

# A Follow-up Study on the Metaphoric Perception of Secondary School Students from TEOG to LGS\*

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## Abstract

This study aims at determining what kind of images represent the practices of TEOG and LGS in the minds of students during the transition from secondary to high school. It attempts to reveal through comparisons conducted whether any metaphorical change occurred in the minds of students during the transition from TEOG to LGS. A data gathering technique through metaphors from qualitative research methods was used in gathering data in this study, carried out with the participation of 187 students in 2017 and 189 students in 2018 at three secondary schools in Samsun, Turkey. The data gathered was analysed using the steps of coding and sorting, compiling a sample metaphor image, category development, validity and reliability. It was observed that exam change did not cause any change concerning the metaphors used by students in defining the exam as a result of the comparison of metaphors regarding both the above mentioned exams.

**Keywords:** TEOG, LGS, Metaphor, Exam, Transition to High Schools Examination.

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## INTRODUCTION

Today, formal education has become an indispensable part of life, and a system, through which students are centred in the education process, and their future planning is conducted by more professional individuals, has begun to be established in almost all parts of the world. Although the systems operating in different countries are generally similar, certain countries (Germany, Austria, Belgium, China and the USA) act correctly in line with the method of guidance in student admissions, while other countries (Turkey, Denmark, Malta, Korea, Luxembourg and a number of regions of the United States) apply a student selection system through examinations.

A formal test that you must pass in order to earn a particular qualification or to be allowed to do a particular job. A test of a student's knowledge or skill in a particular subject (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/tr/sözlük/ingilizce/examination>). National, regional and school-level assessments carried out for exam purposes serve many basic goals. The assessment is important in terms of ensuring a level of objective achievement as well as providing a measure of the effectiveness of the education system. In addition, it is also regarded as an indispensable tool concerning its structuring the development process of schools and it enables the schools to compare themselves with other institutions (Gültekin and Anagün, 2006).

Certain criteria are considered in the transition to a higher education institution all over the world, and while placements are fulfilled through year-end assessments in some countries, certain other countries prefer to guide students in accordance with their interests and skills in this process. Countries that perform result-oriented assessment admit students to high schools depending on the scores obtained as a result of these evaluations. Students are not tested until the 9th grade level in Denmark as one of these countries (Yüceer and Coşkun Keskin, 2012). The school where the students receive education until the 9th grade is called the Folkeskole, which involves primary and secondary schools. Students who complete their education at the Folkeskole level, are educated at the Gymnasium, a higher education institution. The Gymnasium is a three-year school considered equivalent to a high school in Turkey. It requires students to have completed English language education from the fourth grade and a second foreign language education from the seventh grade, totaling nine years in order to enrol at this school. It is also a requirement for entry to the Gymnasium that students must be reported as qualified by their previous school, and to achieve satisfactory scores in the exit test of Folkeskole (Erdoğan, 2000). While students take SEC exams, which are pre-requisites for placement in high school and post-secondary programs in Malta (Eurydice, 2019), it is required for a Korean student, graduated from secondary school, to pass a proficiency exam or any assessment providing equivalent credits, in order to enrol at high school (<http://english.moe.go.kr>). Furthermore, students are similarly required in Luxembourg to pass examinations, including courses in German, French and Mathematics, held separately for general and vocational high schools (İlğan, 2013).

Austria is one of the countries where the system of transition to a higher level of education will be exemplified. Although there is no chance of failing in class during primary education in this country, assessment with scores or oral assessment may be performed in line with the decision of the class or school at midterm or the end of the year. Students under certain conditions may be moved to higher or lower classes according to their parents' opinions. Students assessed according to their success in the prepared annual report can also be assessed in the later periods of the year. More decisive are the assessments made in the last period of the year (Memduhoğlu, 2008). Considering the educational system of the People's Republic of China, school children and youths may go to schools without taking any examination, and the government will allow them to enrol at schools close to their residences pursuant to the 12th article of Compulsory Education Law (MOE, 2019). With regard to Japan, students receive their education at high schools called Kotogakko, at the end of the secondary school period called Chugakko. Examinations or selection is conducted to be able to enrol at Kotogakko (<https://www.foreignconsultants.com/japan-educ.php> 2019). Although the process of student selection varies from school to school, most private and state schools choose their students themselves. In the regions, the Regional (prefecture) Education Board places students in schools by

conducting a student selection examination that is valid for all schools (Erdoğan, 2000). The system is slightly different in the United States (USA). Though education has unity nationwide on the basis of general principles, there are significant differences between states. Each student with twelve years of education is entitled to receive a high school diploma, regardless of their level of education in the states (Harmançı, 2013). A year-end exam is held in certain regions. The transcript, showing the lessons and grades received from the previous educational institution, is important for attendance at a higher education institution or to apply for a job (Erdoğan, 2000).

