

## Metaphorical perceptions of undergraduate tourism students towards the concepts of English and Professional English: the case of Türkiye-Spain

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### Abstract

The primary purpose of this research is to determine the metaphorical perceptions of the student's tourism in Türkiye and Spain regarding the concepts of English and professional English and to compare these perceptions. The phenomenology technique was adopted and used in this research. The data were collected in person using a two-question questionnaire. A purposeful sampling technique was used for this research. Data were collected from May 24 to May 28, 2022. The content analysis method was applied in the analysis of the research data. The results show that students' metaphorical perceptions of English and professional English concepts are positive and different. The research findings show that English and professional English learning interact with the inner worlds of the students.

**Keywords:** *Metaphorical perceptions, Tourism students, Professional English, Spain, Türkiye*

### 1. Introduction

The tourism sector is a direct and indirect economic contributor to countries. The main economic benefits are the increase in foreign currency, employment opportunities development, investment diversification, and the taxes paid by the enterprises providing tourism services (Bunghez, 2016; Demir et al., 2017). The primary driver for achieving these economic benefits is tourism. Tourists are crucial to hosting countries (Zaei & Zaei, 2013). Tourists are required to establish a dialogue and agreement with the employees of the companies providing tourist services in the host country. Nowadays, tourists use English even though it is not their first language (Aldohon, 2014). In host countries, English is at the top of the list of those working in tourism, as in other sectors (Angouri, 2013). Because speaking the same language is necessary to understand and answer the needs of tourists. Tourism companies also want their employees to have a certain level of English and professional English.

Using English at a sufficient level is the main feature tourism sector employees seek (Rao, 2019). This feature is inevitable for the industry to improve service quality and compete (Chang & Hsu, 2010). English is also essential for ensuring tourists' satisfaction as customers (Bobanovic &

Grzinic, 2011). In addition, professional English skills increase job opportunities for tourism professionals (Ghany & Latif, 2012). For this reason, employees need to use professional English skills effectively (Lertchalermtipakoon et al., 2020). Most of the employees in the tourism sector are educated at a university (Demir et al., 2023). English and professional English education are also within this scope (Al-Tarawneh & Osam, 2019). With the successful realization of schooling, students fulfill their responsibilities while working in the tourism sector and can communicate with tourists (Zahedpisheh et al., 2017). Factors that do not originate from students, such as academic education quality and academic conditions, can influence the success of English education. In addition, a significant factor is students' perceptions of English and professional English. Students' perceptions of English affect their tendency to learn the language (Gömlüksiz, 2013). In this context, the perceptions about English in the student's subconscious are decisive in learning English.

Perception is an abstract concept. Metaphors facilitate the conceptual understanding of concepts by concretizing them and, in other words, concretely expressing an abstract concept through metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). Using metaphors in education and language studies is a method

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researchers adopt (Low & Cameron, 2002). When the literature is reviewed, we see that the English language and education are often used in metaphors. In these studies, students' metaphorical perceptions of English teachers (Mudra & Aini, 2020; Nikitina & Furuoka, 2008; Zhang, 2016), teachers' metaphorical perceptions of English (Demir, 2018; Su & Yang, 2020; Zambon Ferronato, 2022) and students' metaphorical perceptions of English were examined (Baş & Gezeğin, 2015; Bekdaş, 2017; Duyar & Özkan, 2020; Erdem, 2018; Fang, 2015; Genç, 2017; Hongqin & Jianbin, 2008; Limon, 2015; Pehlivan et al., 2020, Şahin & Kil, 2020; Teskereci et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2022).

In tourism, few studies determine metaphorical perceptions of English and professional English. Özer (2020) surveyed to learn the metaphorical perceptions of English and professional English of tourism students. To the authors' knowledge, there is no other research for tourism education students. In addition, studies both in the field of tourism and in other areas were carried out within the scope of a single sample or country. In line with this information, it is necessary to fill the literature gap and present a different perspective on the literature. In this context, the primary purpose of this research is to determine the metaphorical perceptions of the students studying tourism in Türkiye and Spain regarding the concepts of English and professional English and to compare these perceptions.

