerinin İngilizce konuşmaya yönelik metaforik algılarını belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu, fenomenolojik tasarıma sahip nitel bir çalışmadır. Çalışmaya 31 eğitim fakültesinde okuyan İngilizce alan dışı üniversite öğrencisi katılmış ve veriler bu katılımcılardan yarı-yapılandırılmış bir formda "İngilizce konuşmak.... gibidir, çünkü... "komutunu tamamlamaları istenerek toplanmıştır. Öğrencilerin olumlu mecazi algılarının İngilizce konuşma üzerinde olumlu bir etkisi olduğundan, öğrencilerin mecazi algılarının belirlenmesi son derece önemlidir. Metafor analizi ile öğrencilerin İngilizce konuşma deneyimlerini nasıl algıladıklarını ve İngilizce konuşmaya yönelik ne tür mecazi algılamalar sergilediklerini belirlemek umut edilmektedir. Katılımcılar sadece bir metafor geliştirmekle kalmadı, aynı zamanda bu metaforu neden kullandıklarını da açıkladılar. Öğrenciler "İngilizce konuşmak" ile ilgili 30 metafor üretti ve bu metaforlar 5 kategoride toplandı. Öğrencilerin yaklaşık üçte biri olumlu metaforlar yarattı ve en sık bahsedilen kavramlar su, eğlence ve yeni bir insan olmak idi. Bu kavramlar incelendiğinde 5 tema başlığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu temalar: İngilizce konuşmak zordur, güç demektir, eğlencelidir, maceradır, zorunluluktur. Araştırma sonuçları öğrencilerin İngilizce konuşmayla ilgili daha çok olumlu algılara sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Çalışma, literatürde anadal olmayan öğrencilerin İngilizce konuşma algıları üzerine bir çalışma olmadığı için literatüre bir katkı olarak düşünülebilir. Araştırmanın bulguları, öğrencilerin İngilizce konuşmayı nasıl gördüklerini daha iyi anlamak ve olumsuz tutumlarını değiştirmenin yeni yollarını denemek için dil sınıflarına uygulanabilir. Çalışmanın sonuçları ayrıca İngilizce öğretmenlerine öğrencilerin İngilizce konuşma algıları hakkında bilgi vererek rehberlik edebilir ve eğitim-öğretim faaliyetlerini düzenlemelerine yardımcı olabilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: metafor, algı, İngilizce konuşmak, İngilizce alan dışı üniversite öğrencileri

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Problem

Although English speaking is a common problem for students of all fields and levels, the perceptions of non-English major university students towards speaking English seemed to have not yet been analyzed in the literature. This study explores the uses of metaphor to express the various perspectives of non-English major university students. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphors are "tools to make thoughts more vivid and actually structure our perceptions". Additionally, Oxford et al. (1998, p. 5) suggest that "metaphor has the power to enhance the subject's understanding of educational problems and thus increase perspective-consciousness". Therefore, it can be inferred that exploring non-English major university students' metaphors will reveal more reliable and clear information about their beliefs regarding speaking English.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

This study was aimed to determine the metaphorical perceptions of non-English major undergraduate students towards English speaking. In the framework of these objectives, the answers to the following questions have been sought:

- 1) What metaphors (or mental images) do non-English major university students have about speaking English?
- 2) Which conceptual categories can be used to group these metaphors in terms of their common features?
- 3) Do the metaphors produced by non-English major university students differ from each other in terms of gender?
- 4) Do the metaphors produced by non-English major university students differ from each other in terms of grade level?

1.3. Importance of the Study

When the literature is analyzed, it is seen that there are some studies aimed to determine the conceptual metaphorical perceptions of the students of the department of English language teaching and the university students whose fields are not English Teaching about 'the foreign language teacher'. However, to the researcher's best knowledge, no research has been found aiming to determine the metaphorical perceptions of university students whose field are not English towards speaking English. This situation was seen as a deficiency by the researcher and this research was decided to be conducted, which will contribute to the literature. The study is considered to help students and instructors to see further.

