



## A Comparative Study of Classroom Teachers' Educational Beliefs and Metaphorical Perceptions of Curriculum<sup>1</sup>

Research Article

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### ABSTRACT

Curricula aim to raise individuals needed by educational systems. Teachers who are implementers of curriculum have a major role in the realization of this capital aim. Teachers' perceptions of curriculum and their beliefs related to education can be accepted as important indicators of in-class practices. Within this context, this study aims to compare classroom teachers' educational beliefs and metaphorical perceptions of curriculum. 315 classroom teachers working in the city of Gaziantep participated in the study. The study was carried out by using "concurrent triangulation design" which is one of the mixed method designs that offer the capacity to integrate quantitative and qualitative data. "Personal Information Questionnaire", "Educational Beliefs Scale" and "Metaphors Form" were used as data collection tools. The findings of the study indicated that most of the classroom teachers have an existentialist belief of education. The categories generated from the analysis of the metaphors were named as "transformable structure", "guide", "mechanism", "tool", "and basis in education "problem generating structure" and "comprehensive structure". Also, it was found out that most of the teachers generated positive metaphors whereas a considerable number of teachers generated negative metaphors despite their high adoption of modern views of educational philosophies such as existentialism, progressivism and reconstructionism.

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#### Keywords:

Curriculum, philosophy of education, belief in education, metaphor

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## Introduction

The concept of philosophy is composed of two words originating from Greek roots "philla" (love) and "sophia" (knowledge, wisdom). Literally the word philosophy means "the love of wisdom" and it aims to reach essence of existence (Ergün 2014). And in this aim it uses reasoning. According to Kant philosophy is a mental activity which people use to demonstrate their rightness by using rational reasoning (Arslan, 2012). People are in this pursuit as they seek the truth and they desire to be righteous.

The main concepts of philosophy 'love, wisdom, and truth' are intertwined with education and as they both try to shape human beings' perspectives on life, the existence of a relation between philosophy and education is unavoidable. Additionally, it is of critical importance for educational sciences to scientifically investigate all activities and phenomena closely related to philosophy and education which aim to; equip learners with information, skills and behaviours; develop them in certain fields; provide them social and artistic values (Arslan, 2012). All these arguments provided basis for educational philosophy to emerge as a branch of philosophy. Educational philosophy evaluates understandings of individuals underlying the basis of educational systems and aims to develop new hypotheses related to education (Ergün, 2014).

Philosophical view which determines educational approach to individual affects teachers' approach to teaching who are one of the major dynamics of education (Geçici & Yapıcı, 2008). Teachers' approaches to education affect educational processes and this in turn obviously affects students' learning processes and achievements (Geçici & Yapıcı, 2008).

Different philosophical views effecting educational practices and individuals' growth appeared as a result of various ways to view, evaluate and solve problems (Ergün, 2014). Because of different beliefs of education, educational philosophy branches to various subsections. Educational philosophies also differ in literature. Many sources do not approach existentialism as an educational philosophy but accepted it as a philosophical trend. However, in a rapidly changing and developing world and with the differentiation of aims and needs in education, existentialism started to be analyzed as an educational philosophy. Five educational philosophies are examined in the current study and these are: perennialism, essentialism, progressivism, reconstructionism, existentialism.

Perennialism is the reflection of idealism to education. It claims that individuals should be taught the essential, universal principles underlying the basis of humanity. According to perennialists, as the meaning of humanity is same everywhere, the aim of education must be the same everywhere and it must never differ (Ergün, 2014). For this reason, curriculum must include unchangeable knowledge and it must be in a logical integrity (Ergün, 2011). According to them, school is not the real life itself but an artificial layout where people are prepared for real life (Arslan, 2012). Perennialists, who have a teacher centred view of education, believe that reason is the way to reach universal truth. It is necessary to widen the perspective and open the eyes of the soul in order to achieve this (Cevizci, 2016).