Within the scope of the research purpose, it will make essential contributions in two areas. First, determining the professional English metaphorical perceptions of tourism education students will provide a different perspective on the literature. Secondly, it will be possible to compare the English and professional English perceptions of the students who receive tourism education in two different cultures.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. English within the scope of professional terminology

Language is the primary tool for communicating and sharing ideas. Every country has its own national language (Kramersch, 2014). In addition to the national language, each country adopts and learns languages often used in other countries (Melitz & Toubal, 2014). One of these languages is English. The importance of English, a language spoken in almost every country, is indisputable (Ilyosovna, 2020). Today, English is necessary for everyone (Reddy, 2012). It is indispensable, especially for businesses and employees that produce and provide services to people from different countries (Crystal, 2003). English may require people to achieve personal goals (Warriner, 2016). Because with English, people can communicate with the individuals they want and explain their problems (Ryan, 2009). In addition, English allows people to collaborate with people from different countries in their careers (Cargill & O'Connor, 2006). English is also important for countries other than people. English is the common language in the everyday dialogues and agreements of the countries (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996).

English is used in fields such as science, literature, and trade in countries (Lee & Buxton, 2013).

In such an equation, it is necessary to know English and, more specifically, professional English to communicate. Because English is accepted as an international language and is used more frequently with each passing period (Anam & Rachmadian, 2020). Professional English, a particular-purpose English, is used in different fields, especially in-service sectors (Dudley-Evans & John, 1998). General English and professional English have similarities in content. For example, Subjects such as listening, speaking, writing, reading, and grammar are offered within the scope of the training, both at a certain level. Along with this similarity, there are also differences. Professional English is aimed at the sector in the career plan of the individual or student (Demir & Demir, 2016). General English, conversely, is not for the sectoral dimension but for daily life (Kitkauskienė, 2006). General English constitutes the first step in which the individual begins the English learning process. Professional English is the next step for individuals learning general English (Özer, 2020). Students receiving tourism education receive both general English and professional English education. In English education, students understand general rules and logical relations. On the other hand, in professional English, more specific training content is shown and taught, such as welcoming guests, making their reservations, establishing a dialogue for any guests' needs and solving problems, and giving information to the guests about the business or the region. A student or employee who uses professional English effectively facilitates quality service delivery (Leslie & Russel, 2006).

### 2.2. Metaphoric perception

Metaphor, a term of Greek origin, corresponds to expressions that change and carry (Levine, 2005). Metaphors include making meaning changes between concepts (Nikitina & Furuoka, 2008). The main reason for doing this is to make that concept more understandable (Adu-Ampong, 2016). Using metaphors, images are compared to something else. Thus, the idea is expressed more memorably (Allan, 2007). The variety of analogies of concepts depends entirely on the perception of the individual's inner world. The individual better explains the thoughts and perceptions in his inner world using metaphors (Levitt et al., 2000). This also increases awareness of the concept explained (Crompton, 2017).

Metaphor is a tool that allows us to recognize thoughts and feelings and simultaneously convey them (Zhang & Hu, 2009). Metaphors enable an individual to introduce himself (Draaisma, 2000) because metaphors show the individual's mindset. How a concept is understood, and its position in life can be learned through metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). Metaphor reflects the individual's subconscious in real life (Botha, 2009). For this reason, metaphor is considered a tool with creative use (Andriessen & Gubbins, 2009). For a concept to be considered a metaphor, it must answer some questions.

These are (Forceville, 2002):

- What is a metaphor analogous and likened?
- What is the conceptual goal and source of the metaphor?
- In what features are the conceptual source and target similar?

These questions question the reality of metaphorical perception. It is determined whether a metaphor is considered a metaphor. In presenting the concept as a metaphor, logical relations are sought. The individual is evaluated to express the metaphor appropriate to the characteristics of the concept.

Within the framework of research purpose, answers to the following questions are sought. These:

1-What metaphorical perceptions of students studying tourism in Türkiye and Spain about English?

2-What metaphorical perceptions of students studying tourism in Türkiye and Spain about professional English?

3-In which categories are the English and professional English metaphorical perceptions of students studying tourism in Türkiye and Spain?