There are also a number of other countries performing follow-up assessments, and guiding students in accordance with their interests and skills in the process of placing students in any school along with those countries selecting and placing students with examinations. One of these countries is Germany, where children between the ages of 6-10 years, enrol at one of the following schools; High School (Gymnasium), secondary school (Realschule), elementary school (Hauptschule), or a multi-program school in some of the states during the first period of secondary education. This involves 5th-10th grade students in line with their success and aptitude, and the guidance of the school after they graduate from their four-year primary school. While the most successful students go to high school, students with an intermediate level of success attend secondary school, and other students enrol at elementary school. Assessment is made according to primary school grades. There is no criterion for students wishing to go to a multi-program school. Every student can receive education in this school if they want (Sağlam, 2004). On the other hand, it is possible to see that almost everyone in Germany chooses a school in line with their skills (Ertan Kantos, 2013). While the system in Belgium is aimed, not only to gain mathematical skills, but also to be able to serve the purposes of compulsory education, it also enables students to be placed in schools in accordance with their interests and skills in secondary education (Yılmaz, 2013).

In Turkey, students are selected to high schools through in-class tuition and training applications carried out by teachers along with determining desired behavioural changes and conducting central and multiple choice examinations for the purpose of placement (Yılmaz Koğar and Aygün, 2015; Dinç, Dere and Koluman, 2014).

Although examinations do not show great changes in terms of content, they differ in terms of name and application. The examinations, held by the Ministry of National Education (MEB) during the transition of students completing their primary education to secondary education, have taken different names over the years. The exam conducted in 2013, was called the Transition from Primary to Secondary Education (TEOG), and students began to be accepted into high schools through this examination (Zayımoğlu Öztürk and Aksoy, 2014; Karadeniz, Er and Tangülü, 2014; Ceran and Deniz, 2015).

The MEB declared that common examinations would be held by the Directorate General for Measurement, Assessment and Examination Services (DGMAES) during every term for certain courses. These were Turkish, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Education in Religion and Ethics, T.R. History of the Revolution and Kemalism, and Foreign Language in the 8th grade of Secondary schools in line with the rules and procedures of examinations. These common examinations would be conducted at the time of the first written exam for those courses with two written exams and a second written examination for those courses with three written exams. It was also emphasised that learning outcomes would be based on and prepared considering the written subject of each course, depending on the program of that school year and indicated in the curriculum announced by the Ministry. It was then underlined that questions would be prepared to measure the abilities of students, such as problem-solving, inference, critical thinking, interpretation, and analysis. The scores, obtained from the common exams, would be included in the year-end success calculation by entering them in the system of e-School as the first or second written examination point. As to the weighting system, it was also stated that a Weighted Common Exam Score (WCES) for each course would be calculated by multiplying four coefficients for the scores of Turkish, Mathematics, Science and Technology courses, and two coefficients for the scores of courses of T.R. History of Revolution and Kemalism, Foreign Language, and Education of Religion and Ethics. It was emphasized that the scoring would be made

over 700 full points. It was also added to the rules and procedures that students' year-end success points for the 6th, 7th and 8th grades would be added to the WCES of the 8th year, and that the obtained total score would be divided by two and used in the calculation of a basic score for placement at secondary education institutions admitting students through a central system. The scoring would be made over 500 full points (MEB, 2015a; MEB, 2015b). Many students struggled to achieve places in the schools they wanted with the TEOG system, practised from 2013 to 2017. All types of high schools began to admit students through TEOG scores, and this both increased the importance of central examinations and created disputes concerning the method of examination, and it is constantly being changed due to increasing competition (Şad and Şahiner, 2016). Accordingly, there are many studies investigating the effects of this practice on students, parents and teachers; evaluating the questions, content and scope of the exam; studying the effect of situations that students were in on their exam success, and receiving the opinions about the exam (Şad and Şahiner, 2016; Kaşıkçı, Bolat, Değirmenci and Karamustafaoğlu, 2015; Gökulu, 2015; Yılmaz Koğar and Aygün, 2015; Canpolat and Köçer, 2017; Karadeniz, Eker and Ulusoy, 2015; Erol, 2015; Cayhan and Akın, 2015; Özkan, Güvendir and Satıcı 2016; Akkaya, Özbay and Köksal, 2016; Topçu, 2017; Demirkaya and Karacan, 2016; Altun and Doğan, 2018; Tulunay Ateş, 2016; Kırkaplan, 2015; Taşkın and Aksoy, 2018; Kılıç and Kelecioğlu, 2016; Diken, 2018; Okutan and Daşdemir, 2018; Çelikel and Karakuş, 2017; Çolak, 2017; Batur, Başar and Şaşmaz, 2016; Eroğlu and Özbek, 2017; Bağcı, 2016; Çelikel, 2016; Çamurlu, 2018; Sarıcı, 2016; Yener, 2016; İnceoglu, 2015). A significant part of the studies conducted about TEOG revealed that this exam had significant effects on students, families and school, and it was especially effective in students' getting stressed.