Progressivism is the reflection of pragmatism to education. Progressivists have ideas contradicting with perennialism. Philosophers defending a progressivist view of education object to traditional teacher centered, form focused, overtly strict and passive learning environment (Ergün, 2014). They have a view of education aiming development of society as well as individual and protecting and improving cultural heritage (Cevizci, 2016). They claim that school is the real life itself and believe that students must learn by experiencing (Ergün, 2011). Progressivists think that a cooperative learning environment where love and cooperation are more emphasized must be created instead of a competitive one (Arslan, 2012).

Essentialism is rooted in realism. According to essentialists, if the established knowledge and skills of the society are successfully transmitted to the new generations, the differentiation of the old and the conflict arising from this differentiation can be avoided. This provides permanence of cultural heritage (Sönmez, 1996).

In this context, essentialists hold the view that the actual function of education is to transfer the key elements of culture to individuals and in the meantime help them to socialize and equip them with basic knowledge which can assist them to get a profession. Additionally, they defend a teacher centred view of education. According to essentialists, school is a place where cultural heritage is transmitted and habits which bring human beings to happiness are formed (Cevizci, 2016).

Reconstructionism is based on pragmatism and is considered as an extension of progressivism. Reconstructionists defend the idea that life is in a state of constant change and for this reason human beings must reconstruct their lives at any moment (Ergün, 2011) and they believe that the school has a vital role in keeping pace with this state of constant change (Ergün, 2014). Their educational belief is that students need activities in which they can construct meanings and a curriculum which enables them to connect new knowledge with the existing knowledge (Cevizci, 2016). In the process of education students must be presented changeable knowledge as the true knowledge is constantly changing (Sönmez, 1996).

Existentialism is not approached as an educational philosophy but just as a philosophical trend in many sources. Changes in many areas of the society also reflect themselves in education. Meanings attributed to contemporary education and educators differ with recent developments. Education is expected to meet needs of individuals and reveal their existing potential. Today, views of education aiming to help growth of independent individuals (Memduhoğlu & Yılmaz, 2017), show parallelism with existentialist educational philosophy which aims realization of individual differences and development on its basis. For this reason, today existentialism more frequently finds a place to itself among the studies about branches of educational philosophies.

Existentialist view of education defends the idea that the most important aim of education is directing the individual to take the responsibility of his/her existence and the burden that comes with that existence and by this way create his/her own identity and with this identity have the ability to designate his/her own future (Cevizci, 2016). According to existentialists, teachers or educators are "have the responsibility to show their students the importance of existence and every individual is responsible for shaping his/her own existence (Cevizci, 2016, s. 157). They defend the idea that all students are different thus each student needs special attention. Existentialists believe that students must be free, creative and taking the responsibility of their own learning and teachers must be supportive and guiding by using methods such as question-answer (Ergün, 2011).

As stated in the above mentioned educational philosophies, teachers have a major role in the process of teaching and learning and the ideas they possess unavoidably influence education. The ideas and perceptions teachers have give us a great deal of information about what kind of teachers they are and how they implement the curriculum. Their ideas about education constitute their *educational beliefs*. Educational beliefs can be defined as "*an individual's philosophy, opinions, principles and views about education*" (Haney et al., 2010 as cited in Tunca, Alkın-Şahin & Oğuz, 2015, s. 19). As it is known to all, the ideas in our mind shape our behaviours and they make us different from others (Kıroğlu, 2011). Teachers educational beliefs also give us valuable information about which teaching methods they use and how effectively they implement these methods.

Besides the beliefs of educators, the quality and success of education is closely related to the curriculum guiding them. Upbringing educated individuals after any instructional process depends on a well prepared curriculum and advanced methods. Well-prepared curricula underlie success of education and instruction. Achieving the goals of education and instruction heavily depends on well-prepared curricula (Kayadibi, 2001).

*Curriculum*; is everything taught to students in or out of school by using various activities (Demirel, 2007). Curriculum consists of four elements which are aim, content, teaching-learning process and assessment-evaluation and there is a dynamic relationship between these elements which means any change in one of

them affects the others (Demirel & Kaya, 2011). Curriculum is a guide for teachers and it is the most important tool to ensure the effectiveness of the education. Curricula are designed to raise individuals suitable to the needs of the society and they are the first step to improve the society. Curriculum aiming to develop individuals' cognitive, psychomotor and affective qualities to an adequate level includes Turkish national educational aims (Özçelik, 2009).