4-Is there a difference in the metaphorical perceptions of English and professional English of students studying tourism in Türkiye and Spain?

### 3. Methodology

This study was carried out with the decision of the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Isparta University of Applied Sciences, dated 24.05.2022, and numbered 107/02.

The phenomenology technique was adopted and used in this research, which was carried out to determine the metaphorical perceptions of students studying tourism in Türkiye and Spain towards English and professional English. Phenomenology is one of the qualitative research techniques. The phenomenology technique provides in-depth information about concepts and phenomena that cannot be understood clearly (Creswell, 2013). This technique offers a concrete understanding of thought structures by examining student perceptions of both English and professional English (Patton, 2014).

#### 3.1. Sample group

The sample of this research is composed of students studying at the Faculty of Tourism of the University of Applied Sciences of Isparta and the Faculty of Tourism and Geography of Rovira I Virgili University. There are reasons to select those countries and universities. The reason behind the selection of Türkiye and Spain is that both countries are located in the Mediterranean region and are generally preferred as destinations in the Mediterranean region. The main reason for choosing universities is that students studying

tourism at two universities take courses in English and Professional English. Moreover, the choice of two universities for data collection was deemed appropriate. Both authors of the research work at Isparta University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Tourism. In addition, the second author's temporary presence in the Tourism and Geography Faculty within the scope of the assignment has effectively selected universities.

#### 3.2. Data collection

The research data were obtained from the students who completed the English and Professional English course. The data were collected in person using a two-question questionnaire. A purposeful sampling technique was used for this research. In purposive sampling, the participants are included in the research due to their characteristics and experiences (Etikan et al., 2016). Data were collected from May 24 to May 28, 2022. The data were obtained from 35 students of the Faculty of Tourism of the University of Applied Sciences in Isparta and the Faculty of Tourism and Geography of Rovira I Virgili University. Data were obtained from a total of 70 students.

Two questions were formed to determine the students' metaphorical perceptions of English and professional English concepts. These questions consist of the sentences "English is like ...because..." and "Professional English is like .....because.....". Students were given a form in which these two questions were written. Before providing the form, students were informed about metaphorical perception. Afterward, students were asked to write their thoughts about English and professional English in the spaces in the questions. The word "like" in the questions allows students to indicate the relationship between the subject and the source of the metaphor. The word "because" in the questions will enable students to state why they use metaphors. The words written by the students constitute the data of this research.

#### 3.3. Data analysis

The content analysis method was applied in the analysis of the research data. Content analysis systematically examines and interprets research data as content (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The data are classified with content analysis and become more understandable (Cohen et al., 2002). In this research, content analysis was carried out in four stages. These stages (Creswell, 2013; Saban, 2009):

Coding stage: The metaphors developed by the students were listed, and their suitability for the research was checked. Data that did not explain the concepts of English and professional English metaphorically were not included in the analysis (n:10)

Classification stage: The metaphors developed by the students were rechecked. Generated metaphors have similar and simulated features.

Category development stage: Developed metaphors are associated with a theme. As a result of this stage, categories and themes were determined.

Validity and reliability stage: In qualitative research, detailed explanations of the research process and data acquisition are essential to ensure validity. (McMillian, 2000). This research details the research methodology, research group, data collection process, data analysis, and results to confirm the validity of the research. In the findings section, responses given by students to develop metaphors are provided as direct quotes. While the students' opinions were included, the abbreviation was TS1, TS2..... TS30 for Turkish students, and as SS1, SS2..... SS30 for Spanish students.

To ensure the reliability of the research, the researchers examined the data separately. Following the review, a consensus was achieved on the categories. Following analysis of the data, it was determined that 30 tourism students in Türkiye developed 26 different metaphors in English and 28 in professional English. Thirty tourism students in Spain have made 27 different metaphors in English and 29 in professional English. To increase the reliability of the search, the resulting metaphors and categories were reviewed by a Turkish and Spanish expert. The experts received a list in which the metaphors were written in sequence and asked to match the metaphors to the categories. The correspondence made by the experts and writers in the first part was compared. Following the comparisons, consensus and disagreement rates were determined. Subsequently, the reliability formula developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was implemented.