1.4. Limitations

This study has some limitations due to COVID-19 pandemic. Firstly, the number of participants had to be limited because of the school closings across the country by the government and it was conducted with only 31 students. Therefore, the study could not meet the desired numbers of participants. Secondly, the semi-structured questionnaire, which was planned to be held on a paper form face-to-face with university students, had to be done using online metaphor elicitation questionnaires because universities were closed earlier due to the pandemic. Additionally, only gender and grade level information were asked to the students in the questionnaire of the research because of the difficulty of reaching students in the pandemic process. Individual variables such as their educational, social and economical backgrounds, and their language proficiencies were not taken into consideration for the analysis of the data.

1.5 Definitions

- Metaphor: *"The use of a word or a concept in a way other than its meaning aside from its acceptable usage"* (TDK - [Turkish Language Association](#), 2011),
- ELT: English Language Teaching.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Metaphor as Method

One of the significant functions of metaphors is to reveal the affective characteristics of students. Metaphor is expressed as the “figure of speech” in Turkish and is defined as “the use of a word or a concept in a way other than its meaning aside from its acceptable usage” (TDK - [Turkish Language Association](#), 2011). According to Palmquist (2001), “a metaphor, which is a linguistic tool connecting two objects or concepts with each other, is considered as a symbolic language structure that links two different ideas or concepts in order to make a transition or comparison from one life area to another. Metaphors appear in daily conversations as nouns, verbs or qualifiers” (Cited from Bahadır, 2018). Kovecses (2002) defined it as “an expressing process of a meaning structure with another meaning structure”. Metaphor is also described as “correlating with the abstract concepts and the recognized concrete things” (Saban, 2004). Radman (1997) suggests that “Metaphors are formed with the use of creative ways in order to create new meanings. This creative thinking is composed of in all areas of life, and therefore metaphors can be used in a wide range” (Radman, 1997). Metaphors not only affect individuals but also reflect and shape their thoughts and conduct the emergence of behaviours (Strenski, 1989). Moreover, “they also improve individuals’ intuitions and emotional developments” (Fraser, 2000), and give individuals the opportunity to build strong modelling mechanisms to understand and structure their own worlds (Arslan & Bayrakçı, 2006). The definition of metaphor as “...a powerful mind mapping and modelling mechanism towards individuals’ understanding and configuring their worlds” (Arslan & Bayrakçı, 2006) attracts the attention of the educators of today. Therefore, many metaphorical studies have been conducted to reveal perceptions of participants regarding different subjects so far.

2.2 Metaphorical Studies on English

Metaphors represent the way we perceive the world and reality as well as shape our professional opinions, approaches, and behaviours. This study aimed to explore the conceptual metaphors of non-English major learners, in regard to their perceptions of speaking English. Many studies can be found in the literature regarding foreign language education conducted by metaphor analysis (Table 1). However, these studies are limited to the certain analyses such as perceptions of university students towards “English” (Erdem, 2018); perceptions of secondary school students towards “English teacher” (Uğur & Başaran, 2017), perceptions of university students towards “learning English” (Fang, 2015), perceptions of university students towards “English instructor” (Ahkemoğlu & Kesen, 2016), perceptions of pre-service teachers towards “foreign language” (Gömleksiz, 2013) and perceptions of university students towards “language learning process” (Baş & Gezeğin (2015), etc. The other metaphor analyses in the literature on ELT as follows: L. Nikitina and F. Fruoka (2008) did the metaphor analysis with 23 university students towards a language teacher. Their study aimed to determine whether students’ genders influence their metaphor productions on a language teacher. As a result of their study,

they could not find any significant differences between the perceptions of different genders about the teacher's role.