It is necessary for any curriculum to be positively perceived and functionally used by its implementers to reach its aims. Teachers' perceptions about the curriculum plays a major role in the effective implementation of the curriculum. The metaphors teachers make about the curriculum gives us valuable ideas about how they perceive the curriculum. The word metaphor comes from Old Greek words "meta" (over) and "phrein" (carry, bear) (Cebeci, 2013). The Greek equivalent of the word is "metapherein" which means "to transfer, to carry over" (Draaisma, 2014). TDK (2017) (Turkish Language Association) defines the word as "figurative speech" and in Turkish it is generally used to mean "simile". In literature metaphor is defined as "the act of expressing a meaning with something that actually means something else" (Kövecses, 2002 as cited in Gültekin, 2013, s. 128). Most of the activities and experiences in our lives have a metaphoric form and metaphors shape most of our concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 2015). Lakoff and Johnson (2015) state that in our daily lives metaphors do not only reflect on our language but also our thoughts and actions. Defending the notion that the system of concepts in our minds are metaphorical in nature, Lakoff and Johnson (2015) state that metaphorical ideas shape the way we perceive the world, the way we relate to and communicate with others and the way we shape our future. In the field of education, metaphors are used to understand and explain some concepts in the process of teaching-learning.

When the literature reviewed, the studies carried out about educational beliefs and educational philosophy are: (Altinkurt, Yılmaz & Oğuz, 2012; Alkın-Şahin, Tunca & Ulubey, 2014; Çoban, 2004; Doğanay & Sarı, 2003; Yapıcı, 2013) and the studies about metaphoric perceptions related to curriculum are: (Aykaç & Çelik, 2014; Gültekin, 2013; Örtten & Enginer, 2016; Özdemir, 2012; Semerci, 2007; Taşdemir & Taşdemir, 2011). However, no study comparing teachers' educational beliefs and their metaphorical perceptions related to curriculum were found. For this reason this study has a unique quality. In addition, by taking into consideration teachers' philosophical beliefs about education (Baş, 2015), and meanings they attribute to curriculum (metaphors) play a major role in teaching-learning processes (Gültekin, 2013), the findings of this study are anticipated to contribute to the related literature.

The aim of this study is to compare classroom teachers' educational beliefs and their metaphoric perceptions related curriculum. Within this overall framework, the research questions for the current study are as follows:

1. What are classroom teachers' educational beliefs?
2. Which metaphors do the classroom teachers attribute to the curriculum?
3. What kind of a relation between teachers' educational beliefs and their metaphorical perceptions related to curriculum exist?

### **Method**

The current study has a mixed method design in which qualitative and quantitative data have equal weights and "*Concurrent triangulation*" (Creswell, 2003) research design is used in the study. Concurrent triangulation design aims to: converge qualitative and quantitative data, compare them and diversify them (Cresswell, 2003).

## Participants

The participants of the study are 315 classroom teachers working in the provincial centre of Gaziantep during 2016-2017 educational year and 180 of them are women and 135 are men. The participants are chosen using random sampling method. 9 of the teachers participating in the study have an undergraduate degree, 283 of them have graduate degree, 22 of them have MA and 1 of the participating teachers have PHD. At the time of the study 66 of these teachers work with first graders, 90 of them work with second graders, 71 of them work with third graders and 88 of them work with fourth graders.

## Data Collection Tools

Data collection tools for the current study consist of three parts. The first part is personal information form containing demographical questions (gender, educational background, etc.). The second part contains the metaphorical question "If you were to liken curriculum to an object, a shape, a story character, etc. what would you liken it to? Why?" in order to reveal their perceptions related to curriculum. "Educational Beliefs Scale" (EBS) developed by Yılmaz, Altınkurt & Çokluk (2011) makes the third part of data collection tools. EBS is a five point likert type scale. The scale contains 40 items representing progressivism, existentialism, reconstructionism, perennialism and essentialism sub-dimensions. Reliability coefficients for the sub-dimensions of EBS are found as: "progressivism" ( $\alpha=.91$ ), "existentialism" ( $\alpha=.89$ ), "reconstructionism" ( $\alpha=.81$ ), "perennialism" ( $\alpha=.70$ ) and "essentialism" ( $\alpha=.70$ ). The results of the confirmatory factor analysis related to the scale are found as: GFI = .85; AGFI = .83; RMSR  $\leq$  .05; RMSEA  $\leq$  .05; RMR and SRMR  $\leq$  .08; CFI  $\geq$  .95; NFI and NNFI  $\geq$  .95; PGFI = .75.