The reliability of the investigation was therefore determined. The Turkish expert, whose advice was consulted in connection with the reliability of the decision, examined Turkish students' English and professional English metaphors. The expert placed a metaphor (native language) in English metaphors and two metaphors (course, habit) in professional English metaphors in a different category of writers. In this case, the reliability of Turkish students' metaphorical perceptions of English was determined as  $25/25+1=96\%$ , and the reliability of professional English metaphorical perceptions was defined as  $25/25+2=92\%$ .

The Spanish expert, whose opinion was consulted to determine the reliability, looked at Spanish students' English and English professional metaphors. The expert placed a metaphor in English metaphors (the native language) and one in professional English metaphors (the way to become rich) in a different category of writers. In this case, the metaphorical perception reliability for the concept of English was determined as  $26/26+1=96\%$ , and the professional English metaphorical perception reliability was defined as  $28/28+1=96\%$ . The agreement between experts' evaluations and research authors is 90% or more, indicating that the research is reliable (Saban, 2009).

#### 4. Findings

The metaphorical perceptions of Turkish and Spanish students in English and professional English were examined and explained in separate tables. First, a list of metaphorical

perceptions of students in English and professional English is given. Table 1 shows the metaphorical perceptions of both Turkish and Spanish students. As seen in Table 1, Spanish students developed 27 different metaphors, and Turkish students created 26 different metaphors for the concept of English. The most frequently used metaphor for the idea of English in Spanish students is "superiority" ( $f=3$ ). In Turkish students, the most common "money" ( $f=4$ ) and "sports" ( $f=2$ ) are related to the concept of English. Other metaphorical perceptions about the idea of English were expressed by one student each. Spanish students developed 29 different metaphors, and Turkish students created 28 different metaphors for the concept of professional English. The most frequently used metaphor for professional English in Spanish students is "mathematics" ( $f=2$ ). For Turkish students, the most commonly used metaphor for professional English is "money" ( $f=3$ ). Other metaphorical perceptions about the idea of professional English were developed by one student each.

Table 2 shows the distribution of Spanish students' metaphorical perceptions of English and professional English by categories. When Table 2 is examined, metaphorical perceptions of English and professional English show distribution in 6 different categories. 44.4% of the metaphors developed by Spanish students for English belong to the concept category. The least metaphor for English is the category of living beings, with 3.7%. 27.7% of the metaphors developed by Spanish students regarding the concept of professional English are in the inanimate being category, and 24.1% are in the concept category. In professional English, the least metaphor is in the verb category, with 10.3%.

Table 3 shows the distribution of Turkish students' metaphorical perceptions of English and professional English by categories. When Table 3 is examined, the metaphorical perceptions of Turkish students show the distribution in 6 different categories, as in Spanish students. 34.6% of the metaphors developed by Turkish students regarding the concept of English are in the category of inanimate beings. The most miniature metaphors related to the idea of English are in the categories of food-beverage and verbs, with 7.7%. 53.6% of the metaphors developed by Turkish students related to professional English are in the concept category. The most miniature metaphors related to professional English comprise living beings and verbs, with 7.1%.

Table 4 shows the metaphors of Spanish and Turkish students regarding the concepts of English and professional English in the category of a living being. Spanish students developed metaphors in 1 living creature category related to English and three related to professional English. On the other hand, Turkish students created four metaphors for English and 2 for professional English in the categories of living beings. Spanish students focused on the human metaphorical perception in the living being category. On the other hand, Turkish students developed metaphors in the form of living being, such as trees and cats, as well as human metaphors. The opinions of the students regarding the living being category are as follows:

Table 1. Metaphorical perceptions associated with English and professional English