M. Baş and B. Gezeğin (2015) examined the perceptions of a group of first-year students in an EFL setting regarding their language learning process. They used a metaphor elicitation form which includes the prompt of "*English learning process is (like) ... because*" in order to obtain metaphors. The results of their study reveal that students consider language learning is a constant process which requires effort and support. S.Fang (2015), in his research, examined the college EFL students' metaphorical perceptions on learning English in a minority area in Northwest China with the participation of 120 students (30 English majors and 30 non-English majors). The participants completed a metaphor elicitation form as "*learning English is (like)... because...*". In his study, he aimed at how students perceive their experiences of learning English and what thinking the students' metaphorical perceptions of learning English may stimulate. His findings showed that students at different levels have different perceptions of English learning. English majors talk more about the demands, while non-English majors experience more difficulty and negative feelings in learning.

A. Uğur and S. Baysal (2017) in their study, tried to determine the perceptions of 188 secondary school students regarding the concept of "*English teacher*" through metaphors. The students were asked to complete a prompt "*English teacher is like because*". The results indicated that students perceive being a student as effort and struggle, improvement and growth, achieving a goal, versatility, and being forced. On the other hand, C. Erdem (2018), in his study, aimed to identify 342 university students' perceptions of English through their use of metaphors. He collected data through a semi-structured form, in which the participants were asked to complete the sentence "*English is like... because...*" This finding of his reveals that the students of the social sciences departments tend to create more positive metaphors than the students of quantitative sciences, except for faculty of technology.

In light of these results, it is seen that there is no study examining how non-English major university students perceive speaking English in the literature. In other words, perceptions of university students, particularly ones whose major are not English, towards "*Speaking English*" have not been examined yet, which would provide significant findings for the field and practitioners. However, knowing the perceptions of non-English major students is important in order to build a more effective English-speaking environment. Therefore, the metaphorical perceptions of students are investigated in this study. In this context, it is thought that this study may contribute to the literature.

Table 1: Studies conducted by metaphor analysis

Researcher(S)	Participants	Topic
Özmantar and Arslan (2019)	Pre-service EFL teachers	Turkish Education system
Aydın and Baysan (2018)	Postgraduate students	Academic writing skills
Erdem (2018)	University Students	English
Uğur and Baysal (2017)	Secondary school students	English Teacher
Beldag & Gecit (2017)	In-service teachers	Geography
Ahkemoğlu & Kesen (2016)	EFL Learners	Foreign Language Teacher
Pekdoğan and Kanak (2015)	Pre-service Preschool teachers	Creativity
Fang (2015)	University students	English Learning
Tercan (2015)	Pre-service teachers	YL English Teacher
Baş and Gezegin (2015)	University students	English Learning Process
Şimşek (2014)	Pre-service teachers	Language and Teaching
Kocak (2013)	Pre-service teachers	School
Konaklı and Göğüş (2013)	Pre-service teachers	Faculty of Education
Gömleksiz (2013)	Pre-service teachers	Foreign language
Bozdoğan (2012)	Pre-service teachers	CALL
Farjami (2012)	EFL Students	Grammar Learning
Gürol and Donmus (2010)	University students	Social network
Nikitina & Furuoka (2008)	University students	Language Teacher

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study aims to analyze the perceptions of non-English major university students about speaking English deeply. Therefore, the phenomenology approach of descriptive research models was used as a research model. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008) claim that *“the phenomenology approach aims to define experiences, perceptions, the meanings and the attributions towards these concepts.”* Resources are the individuals or groups who experience the concepts under research. Thus, we can discover the experiences and meanings through data analysis.

3.2 Population of the Study

The participants for the present study were 31 non-English major students who were studying in the Faculty of Education at Yildiz Technical University in the 2019/2020 academic year. 19 of 31 participants were female and 12 of them were male students. 4 students in total were studying their first-years, 23 of them were studying their second-years and 5 of the participants were studying their third-years. The university students participated in the study voluntarily and to ensure the anonymity of their data, each participant was given a case number such as S1, S2, S3, etc.