All these data and studies carried out by MEB led to change in the system and functioning of TEOG, a new system called the High School Entrance Exam (LGS) came into force in 2018. The explanation about the content and assessment type of this exam, aimed to be held by the Ministry for the purpose of placing the students in the 8th grades of public and private secondary schools, temporary education centres (TEC) and religious vocational secondary school to Social Sciences High Schools, Science High Schools, Anatolian technical programs of Education Institutions carrying out projects and Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School is as follows: The examination consists of two parts as numerical and verbal. The verbal section will include question from the courses of Education of Religion and Ethics, Turkish, Foreign Language and T.R. History of Revolution and Kemalism while numerical section would involve questions from Science and Mathematics. The exam will be held on the same day in two sessions. Questions of the exam will be prepared by considering the learning outcomes taking part in the syllabus of 8th grade Science, Mathematics, Turkish, T.R. History of Revolution and Kemalism, Education of Religion and Ethics and Foreign Language. The question will aim to measure students' skills such as reading comprehension, interpreting, inference, analysing, problem-solving, critical thinking and scientific process. Two systems will be applied in Placement in Secondary Education Institutions. The first one of this is central placement in which placement will be performed depending on the scores that students obtained from exams, and the second one is local placement which will be applied for schools admitting students without any exam score (MEB, 2018).

In the literature, there are studies revealing the attitudes of students towards the exams that they took in order to pass to high schools (Çapulcuoğlu and Gündüz, 2013; Bacanlı and Sürücü, 2006; Duman, 2008; Koçoğlu and Kaya, 2016). What is more, studies were also conducted to suggest what kind of mental images students had concerning the exams, and which meanings they attributed to these exams by assuming that students may have concerns about exams (Koçak, Doğan Gül, Gül and Çokluk Bökeoğlu, 2017; Karadeniz, Er and Tangülü, 2014; Koçoğlu and Kaya, 2016; Zaimoğlu Öztürk and Aksoy, 2014). However, no studies have been detected in the literature regarding whether changes in the high schools entrance exams caused any change in the context of students' images. Thus, it was aimed to investigate in this study that whether the transition from TEOG to LGS caused any change in terms of the images and point of views of students concerning these exams. The following questions were sought answers to achieve targeted goals:

Which metaphors do students associate the TEOG exam with?

Which metaphors do students associate the LGS exam with?

What kind of changes occurred in the metaphors used by students to imagine these exams through transition from TEOG to LGS?

## METHOD

### Study Group

This study was carried out with the students educating in the 8th grade in three secondary schools selected from Atakum, Ilkadim and Tekkekoy districts of Samsun province in 2017 and 2018. While metaphors developed for TEOG were detected in the practice of 2017, the metaphors of LGS were determined in 2018. Whereas data gathering form developed for TEOG was distributed to 179 students, this number was 194 for LGS. It was paid attention to select students from the ones who would attend these exams and were voluntary to participate in this study when distributing the forms.

### Data Gathering Tool

Data gathering technique through metaphors from qualitative research data gathering methods was used in this study. The literal meaning of metaphor is “to use any word or concept in different meanings rather than accepted one” (Türk Dil Kurumu, 2018). Therefore, gathering data through simile has the same meaning with collecting data through metaphor. Two data gathering forms, consisting of the patterns of “TEOG is similar to .... for me. Because....” and “LGS is similar to .... for me. Because....”, were developed in order to gather data through metaphors. The literature was benefited while developing data gathering forms. Prepared forms were subjected to expert opinion, and then necessary corrections were performed on the forms.

### Data Gathering and Analysis

Obtained data were analysed by using the steps of coding and sorting, compiling a sample metaphor image, category development, validity and reliability (Saban, 2009).

The forms were checked in the stage of coding and sorting whether they had information about class and gender, explanations of the metaphors. The forms, which did not include even one of this information, were not received for consideration. Each of the forms was numbered and then alphabetical order of metaphors was carried out.

Percentages and frequencies of the metaphors in forms other than the forms eliminated in the sample metaphor image compilation stage were provided after they were alphabetically ordered, and sample metaphor expressions (explanations about metaphors) were given. Each student was given codes as S1, S2, S3 ... and thus it was aimed to determine the expressions of students clearly. Sample metaphor list was also created to be able to present metaphors in categories, and validate the commentaries with the data analysis process. It was then controlled whether metaphors created by students establish an integrated structure in terms of the subject and the source of metaphor. Conceptual categories were created by associating each achieved metaphor image with a theme and following this stage, ensuring validity and reliability were the next. Generated categories were called TEOG/LGS as the factor giving happiness to entertainment and life; TEOG/LGS as the medium of a new beginning and progress; TEOG/LGS as the factor of process and journey; TEOG/LGS as the element of oppression and tension; TEOG/LGS as the medium of rivalry and competition and TEOG/LGS as the element of uncertainty and doubt.

The researcher should use some additional methods (triangulation, participant approval, colleague approval) for obtained data and achieved results to ensure the validity and reliability of any study (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). Certain questions were sought answer especially to ensure internal

validity in this study. These questions included whether research findings were meaningful and defined depending on the environment where data were gathered; whether findings were meaningful and consistent within themselves; whether findings were ensured by using different data sources, data gathering methods and analyse strategies and then creating a meaningful whole, whether they were conformed with previously generated conceptual framework or theory, whether this framework was guide in gathering data. Moreover, it was checked whether there were rules and strategies used in verifying the finding and these were used appropriately; to determine unclear phenomenon and events, to use alternative approaches in clarifying the findings, whether findings were found to be realistic by the participants, whether estimations and generalizations were consistent with obtained data (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013; Miles and Huberman, 2015). It was tried to ensure the internal validity of the study by giving reasonable answers to all these questions. A pilot practice with 22 students was carried out before conducting main practices to determine the reliability, and required corrections were performed in data gathering tool. This study was excluded from the main practices conducted.