## Data Collection Process

The questionnaire forms developed to collect data were distributed to teachers working in elementary schools in the provincial centre of Gaziantep. The participants themselves read and answered the items. The schools were revisited after some time to collect the forms. After about three months data collection was completed and the collected data began to be analyzed.

## Data Analysis

Frequencies and percentages of the collected quantitative data were calculated. Content analysis method was used in the analysis of the qualitative data. Descriptive analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013) were used in the explanation of the metaphors. Also, Saban (2008)'s metaphor analysis stages were followed in the analysis of the metaphors. Within this context, the metaphors developed by classroom teachers were analyzed in four stages: the first stage is coding and sorting in which metaphors were listed and coded and unrelated explanations and empty sheets were sorted out. The second stage is collecting sample metaphor images list to help easy interpretation and categorization of the metaphors. In the third stage, which is named as category development stage, sample metaphor lists are examined and each metaphor is related to one theme and as a result 7 conceptual categories are created. These categories are: *transformable structure*, *guide*, *mechanism*, *tool*, *basis in education*, *problem generating structure*, *comprehensive structure*. The fourth stage is ensuring the validity and reliability stage and for this stage procedures for data collection and analysis are provided.

All metaphors for each created category are indicated and the reason for creation of each category is explained and explanations are supported with explanations. In addition, a classroom teacher and a faculty member who are experts in their fields are asked to analyze and match the categories to confirm the accuracy of the categories. After the analysis, the categories, themes and the metaphors which constitute them were given their final form. The reliability coefficient of the study was calculated by Miles and Huberman (1994)'s reliability formula (Reliability=Number of Agreements/ Number of Agreements + Disagreements). The reliability coefficient for the categories created in the current study is identified as %87.

## Findings

In this part of the study, classroom teachers educational beliefs and their idea related to the metaphors they use to explain curriculum are presented on the basis of research questions.

### Findings Related to Classroom Teachers' Educational Beliefs

In this study, classroom teachers' beliefs related to education are specified first. The findings are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Means and Standard Deviations of Teachers' Answers Related to Educational Philosophies in EBS

	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Level
Perennialism	315	4.14	.58	Agree
Essentialism	315	2.67	.83	Neutral
Progressivism	315	4.49	.44	Agree
Reconstructionism	315	4.23	.69	Agree
Existentialism	315	4.67	.43	Strongly Agree

As shown in Table 1, the answers given by teachers related to educational philosophy starting from the highest mean score is: existentialism, progressivism, reconstructionism, perennialism and essentialism. Existentialism was identified to have the highest mean score (=4.67) while essentialism was identified to have the lowest (=2.67). 2.67 mean score shows that teachers are unsure about essentialism . 4.14 and 4.49 mean scores for perennialism and progressivism show that they agree with these views and have positive attitude towards them. 4.67 mean score for existentialism shows that teachers strongly agree with existentialist views.