3.3 Data Collection

The data for analysis in this study was obtained by asking students to provide a metaphor which best describes their experience of English speaking. The non-English major university students were asked to complete the sentence frame online: *“Speaking English*

is (like).....because.....” (Annex-1). In the studies that metaphor is used as a research tool, the concept of “like” is often used to evoke the connection between “the subject of the metaphor” and “the source of the metaphor” more clearly. In this research, using the concept of “because”, the participants were asked to provide a “reason” or a “logical base” for their own metaphors. The sentences that the students completed online were used as the main data source for this study.

3.4 Data Analysis

Content Analysis has been used in this study. Content analysis is one of the research tools used to determine the presence of certain words, concepts, or themes within some given qualitative data (i.e. text). Content analysis allows researchers to quantify and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of such certain words, concepts, or themes. Then the researchers can draw conclusions about the messages within the texts about the participant or participant group and even the culture and time of surrounding the text.

In this study, the analysis of the online forms that the university students in the study group produced metaphors for the concept of “speaking English” has been done with the content analysis method and the findings have been interpreted using the tables. These metaphors were then categorized by identifying naturally occurring themes. The themes helped the researcher to reveal students’ experiences of speaking English.

4. Findings

The first research question of the study is “What are the metaphors (or mental images) the students have about English Speaking?” In order to find the answer to this question, Non-English major university students were asked to identify the concept of “English speaking” by means of metaphors. Table 2 shows the metaphors produced by the participants below.

Table 2: Metaphorical images produced by non-English major university students

Conceptual categories	Exemplar metaphors	Entailments (because.....)
Speaking English as a difficulty F: 6 %19	Swimming in a cold water	With both of them, first you get stuck, then get used to it and like it. (S26) F/2
	Cruelty	I have not been able to speak to it in my life. (S31) F/2
	Climbing up the top of a mountain	It is a very demanding thing, it requires patience and courage. (S15) F/2
	Speaking Turkish in reverse	The word order is mostly flipped. (S30) F/2

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	Vain hope	Since speaking skill is neglected by our education system, speaking English has been just a dream today. (S11) F/2
	Toddler's starting to walk	You learn how to speak English by fits and starts. (S28) F/2
Speaking English as a power F: 5 %16	Being a new person	It is very different to use a language other than their native language as if a new person emerges from me. (S4) F/2
	Self-confidence	Speaking this language makes it easy to travel to many countries around the world to adapt to your life. (S10) M/2
	Crossing the barrier	If you pass it, you learn to speak. (S22) M/2
	Being a famous musician	You cannot hold down without a talent. (S12) F/2
	Deaf person's being able hear	It is a unique happiness to be able to understand the person when s/he speaks (S1) F/1
Speaking English as fun F: 11 %35	Doing sports	It is very tiring at the beginning and it requires hard work, then it gives pleasure and does not tire you. (S2) F/3
	Show	It attracts everyone's attention as a person speaks it. (S8) M/2
	Having a nice time with friends	You can't understand how time passes when you're talking (S16) F/1
	Cooking	If you don't cook, you will be compelled to order food online. (S6) M/2
	Sauce	If it does not exist, it does not matter, but if it exists, it openly shows its difference. It adds a qualification to the individual. (S18) F/2
	Writing	There is a constant thinking in both writing and speaking English. (S19) M/2
	Puzzle	It has certain patterns. (S17) F/2
	Maze	You have to know all the ways to get out. (S20) F/2
	Playing games	Certain strategies need to be mastered. (S25) F/2
	Playing a musical instrument	It requires patience and study to learn. (S27) M/2

	Writing poetry	You can't always write poetry, as you can't always speak English. (S29) M/2
Speaking English as an adventure F: 4 %12	Diving into Ocean	No matter how deep you dive, there is something you don't know. (S5) F/3
	Riding on a bus for a long distance	It takes time and effort. (S9) M / 2
	Long journey	When it ends depends on your speed. (S14) F/ 1
	Speaking to a new universe	It takes you to different realms, senses. (S21) F/2
Speaking English as an obligation F: 5 %16	Speaking the language of science	It has a scientific and naive phonetics. (S3) M/1
	Compulsory	It is the type of language in which communication is provided in science, health, education, and human rights. (S7) M/3
	Water X 2	Water is life, life is good. (S23) M/1. One of the basic needs of every person. (S24) M/2
	Covid-19	Once you start speaking, it begins to be a big part of yours, you want everyone to know English. (S13) F/2