Metaphorical perceptions associated with English			Metaphorical perceptions associated with professional English	
	Spanish students	Turkish students	Spanish students	Turkish students
1	Human	Game	Several people	Money
2	Mathematics	To do sport	Vehicle	Nightmare
3	Onion	Telephone	Boiled potato	Encyclopedia
4	Driving a car	A small kid	Climbing a mountain	Mountain
5	Cycling	Vehicle	A bumpy road	Need
6	Playing computer game	Music	Cake	Lesson
7	Superiority	Character	Mathematics	Business ethics
8	Superiority	Money	Difficult meal to make	Professional football player
9	Superiority	Cement	Holiday	Stairs
10	Talent	Relationship	Advantage	Love
11	Sun	Weather	Moon	Life
12	Riding a motorcycle	Tree	To play football	Habits
13	Native language	To do sport	A difficult game	Independence
14	Magic	Exercise	Multi-purpose, useful cloth	Sun
15	Communication	Passion	Seascape	Need
16	Advertisement	Money	Mathematics	Socialization
17	Family	Euro	Easy puzzle	Baby
18	Key	Native language	The way to be rich	Business life
19	Strength	Field	Facility	A technical job
20	Roller coaster	Business	Annoying friend	Rent
21	Tolerance and respect	Child	Creativity	Exercise
22	Job	Money	Meal	Money
23	Fun	Cat	Success	Money
24	Life	Money	Freedom	Professional duty
25	Solution	Electric	Defense	Meal
26	Water	Taking vitamins	Scarf	Eat food
27	To do sport	Innovation	Gymnastics	Excess
28	Mobile phone	Creativity	Oxygen	Mathematics
29	Arm	Bike	Ride a horse	Glove
30	Sleep	Water	Doctor	Identity

*“English is like a child because it must constantly be considered.” (TS21)*

*“English is like a cat because it is ungrateful. If it is not studied, it will be forgotten.” (TS23)*

*“English is like a tree because if you don't look at it, it will dry up, and if you don't look at the English language, it will be forgotten.” (TS12)*

*“Professional English is like a baby because it requires constant attention.” (TS17)*

*“English is like a human because it continually evolves.” (ST1)*

*“Professional English is like an annoying friend because although it is annoying, it is indispensable” (ST20)*

Table 5 shows the metaphors of Spanish and Turkish students regarding the concepts of English and professional English in the category of an inanimate being. Spanish students developed metaphors in 4 inanimate beings categories related to English and 8 related to professional English. On the other hand, Turkish students created 9 metaphors for English and 5 for professional English in the categories of inanimate beings. Turkish students mostly used the money metaphor. The opinions of the students regarding the inanimate being category are as follows:

*“English is like a key because it opens many doors for you in the world” (ST18)*

*“English is like a mobile phone because everyone knows of it, but everyone knows how to use it.” (ST28)*

*“Professional English is like multi-purpose, useful cloth because it provides benefits in many business areas.” (ST14)*

*“English is like money because it is needed everywhere.” (TS16)*

*“English is like a field because it does not bear fruit unless the seed is planted; if it is not studied in English, it will not develop.” (TS19)*

*“English is like electric because many vehicles cannot operate without electricity; our skills will be incomplete without English.” (TS25)*

*“Professional English is like a glove because you use it when you need it.” (TS29)*

*“Professional English is like money because the more it is, the better” (TS23)*

Table 6 shows the metaphors related to English and professional English in the concept category. Spanish students developed 12 metaphors for English and 7 metaphors for professional English. Turkish students created 6 metaphors for English and 13 metaphors for professional English. Spanish students used the metaphor of superiority most frequently. The opinions of the students regarding the concept category are as follows:

“English is like a family because it makes me feel good like my family makes me feel good” (ST17)

“English is like fun because funny situation occurs when you use a wrong pronunciation in front of your friends.” (ST23)

Table 2. Spanish students' metaphorical perceptions of English and professional English

Categories	English		Professional English	
	n	%	n	%
Living being	1	3,7	3	10,3
inanimate being	4	14,9	8	27,7
Concept	12	44,4	7	24,1
Term	3	11,1	4	13,8
Food & Beverage	2	7,4	4	13,8
Verb	5	18,5	3	10,3

Table 3. Turkish students' metaphorical perceptions of English and Professional English

Categories	English		Professional English	
	n	%	n	%
Living being	4	15,4	2	7,1
Inanimate being	9	34,6	5	17,9
Concept	6	23,1	15	53,6
Term	3	11,5	3	10,7
Food & Beverage	2	7,7	1	3,6
Verb	2	7,7	2	7,1