## FINDINGS

The metaphors developed by students towards TEOG and LGS and their explanations regarding these metaphors were attempted to be presented in this section of the study. What we wanted to reveal is whether any change has occurred concerning the images that students have developed about high school entrance exams following the process of transition from TEOG to LGS.

### Gathered Data Concerning TEOG and LGS

The metaphors, obtained from 178 students towards TEOG in 2017, were categorised by using content analysis, and totally 110 valid metaphors were achieved after eliminating reiterated ones. The most commonly used metaphors used by participants towards TEOG are as follows: Fear (12), Future (10), Exam (9), Life (5), Stress (5), Nightmare (5) Exam of the life (3), Incubus (3), War (3) and Torture (2). The metaphors developed towards TEOG, categories of metaphors, percentages and frequencies are provided in the following table:

**Table 1: Metaphorical Perceptions and Conceptual Categories towards TEOG**

Categories	Metaphors	Number/ Frequency	Percentage
TEOG as the factor giving happiness to entertainment and life	Computer (1), Hobby (1), Cake (1)	3/3	1.6
TEOG as the medium of a new beginning and progress	Door (2), Step (1), A new house and key (1), Lift (1), Stair (1), Beginning (1), Arrow (1), Trailer (1), Gate (1), Bridge (1), Stairs (1), The first day of school (1), Opportunity (1), Turning point (1) Hope (1)	15/16-	8.9
TEOG as the factor of process and journey	Life (5), Moon (1), Pilot Test (1), Film scenario (1), Hourglass (1), Put something learned into practice (1), Chess (1), Titanic (1), Train (1), Lifestyle (1), Road (1), Difficult journey (1), Journey (1)	13/17	9.5
TEOG as the element of oppression and tension	Apple (1), Fear (12), Horror film (10), Future (10), Nightmare (5), Exam (9), Stress (5), Incubus (3), Exam of life (3), War (3), Torture (2), A dark room (2), Horror play (2), Horror tunnel (2), Death (2), Difficult exam (4), Torture exam (2), Unpassable bridge (2), Mother (1), Unpassable mountain (1), Angel of death (1), Father (1), Hell (1), Between heaven and hell (1), A damned school (1), A damned pavilion (1), Celery (1), Doomsday (1), Fearful moments (1), Fear labyrinth (1), A terrible nightmare (1), Anxiety (1), A dark gap (1), Heart throb (1), Pain (1), Last opportunity of the life (1), Murderer of imagination (1), Obstacle to life (1), Illness (1), Tension (1), The death of best-loved (1), An Anxious emotion (1), Obstacle race (1), Drama (1), Hail (1), Grave stone (1), Teacher (1), Death machine (1), An important exam (1), Spider (1), An assailant animal (1), As-sirāt (1), A world full of stress (1),	62/123	69.1

	Leech (1), Challenging (1), A challenging process (1), Difficult (1), Snake (1), Test (1), Borderline (1), Adrenalin (1), Question (1)		
TEOG as the medium of rivalry and competition	Besiktas (1), Excitement (1), Puzzle (1), Filter (1), Race (1), Bumper car (1), Marathon (2), Human being (1)	8/9	5-
TEOG as the element of uncertainty and doubt.	Tunnel (2), High school in my future (1), More than only an exam (1), Labyrinth (1), Scales (1), Never-ending road (1), Clutch pencil (1), An endless staircase (1), Endless tunnel (1)	9/10	5.6-
		110/178	

Totally, 130 valid metaphors were achieved after removing the reiterated ones from the metaphors created by 189 students participating in the study in the analysis of LGS in 2018. Ten most reiterated metaphors by students regarding LGS are as follows; Incubus (15), Fear (10), Nightmare (10), Stress (6), Torture (3), Hell (5), Worry (3), Football Match (3), Mountain (3) and Anxiety (2). Metaphors developed towards LGS, categories of metaphors, percentages and frequencies are given in the following table:

**Table 2: Metaphorical Perceptions and Conceptual Categories towards LGS**

Categories	Metaphors	Number/ Frequency	Percenta ge
LGS as the factor giving happiness to entertainment and life	Rose (1), A nice garden (1), Imagination (1), An exciting dream (1), The excitement of person going for his/her first vote (1), A good future (1), A good life (1), A good exam (1), Goodness (1), Tale (1), Angel (1), Happiness (1), A useful work (1), Trefoil (1), Festival (1), Health (1), Reading book (1)	17/17	8.9
LGS as the medium of a new beginning and progress	Key to help on the way to dreams (1), A new life (2), Door (1), Transition to real life (1), Beginning to first grade (1), New school (1), Palace (1), Stair (1) Bridge of life (1)	9/10	5.2
LGS as the factor of process and journey	Tree (1), Film strip (1), Bridge (2), Fate (1), Road (1), Journey (1)	6/7	3.7
LGS as the element of oppression and tension	Barbie doll (1), Angel of death (2), Hell (5), Mountain (3), Worry (3), Future (2), Life exam (2), Torture (3), (15), Incubus Anxiety (2), Fear (10), Nightmare (10), Stress (6), LGS (2), Difficulty (2), Deed book (1), Surgery (1), Patient to be undergone surgery (1), Car without key (1), Bee (1), Fire (1), Bomb (1), Monster (1), Horror house (1), Horror film (1), Feeling of horror (1), Horror train (1), Something Horrifying (1), Something Terrifying (1), Fearful dog (1), A complex thing (1), Cactus (1), Going to hospital (1), Fighting with illness (1), Exam which will direct life (1), Nervous waiting (1), Funeral (1), Wall (1), The person who enrolled education faculty and waiting to be teacher but could not appoint as a teacher (1), Obstacle (1), Mountain with an obstacle (1), Donkey (1), Remain paralysed (1), Storm (1), Case with little hope (1), Creature (1), Day of mourning (1), A difficult exam (1), A compelling life (1), Challenging road (1), Question (1), Faded flower (1), Someone I dislike (1), Spider (1), Going to death (1), Day of death (1), Difficult to play (1), Negation (1), An important exam (1), Mine area (1), Judgment Day (1), Something damned (1), A bad smell (1), A bad thing (1), A bad exam (1)	65/118	62.4
LGS as the medium of rivalry and competition	Driving car (1), Football match (3), Formula car (1), Excitement (1), Beaten in Handball match (1), Election (2), Testing yourself (1), Foot-race (1), Test (1), Assessment (1), Experience (1), Effort (1), Normal exam (1), Competition (1), Game (1), Track (1), Rivalry (1), Overhead kick (1), Sport (1), Chance (1), Scale (1)/ Options in the exam (1), Dream (1), Plastic (1), Plastic bottle (1), Lottery (1), Possibility (1), Wonder (1), Box (1), Much (1), A huge mountain (1), Labyrinth (2), Cul de sac (1)	21/24	12.7
LGS as the element of uncertainty and doubt.	Choices in the exam (1), Dream (1), Plastic (1), Plastic bottle (1), Lottery (1), Possibility (1), Wonder (1), Box (1), Much (1), A huge mountain(1), Labyrinth (2), Cul de sac (1)	12/13	6.8
		130/189	

It is possible to state that although metaphors are not literally same, LGS has similar effects on students with TEOG by referencing the explanations. As is seen, metaphors were evaluated under the dimensions of TEOG and LGS and they were placed in appropriate conceptual category, thus totally six conceptual categories were created, the explanations of these conceptual categories were provided below comparatively:

### **TEOG/LGS as the Factor Giving Happiness to Entertainment and Life**

The reason for calling this category as TEOG/LGS as the factor giving happiness to entertainment and life is the association of metaphors and explanations ascribed by students for the exam with entertaining situations of life. When considering the numerical similarities of metaphors obtained for this category in TEOG and LGS, the following table welcomes us. It is observed that the similes made in the dimension of TEOG constitute % 1.6 of all metaphors and % 8.9 in the dimension of LGS. This urges that LGS had more positive effects on students than TEOG. Some explanations of the metaphors in this category are as follows:

S79: ...looks like cake. Because its questions are easy. It has easier questions with more difficult ones. Those difficult questions are easy for hardworking individuals.

S168: ... looks like computer.. Because we pass TEOG as we play games on computer successfully. Just think TEOG as a written exam.

As is seen, there are only three metaphors regarding TEOG while there are 17 metaphors for LGS, and this causes to think that students perceived the new system more positive, and this situation may originate from the negative thoughts developed for the prior system. It can also be considered that this was affected by the hope of students, witnessing the pressure of TEOG on other students around them, about LGS. Some of the explanations performed for these metaphors are below:

S24: ...looks like a beautiful garden. Because I think I will go to a nice high school.

S51: ...looks like a good life. Because corrects and wrongs that I will make in this exam will shape my life. A good exam brings with a good high school and university. For this reason, LGS is the beginning of a good life.

S61: ...looks like a tale. Because I know that it is an action with a good end.

S139: ...look like a festival. Because the questions are very easy. Exam is very nice. It is easy and we enjoy when answering questions.

### **TEOG/LGS as the Medium of a New Beginning and Progress**

The metaphors and explanations stated in this category show that the students focused on the result by leaving aside the positive-negative emotions experienced in the process. It is observed that the students, who made commentary in this category, form %8.9 of all students in TEOG while this rate is %5.2 for LGS. Some of the explanations about the metaphors that students developed in this category concerning TEOG are as follows:

S31: ...looks like a beginning. Because this exam may change your life. We will have a new school and new friends by having a new start with this exam.

S107: ...look like a bridge. Because we will change the rest of our life with this exam. Our future will take shape in accordance with our success in this exam. For this reason, TEOG is like a bridge in our life.

S130: ...looks like a new house and car. Because we enter this new house with our intelligence and success. Some houses may be ugly, small, and irritating. Some houses may be comfort, nice, spacious and comfortable. TEOG is the key to these houses and the key to open these doors is at our hands.