### Findings Related to Metaphors About Curriculum Created by Classroom Teachers

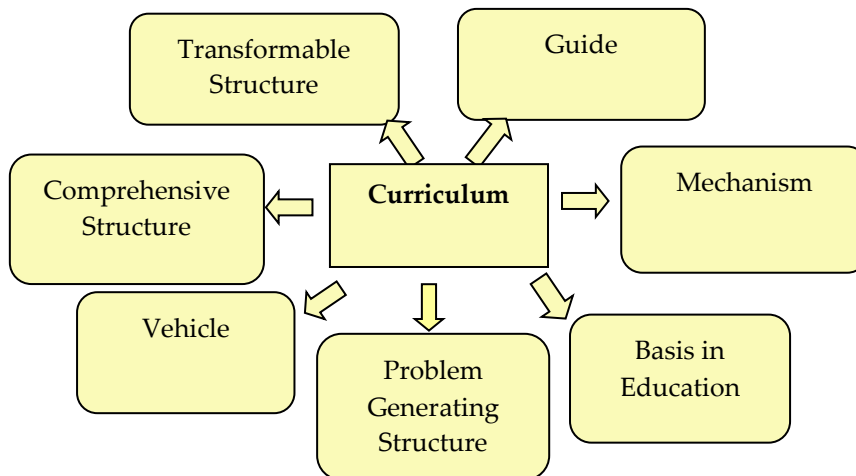
Of the 315 teachers participating in the study, 239 of them created metaphors and 76 of them did not state to what they resemble the curriculum. The metaphors created by classroom teachers are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Metaphors Teacher Candidates Attribute to Curriculum Development Course

No	Metaphor	No	Metaphor	No	Metaphor	No	Metaphor
1	Tree (f:11)	31	Railway	61	Sheep	91	Jug- glass
2	Heavy metals	32	Guinea pig	62	Maze(f:5)	92	Dry cow
3	Octopus (f:3)	33	Sea	63	Lamp	93	Agriculture(f:3)
4	Smart Phone (f:4)	34	Camel	64	Lego(f:3)	94	Stone carving
5	Toolbox	35	Cupboard (f:2)	65	Machine	95	Vehicle
6	Mother(f:2)	36	Don Quixote	66	Carpentry workshop	96	Phonebook
7	Car(f:2)	37	World(f:4)	67	Monkey	97	Popeye the sailorman's spinach (f:2)
8	Vehicle Engine	38	Sowing and planting works	68	Ladder(f:)	98	Seed
9	Research Hospital	39	Hand	69	Pomegranate (f:5)	99	Ball(f:3)
10	Fire(f:2)	40	Donkey	70	Nasreddin Hodja (f:3)	100	High heels shoe
11	Atom	41	Factory	71	Navigation device(f:3)	101	Train
12	Mirror	42	Galaxy	72	River	102	A strange road
13	Brain	43	Gargamel	73	Orchestra(f:2)	103	Space (f:3)
14	Couch potato	44	Rainbow	74	Play-dough (f:18)	104	Vehicle
15	Knife	45	Solar system	75	Toy	105	V shaped flight formation of birds
16	Combine harvester	46	Hospital	76	Parrot	106	Voltran(f:3)
17	A pile of files	47	Empty glass	77	Money	107	Trapezoid
18	Chameleon (f:24)	48	Human	78	Curtain	108	Flip-flopping
19	Fridge	49	Human behaviors	79	Pinocchio (f:2)	109	Jigsaw puzzle(f:12)
20	Wheel mechanism (f:2)	50	Ball of string(f:2)	80	Plato	110	Windmill
21	Hoop	51	House of Cards	81	Pollyanna (f:3)	111	Meal
22	Avalanche	52	Skeletal system	82	Compass (f:3)	112	Recipe
23	Kaleidoscope	53	Heart(f:2)	83	Randomly changing shape	113	Replaced flower vase
24	Farming	54	Tortoise	84	Color changing pen	114	Star(f:3)
25	Cement	55	The hare in the story the tortoise and the hare	85	Road Runner(f:2)	115	Dashed road lines
26	Soup	56	Broken Ladder	86	The milky way	116	Time
27	Notebook	57	Broken pitcher	87	Industry (f:2)	117	Brainbox
28	Changing Structure	58	Clay stone	88	Autumn	118	Hopper ball
29	Holey bucket	59	Kiwi	89	Eternity (f:2)	119	Chain link f:2)
30	Inventory list	60	Scarecrow	90	Water (f:5)	120	Road map(f:2)

Table 2 shows that classroom teachers participating in the study created 120 metaphors in total. It was understood that metaphors such as tree (f:11), octopus (f:3), smart phone (f:4), chameleon (f:24), earth (f:4),

maze (f:5), pomegranate (f:5), navigation (f:3), play dough (f:18), Pollyanna (f:3), compass (f:3), ball (f:3), Voltran (f:2), jigsaw puzzle (f:12), star (f:3) were created in more than one way. Metaphors created by classroom teachers are collected under seven categories. The categories are shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Created Categories Related to Concept of Curriculum