Table 4. Category of a living being

Students	Cate-gory	English		Professional English	
		Metaphors	n	Metaphors	n
Spanish	Living being	Human	1	Several people	1
				An annoying friend	1
				Doctor	1
Turkish	Living being	A small kid	1	Professional football player	1
				Tree	1
				Cat	1
				Child	1

Table 5. Category of an inanimate being

Students	Cate-gory	English		Professional English	
		Metaphors	n	Metaphors	n
Spanish	Inani-mate being	Mobile phone	1	Vehicle	1
		Key	1	A bumpy road	1
		Roller coaster	1	Scarf	1
		Arm	1	A difficult game	1
				Multi-purpose, useful cloth	1
				Seascape	1
				Easy puzzle	1
				Facility	1
				Game	1
				Telephone	1
Turkish	Inani-mate being	Vehicle	1	Stairs	1
		Money	4	Identity	1
		Cement	1	Glove	1
		Weather	1		
		Bike	1		
		Field	1		
		Electric	1		

“English is like a solution because it solves problems in business life in English as it solves problems.” (ST25)

“English is like superiority because it allows me to stay ahead of others.” (ST7)

“Professional English is like freedom because it gives you a lot of new opportunities and the chance to choose new ways.” (ST24)

“Professional English is like the way to be rich because it allows you to earn more money.” (ST18)

“English is like creativity because it allows us to use the mind to develop new things constantly.” (TS28)

“English is like passion because once you get carried away, you can't let go” (TS15)

“Professional English is like rent because sometimes there will be a problem.” (TS20)

Table 6. Concept category

Students	Cate-gory	English		Professional English	
		Metaphors	n	Metaphors	n
Spanish	Concept	Solution	1	Holiday	1
		Magic	1	Superiority	1
		Communi-cation	1	Creativity	1
		Strength	1	Success	1
		Fun	1	Freedom	1
		Life	1	Defense	1
		Tolerance	1	The way to be rich	1
		Sleep	1		
		Job	1		
		Family	1		
		Talent	1		
		Superiority	3		
		Character	1	Nightmare	1
		Relation-ship	1	Need	1
		Passion	1	Business eth-ics	1
Turkish	Concept	Business	1	Love	1
		Innovation	1	Life	1
		Creativity	1	Independ-ence	1
				Socialization	1
				Business life	1
				A technical job	1
				Professional duty	1
				Excess	1
				Habits	1
				Rent	1

Table 7 shows the metaphors of Spanish and Turkish students regarding the notions of English and professional English in terms. The Spanish students developed metaphors in three categories of terms linked to English and four linked to professional English. In addition, Turkish students have created three metaphors for English and three for professional English in the categories of terms. Spanish students frequently used mathematics in the term category. Turkish students used the metaphor of mathematics in professional

English. The opinions of the students regarding the term category are as follows:

*“English is like a mathematics because everyone should learn it.” (ST2)*

*“English is like a native language because everyone around me knows it.” (ST13)*

*“Professional English is like oxygen because oxygen is needed to live. English is needed to develop and stay active in business life.” (ST28)*

*“English is like the euro because it makes us feel comfortable abroad.” (TS17)*

*“English is like my native language because I studied English as much as my native language. (TS18)*

*“Professional English is like the sun because it enlightens us on business.” (TS14)*

*“Professional English is like mathematics because it requires constant repetition and practice.” (TS28)*

Table 7. Category of terms

Students	Category	English		Professional English	
		Metaphors	n	Metaphors	n
Spanish	Term	Mathematics	1	Mathematics	2
		Native language	1	Moon	1
		Sun	1	Gymnastics Oxygen	1 1
Turkish	Term	Music	1	Encyclopedia	1
		Euro	1	Sun	1
		Native language	1	Mathematics	1

Table 8 shows the metaphors related to English and professional English in the food-beverage category. Spanish students developed 2 metaphors for English and 4 metaphors for professional English. Turkish students created 2 metaphors for English and 1 metaphor for professional English. Meal is a common metaphor for Spanish and Turkish students. The opinions of the students regarding the food and beverage category are as follows:

*“English is like water because you cannot live without water. You cannot find a job in the industry without knowing English.” (ST26)*

*“Professional English is like boiled potato because potatoes mature as they boil. Professional English also improves as you use it.” (ST3)*