4.1. Categories of Metaphors Based on Their Rationales

In order to find an answer to the second research question of this study, which is “Which conceptual categories can be used to group these metaphors in terms of their common features?”, 5 different categories were created based on the rationales that students provided in their sentences after the conjunction of ‘because’ in the form. These categories are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Distribution of the categories related to speaking English

Difficulty (%19)	Power (%16)	Fun (%35)	Adventure (%12)	Obligation (%16)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Swimming in a cold water ● Cruelty ● Climbing up a mountain ● Speaking Turkish in reverse ● Vain hope ● Toddler’s walking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Being a new person ● Self-confidence ● Crossing the barrier ● Being a famous musician ● A deaf person’s being able hear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Doing sports ● Cooking ● Show ● Having a nice time with friends ● Sauce ● Writing ● Puzzle ● Maze ● Playing games ● Playing a musical instrument ● Writing poetry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diving into Ocean ● Riding on a bus ● Long journey ● Visiting a new universe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Speaking the language of science ● Compulsory-Water X 2 ● Covid-19
F: 6	F: 5	F: 11	F: 4	F:5

When Table 3 is analyzed, the distribution of categories reveals that the majority of the metaphors created by the students are grouped in the category of 'fun' (f=11). This indicates that most of the students perceive 'speaking English' as fun such as having a nice time with friends, cooking, doing sports, etc.. Regarding being fun of 'speaking English', some of the quotations of the students are as follows:

"Speaking English is like doing sports, because it is very tiring at the beginning and it requires hard work, then it delivers pleasure and does not tire itself." (S2)

"Speaking English is like cooking, because if you don't cook, you will be compelled to order food online." (S6)

"Speaking English is like having a nice time with friends, because you can't understand how time passes when you're talking." (S16)

"Speaking English is like a puzzle because it has certain patterns." (S17)

"English is like sauce for me. If it does not exist, it does not matter, but if it exists, it openly shows its difference. It adds a qualification to the individual." (S18)

The category of 'adventure' can also be discussed along with 'fun', since students (f=4) find speaking English as doing adventurous activities such as discovering a new universe, diving into the ocean, etc.. Some of the quotations of the participants are below:

"Speaking English is like diving into an ocean, because no matter how deep you dive, there is something we don't know." (S5)

"Speaking English is like a long journey, because when it ends depends on your speed." (S14)

"Speaking English is like traveling from the first stop to the last stop by bus. Because it takes time and effort." (S9)

"Speaking English is like discovering a new universe because I believe it opens up to different realms and senses." (S21)

'Fun' is followed by the category of 'difficulty' regarding its frequency of use (f=6). This implies that although students perceive 'speaking English' as fun and adventure, some students also find it difficult. As S11 states that *'Speaking English is like a vain hope in today's system. Because our education system adopted grammar and testing systems for English and speaking is neglected, so speaking English has been a pipe dream today'*, some other factors such as the education system affect their views. Sample quotations in this category are as follows:

"Speaking English is like swimming in the cold sea, because, with both of them, first you get stuck, get used to it later and like it." (S26)

"Speaking English is like cruelty because I have not been able to speak it in my life." (S31)

"Speaking English is like climbing up the top of a high mountain because it is a very demanding thing, and it requires patience and courage." (S15)

"English is like reading Turkish in reverse, because the word order is mostly flipped." (S30)

Even though some students find speaking English difficult, others also are aware of its being an obligation (f=5). For example, S23 defines speaking English as 'water' and says: *"It is like water, because water is life and life is good."* The other samples are provided below.