The metaphors in the dimension of LGS indicate that students consider this exam as a new beginning of life and the medium of progress. Students' ascribing meaning to this exam, which will help them to achieve the end of this process, cause to think that students managed this process healthily by being free from the facts such as anxiety, worry, stress. Some of the explanations are below:

S1: ...looks like a step. Because many people have goals and they must struggle for this. LGS is only a step for my achieving goals in the future. I think that if I pass this stage, I will approach my goal one more step.

S7: ...looks like the bridge of life. Because, when we attend this exam, we take a new step for our life and then pass to a new dimension. For this reason, I liken this exam the bridge of life. I determine my own life.

S52: ...looks like a new life. Because it is like a step.

S53: ...it is a transition to real life. Because we study all year long for High School Entrance Exam. Thus, the better our future high school is, the more successful we are.

#### **TEOG/LGS as the Factor of Process and Journey**

It is seen in this category that students described TEOG as a process and the things lived during this period, and defined it especially with means of transport or moving objects. It is also observed that while %9.5 of students made commentary about TEOG within the scope of this dimension, this is %3.7 for LGS. This causes to think that the students, who would attend TEOG, focused on this process more whereas students, who would take the exam of LGS, did not assign meaning to this process as much as the prior students. Some of the explanations regarding the metaphors that students developed towards TEOG are given below:

S17: ...looks like a train. Because if I do not miss that train, I can reach wherever I want. However, if I do not use the opportunity of getting on the train that is studying, this may take me to any school or job that I do not want.

S38: ...looks like the moon. Because the world has two concepts as night and day. You can see the moon at night but not in a day. I see that I approach more to TEOG with each arrival of the moon to the sky, and I live both outburst of excitement and fear inside me. This affects me both positively and negatively for my future. I will struggle to get a good future with fear and excitement.

S169: ...looks like Titanic. Because my dreams may disappear with a bad result as Titanic sank. If I take a good result, the ship will not sink and continue to be the biggest ship.

The explanations of LGS in this category are as follow:

S2: ...looks like beginning the first grade. Because I think that I will be excited when taking the exam as much as I was when beginning the first grade.

S38: ...looks like a film strip. Because everything goes fast and quickly like a film strip.

## TEOG/LGS as the Element of Oppression and Tension

The category in which students reflected their emotions as the most pessimistic, worried and stressful is the category of TEOG/LGS as the element of oppression and tension. It also urges that students have mostly negative perceptions towards these exams since most of the metaphors were expressed in this dimension and all of them were negative. In this manner, it is thought that students may need the support of a specialist for the process management rather than the support of their families, schools and peers. When considering the metaphors developed by students towards TEOG in this category, it is observed that while 69.1% of metaphors of TEOG relate to this category, this rate is 62.4% for LGS. It is clear that the developed metaphors and explanations of this category for both of exam dimensions have the biggest part within all metaphors and explanations, and there is not any big difference between them in terms of percentage. This shows that students wait for both exams with concern. The explanations of students about the metaphors that they developed towards TEOG are below:

S91: ...looks like a horror film. Because TEOG is very fearful. It will change my future, and it is important in this respect, but stressful. It is actually an exam which is like torture and fear for students. When you enter the exam, your role is determined in that film. Your future and job will become clear in this exam.

S92: ...looks like hell. Because I go with my own will, but I return by not getting what I want. In other words, I am going to hell with my own foot.

S101: ...looks like the angle of death. Because we may go to a bad high school if we make any mistake. My mother always says that you will see the reality if you go to a vocational high school. I sometimes want to commit suicide.

M106: ...looks like my mother. Because my mother frightens me as much as TEOG.

S107: ...looks like celery. Because I hate celery.

S109: ...it is like the death of my best-loved. Because we had such a little time. The fear of if I could not success kills me. Making the same mistakes and wrongs, each of my day is the same the previous ones. It sometimes seems like that the sun will not rise again, and I will be obliged to darkness. I lose something from myself with each passing day. The fear gnaws away me.

It is understood from the expression of students that they were not only affected by the exam itself as an element of oppression and tension, but stress originating from environmental factors were also effective on students. The most remarkable thing in this dimension of the study is students' associating the exam with the concepts of death and afterlife. It is not difficult to predict how much these statements are worrying for students considering their developmental period and age. Some of the expressions of students about LGS concerning indicated metaphors are below:

S12: ... looks like fear. Because I was thinking to get enough score for Science High School at TEOG. However, when this exam (LGS) appeared, I began to feel stress, worry, fear and similar feelings. Most of my future plans ended with this exam.

S19: ...looks like judgement day. I could not study since the system of exam continuously changes. I do not know what will happen at the end of the exam. I am afraid of getting a low score. If it was TEOG, it would be easier. Come back TEOG.

S26: ...looks like the day of death. Because my heart becomes like skipping a beat when I hear its name.

S103: ...looks like somebody that I dislike. Because you feel bad when you one of your friends that you do not like. I get stressed whenever I hear about LGS.

S128: ...looks like a monster. Because the system has changed in the year that we will take the exam, and I get more stressed than before. I even sometimes could not collect my thoughts. For this reason, I liken the new system to the monster.

S132: ...looks like a faded flower. Because it is very challenging for me, I must always study lesson. I can forget what I know when attending the exam or I have many wrong answers. I may be unsuccessful.