As shown in figure 1 the analysis of classroom teachers metaphors generated seven categories and these are: "transformable structure", "guide", "mechanism", "tool", "basis in education", "problem generating structure" and "comprehensive structure". The categories and themes under these categories generated from metaphors created by teachers participating in the study are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Distribution of Metaphors Classroom Teachers Attributed to the Concept of Curriculum into Categories

Qualities of Categories	Categories	f	%
Positive Metaphors f: 125 (%52.3)	Transformable Structure	23	9.6
	Guide	26	10.9
	Mechanism	52	21.8
	Vehicle	13	5.4
	Basis in Education	11	4.6
Negative Metaphors f: 102 (%42.7)	Problem Generating Structure	102	42.7
Both Positive and Negative Metaphors f: 12 (%5)	Comprehensive Structure	12	5
Total		239	100



As shown in Table 3, the highest percentage belongs to “problem generating structure” with a score of 42.7%. Then respectively comes “mechanism” (21.8%), “guide” (10.9%), “transformable structure” (9.6%), “vehicle” (5.4%), “comprehensive structure” (5%), “basis in education” (4.6%) categories.

The category “transformable structure” is divided into two themes which are *flexible* and *renewable*. 23 teachers created metaphors in this category and they make 9.6% of all metaphors. Some of the metaphors created under these category are *play-dough*, *Lego*, *ball* and *time*. One of the teachers likening curriculum to play-dough explained this metaphor as: “*Everyone can shape it as they like (within the conditions of classroom).*”

The category “guide” is not divided into themes. 26 teachers created metaphors in this category and they make 10.9% of all metaphors. *Compass*, *sun*, *V shaped flight formation of birds*, *navigation device*, *road map* are some of the metaphors created in this category. One of the teachers likening curriculum to a road map explained it as “*It is like a road map as it tells us how to carry out education.*”

The category “mechanism” is divided into three themes which are: *the kitchen of education*, *being a stair*, *an inseparable whole*. 52 teachers created metaphors in this category and they make 21.8% of all metaphors. *Agriculture*, *farming chain-link*, *train*, *machine* are some of the metaphors created under this category. One of the teachers likening curriculum to an orchestra explained this metaphor as: “*The harmony of all instruments with each other is important.*”. Another teacher likening the curriculum to a train explained it as : “*Tied to each other and somehow supporting each other. Pulling the education towards success.*”

The category “vehicle” is not divided into themes. 13 teachers created metaphors in this category and they make 5.4% of all metaphors. *Jug-glass*, *vehicle*, *hand*, *money*, *curtain* are some of the metaphors created in this category. One of the teachers likening curriculum to a curtain explained as: “*The mind can understand the world like sun lightens the world. However, some wrong curtains which we draw in front of the sun (mind), surrenders the mind to a blind and dark education system. We need thin, transparent curtains (curriculum) not blocking the sunlight (freeing the mind).*”

The category “Problem generating structure” is divided into three themes which are: *a complicated structure*, *a bunch of unnecessary information*, *frequently changing structure*. 102 teachers created metaphors under this category and they make 42.7% of all metaphors. *Chameleon*, *jigsaw puzzle*, *maze*, *balls of string*, *empty glass*, *refrigerator* are some of the metaphors created by teachers. One of the teachers likening curriculum to a chameleon expressed the reason as “*Because it constantly changes*” and another one likening it to a jigsaw puzzle explained as “*Because some people always play with it*”.

The category “Comprehensive structure” is no divided into themes. 12 teachers created metaphors under this category and they make 5% of all metaphors. One of the teachers likening curriculum to *space* expressed the reason as “*Because it is endless and contains new information*”.

As well as being divided into categories according to their explanations, metaphors are grouped in accordance with their qualities. These groups are: *positive*, *negative* and *both positive and negative*. As shown in Table 3, 125 (52.3%) metaphors created under the categories “transformable structure, guide mechanism, vehicle and basis in education” are qualified as positive and they are listed in the *positive* group. 102 of the metaphors created by classroom teachers under “problem generating structure” category are qualified as negative metaphors and listed in *negative* group. 12 (5%) of the teachers created metaphors under “Comprehensive structure” category and as these metaphors have both positive and negative expressions they are listed in *both positive and negative* group.