"Speaking English seems compulsory because when we look at the position of this language in the international arena, it is the type of language in which communication is provided in subjects that are closely related to individuals such as science, health, education, and human rights." (S7)

"Speaking English is like speaking the language of science because it has scientific and naive phonetics." (S3)

"Speaking English is like Covid-19. Because once you start talking, it begins to be a big part of yours, you want everyone to know English." (S13)

"Speaking English is like water because it has become one of the basic needs of every person today." (S24)

On the other hand, five students see speaking English as a power (f=5). This implies that students are conscious about its advantage as well.

"Speaking English is having self-confidence for going on a world tour. Because speaking this language makes it easy to travel to many countries around the world." (S10)

"Speaking English is like being a new person because it is very different to use a language other than my native language, to navigate in different words, as if a new person emerges from me." (S4)

“Speaking English is like being a famous musician because you cannot hold on without talent.” (S12)

The categories can also be qualified as positive and negative. The positive category includes the categories of ‘power, fun, and adventure’, while the negative category includes ‘difficulty and obligation’.

Table 4: Distribution of Metaphors in Terms of Positive and Negative Categories

Positive Metaphors	f	%	Negative Metaphors	f	%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Doing sports ● Cooking- Show ● Having a nice time with friends ● Sauce-Writing ● Puzzle-Maze ● Playing games ● Playing a musical instrument ● writing poetry ● Being a new person ● Self-confidence ● Crossing the barrier ● Being a famous musician ● Diving into Ocean ● Riding on a bus ● Long journey ● Visiting a new universe 	20	66.66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Swimming in a cold water ● Cruelty ● Climbing up a mountaintop ● Speaking Turkish in reverse ● Vain hope ● Toddler’s walking ● Speaking the language of science ● Compulsory ● WaterX2 ● Covid-19 	10	33.33

When Table 4 is analyzed, it is seen that non-English major university students mostly have a positive attitude (66.66%) towards speaking English.

4.2. Distribution of Positive and Negative Metaphors in Terms of Gender

Table 5: Participants’ Positive and Negative Metaphor Distributions in Terms of Gender

Gender	Positive f (%)	Negative f (%)
Female	12 (38.70)	7 (22.58)
Male	8 (25.80)	4 (12.90)
Total	20 (64.51)	11 (35.48)

The answer of the third research question of this study, which is “Do the metaphors produced by non-English major university students differ from each other in terms of gender?”, is seen in Table 5 above. As a result of the analysis of the students’ metaphors, it is found that non-English major university students mostly have a positive attitude towards speaking English (64.51%) in total. However, female students are seen to be more optimistic (38.70%) than males (22.58%) about speaking English.

4.3. Distribution of Positive and Negative Metaphors in Terms of Grade Level

Table 6: Participants' Positive and Negative Metaphor Distributions in Terms of Grade Level

Grade Level	Positive f (%)	Negative f (%)
First-year	3 (9.67)	1 (3.22)
Second-year	15 (48.38)	8 (25.80)
Third-year	2 (6.45)	1 (3.22)

Table 6 shows the answer to the last research question of the study, which is: "Do the metaphors produced by non-English major university students differ from each other in terms of grade level?" As shown in Table 6, it is found that second-year university students have more positive perceptions (f=15) than first-year (f=3) and third-year (f=2) students towards speaking English.

5. Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

5.1. Discussion

This study was designed in order to reveal the perceptions of non-English major university students towards speaking English using the metaphors. In this study, when the metaphors produced by non-English major university students about speaking English were analyzed, the most preferred metaphor category was found as the category of 'Speaking English is fun' (35%). When the other preferred metaphors are analyzed, students are seen to mostly have positive attitudes (Speaking English of as an adventure 12% and Speaking English as a power %16) about speaking English. In total, 66% of the participants see the positive side of speaking English although they are not ELT major students. In this context, the results of our study contradict the results of Fang (2015) and Baş and Gezeğin (2015), partially overlap with the results of Erdem (2018) and parallel with the results of Bozdoğan (2012) and Gömleksiz (2013). Fang (2015) who conducted a study with both English-major and non-English major students on learning English using the metaphor analysis. According to his results, English majors talk more about the demands, while non-English majors experience more difficulty. In contrast, our non-English major participants mainly found it fun, adventure and power than it was difficult and obligation. Baş and Gezeğin (2015) also conducted their research with English major university students on learning English process using metaphor analysis and their results did not overlap with our results. They found in their study that EFL university students consider language learning to be an effortful and continuous process which requires support. On the other hand, Erdem's (2018) findings reveal that the students studying at departments of social sciences tend to create more positive metaphors while students at departments of quantitative sciences tend to create more negative metaphors, except for faculty of technology. These results partially have parallels with our results since our participants produced mostly positive metaphors regardless of their departments. Similarly, the results of the study by Bozdoğan (2012) who conducted a metaphor