### **TEOG/LGS as the Medium of Rivalry and Competition**

It is possible to see that students, who made explanations about the metaphors of this category, focused only to be successful in this process. The importance of rivalry and competition in the process of achieving success is undeniable, but it is important to know the source triggering the sense of rivalry in estimating that how the mental health of students' is affected. While the spontaneous desire of success provide student's competing with itself, the external wish of success will not evoke the same feelings for the student. Some of the explanations of students, who developed metaphors about TEOG, regarding these similes are below:

S16: ... looks like a puzzle. Because it is demanding. You can find the words over time. TEOG is like this. You can achieve what you want at the end of a long-term study. That is what you want.

S35: ...looks like a marathon. Because when I beat somebody, I am getting ahead. I achieve a better position when I get ahead.

S124: ...looks like Besiktas because there is fear, excitement and it is merciless.

S135: ...looks like a bumper car. Because everybody wants to have better positions by passing this exam.

When considering the explanations of students developing metaphor towards LGS within the scope of this category, it is possible to see that there are students regarding the exam as the medium of rivalry and competition. It is also observed that some of the students, considering this rivalry and competition as required, made comments about the new system by beginning to worry with hearsay information. It can also be understood from the comments that this new system was put into practice fast, and the official declaration was not made for some of the students. Some of these statements are as follow.

S89: ...looks like a rivalry. I think I will get a good score from the exam, and I will obtain a good result by studying.

S126: ...looks like a race track. Because it is required to study much to become ready for the exam and to get a high score. Some exams are really difficult like a race track.

S127: ...looks like foot-race. Because it is said that the exam is very difficult. We were studying less for TEOG, but now we must study more.

S155: ...looks like a football match. If you study, you pass it.

S178: ...looks like a formula car. Because it was suddenly put into practice

## **TEOG/LGS as the Element of Uncertainty and Doubt**

It is possible to see students with unclear feelings regarding TEOG in this category. The effect of an uncertain situation of students may be estimated since uncertainty causes the individual to get worried. The explanations of metaphors concerning TEOG are below:

S14: ...looks like an endless road. Because when you enter a road, you would go at the end of it to see its end, but you could not leave that road whether its results would be bad or good. You have entered before...

S36: ...looks like a tunnel. Because we study without knowing what will happen. As for me, it is dark, a tunnel difficult to cross.

S52: ...looks like an endless staircase. Because it does not have an end. There is not an end of subjects, and pilot test every day and same things every evening, you always see the same things every day but there is no end. No end.

In this category, there are students who could not make prediction about the future and looking at the future with doubtful eyes due to the new system. The metaphors of LGS were expressed by students and some of these expressions supporting these metaphors are as follow:

S8: ...looks like a box. Because I do not know whether the thing inside is good or bad. I also do not know that the result that I would get will be good or bad for me.

S160: ...looks like cul de sac. Because exams are going on throughout our life. The type of questions is not known. We could not answer any question in the exam although we answered many questions before. For this reason, I am quite frightened, especially from mathematics. Because both questions are difficult, and they may sometimes be asked from the subjects that we did not discuss. This is like a cul de sac.

S162: ...looks like a labyrinth. Because I could not see any exit from this exam. Ok, each labyrinth may have an exit, but mine has not, and I am thus frightened.

## **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

Many different systems were tried in the placement of students to high schools from past to present, and studies were conducted for enabling the new system better than the previous one. These studies mostly aimed at decreasing the exam stress of students. However, although exams have changed, this stress has increased as the fact of exam is still going on. Considering the ages and developmental period of students who were affected from the changes made in the exams of transition to secondary school, it is not difficult to predict that how these students would feel before these changes. However, it is significant to get information about the real feelings of students about this issue instead of judging beforehand by making predictions. For this reason, a study aiming at obtaining information about the perceptions of students towards the exam was decided to be conducted, and it was sought to reveal whether any change occurred in the opinions of students along with the changes made in the exam systems.

To that end, data was gathered separately for TEOG and LGS in 2017 and 2018, and it was then investigated that the change in exam system led any difference regarding the perceptions of students towards the exam by comparing the data obtained from both studies. After categorising the metaphors expressed by students, which category had more metaphors, qualifications of metaphors and their explanations were checked. Accordingly, it was researched that what students were thinking about both of the exams, and whether changed exam system enabled them to have different opinions than prior practice.

When the metaphors and their explanations in the category of TEOG/LGS as the factor giving happiness to entertainment and life are examined, it has been identified that the opinions of students seemed changes in the process of transition from TEOG to LGS. In this category, while 3 students stated positive opinion about TEOG, this was 17 for LGS. Compared to TEOG, LGS has emerged as a factor that reduces stress even though it is very small.

As to the category of TEOG/LGS as the medium of a new beginning and progress, it is possible to reach the explanations of 16 students for TEOG and 10 for LGS. It was detected that considering the new practice as a medium was not lived as much as in TEOG.

On the other hand, while 17 students considered TEOG in the category of TEOG/LGS as the factor of process and journey, this was 7 for LGS. It is thought that students regarded these exams as a preview of their life in the future. It was revealed that students, underlining that meeting the expectations of their families was also important for them, had exterior stress. The studies, emphasizing that families were struggling for their children's enrolling a better high school and thus LGS became more important, are in the parallel of confirming that students are alone with this source of stress (Çolak, 2017).