*“Professional English is like a difficult meal to make because it's really hard to use right.” (ST8)*

*“English is like taking vitamins because its effect decreases when its use is interrupted.” (TS26)*

*“Professional English is like a meal because food is a need in our life; professional English is a need in business life.” (TS25)*

Table 9 presents the metaphors of Spanish and Turkish students in the verb category for professional English and English concepts. Spanish students developed five metaphors for English and three for the concept of professional English. Turkish students have created two metaphors for the idea of English in the category of verbs and two metaphors for the concept of professional English. The metaphors developed by Spanish students in the category of verbs are more diverse. On the other hand, Turkish students associate English and professional English to sport and exercise. The opinions of the students regarding the verb category are as follows:

*“English is like riding a motorcycle because you will enjoy using it.” (ST12)*

*“English is like playing computer games because it's fun.”(ST6)*

*“English is like cycling because you can't forget when you learn both.” (ST5)*

*“Professional English is like climbing a mountain because it is difficult to learn.” (ST4)*

*“English is like to do sport because if you don't use it regularly, everything will go away” (TS13)*

*“Professional English is like Exercise because constant practice is required.” (TS21)*

Table 8. Food-beverage category

Students	Category	English		Professional English	
		Metaphors	n	Metaphors	n
Spanish	Food & Beverage	Onion	1	Boiled potato	1
		Water	1	Cake	1
				Meal	1
Turkish	Food & Beverage	Water	1	Meal	1
		Taking vitamins	1		

Table 9. Verb category

Students	Category	English		Professional English	
		Metaphors	n	Metaphors	n
Spanish	Verb	Driving a car	1	Climbing a mountain	1
		Cycling	1	To play football	1
		Playing computer games	1	Ride a horse	1
		Riding a motorcycle	1		
Turkish	Verb	To do sport	1		
		Exercise	1	Eat food	1
		To do sport	1	Exercise	1

### 5. Discussion and conclusion

This research aimed to determine the metaphoric perceptions of Spanish and Turkish students studying tourism in

English and professional English. The results show that students' metaphorical perceptions of English and professional English concepts are positive and beautiful. For example, positive metaphors such as "to do sport, playing computer games, cycling, music" were developed for English, and positive metaphors for professional English such as "sea view, riding a horse, playing football, love" were created. The results of the research are consistent with the studies within the reflections. Xu et al. (2022) indicate that English learners have positive metaphoric perceptions. In addition, students see learning English as a fun activity that allows them to communicate with others. Farjami (2012) and Palinkašević (2021) claim that learning a foreign language is a positive process. Some studies also conclude that learning English can be a negative process. (Fang, 2015; Jin et al., 2014; Mudra & Aini, 2020). Students' English and professional English metaphors can also be negative. In this research, some students used metaphors with negative connotations of English and professional English, such as "onion, a boring friend, a nightmare." But generally, students' metaphoric perceptions of English and professional English are relatively positive.

Students are also aware of the contributions of English and professional English. When students' metaphorical perceptions are examined, they perceive English as an "advantage, success." Likewise, professional English is perceived as "money, creativity." Students are aware that they will add value to themselves by learning English and professional English. Boers and Lindstromberg (2012) highlight that language learning occurs within the scope of a specific motivation. Students who are cognitively aware of the positive contributions of learning a language are more motivated. Students see English and professional English as a necessity and product in their lives. The expressions "power, tool" in English metaphor perceptions and "tool, need" in professional English metaphor perceptions indicate this. Bas and Gezeğin (2017) have realized that English is a product, necessity, and necessity. Therefore, students see English as a need in their professional life. Some of the metaphors developed to show that English and professional English are addressed in line with an objective. For instance, the metaphors "superiority" for English and "the way to be rich", for professional English represent an objective. In the metaphor "superiority," students believe that they will surpass other students or individuals as qualifications if they have skills in both English and professional English. In the metaphor of "the way to get rich", students prioritize success in their business life with their English and professional English skills. Özer (2020) found that students justified the road metaphor as an objective. Caballero (2006) also noted that English is perceived as a "journey".