analysis on CALL indicate that the categories obtained from pre-service teachers reveal that students perceive CALL highly positively. And this result overlaps with our results. Likewise, Gömleksiz (2013) found surprising results through metaphor analysis with pre-service teachers regarding the concept of 'foreign language'. He reported that 80% of his participants created positive metaphors, which are parallel with our results.

As it is seen, metaphors can be used as a powerful research tool in understanding, revealing and expressing the perception of students regarding speaking English. The negative expressions revealed through metaphors can guide ELT teachers to help their students to develop positive attitudes. In this context, the results of our study will also contribute to the perspective and practice of teachers in which they would be able to realize positive student perceptions about speaking English.

5.2. Conclusion

In this article, the researcher explored students' experience of speaking English by asking them to complete the sentence of "Speaking English is (like)because". The 30 metaphors were coded based on the semi-structured interview form that the researcher explores how students have perceived their experiences of speaking English so far. Their metaphors show that students do not have a comprehensive understanding of speaking English. Most of them feel that speaking English is fun, however some of them believe that it is difficult, and that speaking English gives power, self-confidence, talent to the individual. They also seem confused about speaking English. In the study, each student developed different perceptions of speaking English. Nevertheless, even though they were non-English Major students, they did not have many negative feelings towards speaking English. This study provided some outcomes:

Firstly, during the metaphor elicitation task, students had the opportunity to gain self-awareness about their perceptions of speaking English.

Secondly, this article gives an insight into how non-English Major university students perceive their experience of speaking English and this may help teachers who work in a similar context understand these perceptions and use them to facilitate and improve students' learning.

Thirdly, this study opens new gaps for further studies on metaphors for English speaking skills.

5.3 Suggestions

This study has some limitations due to COVID-19 pandemic. First of all, the number of participants was limited because of the school closings by the government and conducted with only 31 students using an online questionnaire form. For further research, more non-English Major university students can be reached to have different or more significant results. In addition, research can be conducted with universities from different countries to find out whether there is a global difference in terms of the perceptions of non-English Major University students towards speaking English. Additionally, the questionnaire of

the research only asks about the grade and gender information of the students. In further studies, individual variables such as social and economic background, and language proficiency may be taken into consideration in the analysis of the data.

About the Author

Gülsüm Öztürk is a certified sworn translator in Istanbul, Turkey and has been working as a freelancer. She specialized in TESOL and TEFL with the CELTA certificate of Cambridge University TESOL. She has been teaching English for 20 years at every level of English. She completed her MA in ELT at Akhmet Yassawi University, Ankara, Turkey. She also contributes to TED Talks and Coursera, well known platforms worldwide as the volunteer translator.

Conflict of interest statement

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare. She agrees with the contents of the manuscript and there is no financial interest to report. I certify that the submission is original work and is not under review at any other publication.

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Appendices

Annex 1: Questionnaire

Dear participant,

This study aims to find out the metaphorical perceptions of non-English major university students regarding speaking English. Please complete the sentence below by writing the metaphor you would use to describe 'speaking English' and detail your reasons for choosing that specific metaphor.

Thank you for your participation.

Gülsüm Öztürk

gulsumozturk@hotmail.com

Gender:.....

Grade:.....

(Speaking English is (like) Because)

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