The category in which feelings and opinions were expressed most regarding both of the practices is TEOG/LGS as the element of oppression and tension. Most of the students defined LGS and TEOG exams as causing pressure, stressing, and affecting the psychology negatively. While 123 students made statements about TEOG, this number was 118 for LGS. This is the maximum number of individuals within the all study group. What is more, it is observed that the new system did not affect students different from the previous one, for this reason, this new system did not raise more positive feelings than the former one. Generally, considering the data obtained in this category, it is possible to see that students associated these exams with the words referring to the end of life such as; death, death machine, hell, between hell and heaven, the death of best-loved, as-sirāt, the angel of death, deed book, funeral, going to death, day of death, judgement day. It is not difficult to predict what kind of pressure students feel on themselves considering the relationship of these words with the fact of death. The explanation of one of the students likening TEOG to the death of angel presents the effect of the exam on students more clearly. S101 coded student "...looks like the angle of death. Because we may go to a terrible high school if we make any mistake. My mother always says that you will see the reality if you go to a vocational high school. I sometimes want to commit suicide. This student both correlated the exam with death closely and emphasized that s/he was thinking about committing suicide by expressing that what kind of pressure was applied on his/her by his/her mother during this process. Another student underlined that s/he did not get support from his/her family during this process by saying "...looks like my mother. Because she is frightening me as much as TEOG". In this regard, it is seen that family support is very important for the students in the preparation process for the exam. The studies, underscoring that the family support is effective regarding the success at TEOG (Çamurlu, 2018) and interfamilial happiness has a positive significant relationship on the net correct answers at TEOG (Sarıcı, 2016), are confirming our related finding and detection. The fact that some students are afraid of the reactions of their families shows that families have a negative role in LGS as it was for TEOG. It can be mentioned that system change did not provide any positive change for the students considering the metaphors in the category of "TEOG/LGS as the element of oppression and tension" concerning both practices. The studies (Kırkaplan, 2015; Şad and Şahiner, 2016) presenting the negative approaches of students against the exam of TEOG support our finding.

While 9 students generated metaphorical expression for TEOG, this was 24 for LGS in the category of TEOG/LGS as the medium of rivalry and competition. It may also be thought that defining the exam of TEOG with the expressions such as getting ahead, competing originates from the pressure that system created on students and focusing completely on the target. However, the statements about LGS such as "...looks like a formula car. Because it was suddenly put into practice." and "...looks like foot-race. Because it is said that the exam is very difficult. We were studying less for TEOG, but now we must study more." cause us to think that exam is considered as a competition factor due to its

sudden introduction and the thought of being difficult. Studies, emphasizing that TEOG forced students joining a competition and led to rivalry (Erođlu and Özbek, 2017) and this rivalry included the families into the process (Çolak, 2017), confirm that how the process turned into the medium of rivalry, and the expressions of students show that the same situation is also seen in LGS.

The metaphors in the category of TEOG/LGS as the element of uncertainty and doubt indicate that students approach both exams and future doubtfully. It is not difficult to predict that the changed exam system (considering that there is not any sample performed before) establishes an obstacle before students to prepare themselves healthily for the exam for a reasonable period (Çapulcuođlu and Gündüz, 2013; Bacanlı and Sürücü, 2006; Duman, 2008; Koçođlu and Kaya, 2016) revealing the anxiety created by the entrance exams for high school on students.

It is not possible to state by referencing all obtained data that the practices of TEOG and LGS raised very different metaphors in the mind of students and generated different effects on them. Starting from this point of view, it can be urged that the important thing is not to make changes in the high school entrance exams, but to produce more radical and valid solutions. Therefore, Hatunođlu and Hatunođlu (2006) underline that the operations of recognition and guidance should be carried out with scientific data and methods. Students can be educated according to their interests and skills by canalising the individuals educated in detecting the interests and skills of students to schools. These students, who may get affected by the negations more due to their developmental period (adolescence), need guidance service. In this sense, students should be supported by school guidance services and their families in coordination with the exam process. Büyükkaragöz (1990) argued that the students, tired of the confusion of exam, are affected negatively in psychosocial and educational dimensions, getting more stressed since they are conditioned by their parents to pass the exam, and failing at the end of all these causes the adolescent to lose his/her self-confidence, and this would affect his/her future life.

Assessing students, preparing to enrol a higher level of school, with a process-driven instead of result-oriented approach will both remove the exam anxiety of students and enable them live this process more healthy, and thus they may be mentally more healthy and successful individuals in the future. The exam should be addressed by performing formative assessment instead of the one conducted during the transition to a higher level of school in order to prevent exam's being a "pressuring" phenomenon in the minds of students, and placement should be carried out in this sense.

To conclude, it is observed that LGS, which was put into practice instead of TEOG, caused a little positive difference in the feelings and opinions of students; in general, change did not occur in the meaning ascribed to the exam; exam was considered as a burden by students. It may be better to prepare a process-driven placement system instead of result-oriented one and placing students in accordance with this system in order to prevent exam's being considered by students as a factor creating "fear", and process' generating pressure and tension on students.

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