Some metaphors also emphasize the need to learn English and professional English from the primary level. It also points out its difficulty. In this context, the metaphors of "native language" in English and "a difficult meal to make" are in professional English. Learning the first language grows

into a process that starts as a child. For students, this process can coincide with the commencement of their university education. Because this is when they are learning English intensively and at a high level, at the same time from the beginning. The metaphor "a difficult meal to make" for professional English brings attention to a challenge beyond learning English. Plenty of ingredients in a meal are hard to prepare. Because it is necessary to use them correctly and beautifully. That's the way things are in professional English. Words, sentence models, and dialogues should be known professionally. They must be used appropriately. In other words, it's like making a complicated meal. In their work, Mudra and Aini (2020) arrived at the metaphor of "building a home, cooking the first meal" for English. These metaphors demonstrate that students are open to learning and require knowledge of both English and professional English.

The research's findings show that English and professional English learning interact with the inner worlds of the students. The metaphors developed by the students reflect the creativity of the student's inner worlds and the realism of their learning process. This situation motivates students in English and professional English learning and supports the continuation of the information flow. Students are encouraged by their metaphor perceptions of English and professional English. Because metaphors provide an understanding of what is desired to be achieved or thought to be unsuccessful (Gillis & Johnson, 2002). At this point, it is necessary to mention the professors who teach English at universities. Teachers affect students' learning and perception of English and professional English. Zhang (2016) reached a conclusion that supports this view in their research. Accordingly, the teacher is a guide for students to learn English successfully. The teacher knows how the student should know what stage he is in and how the development should be to be successful. Therefore, students trust their teachers more in learning English (Farjami, 2012).

### 5.1. Theoretical implications

In this research, the researchers aimed to learn Spanish and Turkish students' metaphoric perceptions of English and professional English. After the analysis, Turkish students developed 26 metaphors for English, while Spanish students developed 27. Turkish students developed 28 metaphors in professional English, while Spanish students developed 29. When created metaphors are examined, English and professional English appear to have a fun, supportive, and contributory profile. Students are conscious of the added value that English and Professional English provide. The results of this research provide some theoretical implications:

First, the metaphorical perceptions of Spanish and Turkish students in English and professional English are positive. In addition, students know the importance of English and professional English.

Secondly, the metaphors developed by both student groups are distributed in 6 different categories. Spanish

students created the most metaphors for English in the concept category and professional English in the inanimate category. Turkish students developed the most metaphors for English in the category of inanimate objects and the concept category for professional English.

Thirdly, this research has been one of the rare studies that reveal the metaphorical perceptions of professional English within the scope of tourism students. Therefore, the results obtained are essential.

### 5.2. Practical implications

The results of this research provide some practical implications. With this research, students gained awareness of English and professional English and had the chance to express their perceptions. This research gives an idea about the perceptions of Spanish and Turkish students in tourism education about English and professional English. It can provide convenience in understanding these perceptions and facilitating and activating students' learning process. It is seen that students' perceptions of English and professional English are at a positive level. Despite a difficult period in the learning and speaking process, students need to be aware of the importance of English and professional English. To have positive metaphorical perceptions of students, it is necessary to make English and professional English education more enjoyable in universities.

### 5.3. Limitations and future research

There are some limitations to this research. This research was applied only to undergraduate students in tourism education, and the criterion of having attended courses in English and professional English was sought. For this reason, data from the survey were collected from 60 participants, 30 Spanish and 30 Turkish students. Future research may suggest comparing results by conducting similar research in the form of a culture-based comparison. In these studies, the number of participants may be increased, or the criteria may be eliminated. As this research was conducted as part of tourism students, future research can measure English students' professional perceptions in various departments. In addition, the metaphoric perceptions of professional English teachers may be examined. In addition to students and teachers, English and professional English metaphorical perceptions of employees and executives working in the field can be explored.

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#### Author contributions

The author declares that they equally contributed to the design and implementation of the research, the analysis of the results, and the writing of the article.

#### Disclosure statement

The author reported no potential competing interest.

#### Ethics committee approval

All responsibility belongs to the researcher. This study was carried out with the decision of the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Isparta University of Applied Sciences, dated 24.05.2022, and numbered 107/02.