### **Findings Related to Comparison of Classroom Teachers' Educational Beliefs and Metaphors**

Classroom teachers' educational beliefs based on educational philosophies and the metaphors they created about curriculum are compared and the findings of comparisons are shown in Table 4. When table 4

is examined, it can be seen that the dominant belief is existentialism. Further information and detailed explanation related to categories and dominant educational beliefs is provided in following paragraphs.

16 of the 23 teachers producing metaphors under "transformable structure" category were observed to show highest mean scores in existentialist philosophy. The metaphors created by teachers defending the idea that curriculum needs to be modified and adapted to the facilities and renewed in accordance with changes in the society are included in this category. In other words, teachers having this view of education believe that education and instruction must be student centred, teachers need to be facilitators, students must have a deep understanding of themselves and make their own decisions, students must internalise their responsibilities and carry them out willingly.

When we look at guide category, it can be seen that 19 of 26 teachers have existentialist philosophical beliefs (Table 4). This category includes metaphors created by teachers believing that curriculum guides teachers during educational processes and it is a program which contains necessary methods and techniques for effective teaching-learning environment. The teachers with this philosophical view defend the idea that they are guides helping students create their own truths by asking them questions and they are roadmaps enabling students draw their own routes by showing them their strengths and weaknesses.

Table 4 shows that 34 teachers out of 52 who created metaphors in "Mechanism" category have existentialist educational beliefs. This category includes metaphors created by teachers believing that curriculum is a whole of inseparable parts in which every part is important and supports educational process by gradually proceeding. Teachers expressing such ideas about curriculum believe that every student is unique and special, a teacher must guide students to understand the reason for their existence and guide students to turn to themselves for their own free choices.

**Table 4.** Frequencies And Percentages Of Groups “Positive, Negative, Both Positive And Negative” Generated Through Content Analysis Of Metaphors

	Categories including positive metaphors f: 125 (%52.3)										Categories including negative metaphors f: 102 (%42.7)		Categories including positive/negative metaphors f: 12 (%5)		Total f: 239 (%100)	
	Transformable Structure		Guide		Mechanism		Vehicle		Basis in Education		Problem Generating Structure		Comprehensive Structure		Total	
<b>Educational Philosophies</b>	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Perennialism	1	.42	-	-	2	.84	-	-	-	-	9	3.8	2	.84	14	5.85
Essentialism	-	-	-	-	1	.42	-	-	-	-	4	1.67	-	-	5	2.10
Progressivism	4	1.70	2	.84	13	5.4	2	.84	2	.84	29	12.13	4	1.67	56	23.44
Reconstructionism	2	.84	5	2.1	2	.84	-	-	-	-	13	5.43	-	-	22	9.20
Existentialism	16	6.70	19	8	34	14.2	11	4.6	9	3.76	47	19.66	6	2.5	142	59.41
Total	23	9.7	26	10.9	52	21.7	13	5.44	11	4.6	102	42.7	12	5	239	100

11 out of 13 teachers producing metaphors in "Vehicle" category were identified to reach highest mean levels in existentialism. This category includes metaphors created by teachers who view curriculum as a vehicle bringing teaching-learning process to success. Teachers who have such ideas about education believe that education must be learner centered, students must be provided with opportunities for self-realization and teachers must always be guides constantly improving themselves.

In the "Basis in education" category, 9 teachers out of 11 (81%) were identified to have existentialist views of education. This category includes metaphors created by teachers believing that curriculum is a basis which supports teaching-learning processes. These teachers believed that it is not themselves directing education but students' own decisions and the school is a place where students realize themselves and shape their own futures.

In the "Problem generating structure" category, 47 teachers out of 102 showed highest mean score for existentialism. Metaphors in this category were created by teachers who have negative ideas about curriculum believing that curriculum is an incomprehensible structure which contains unnecessary information and frequently changed by authorities regardless of necessity. However, their ideas about education were positive and they believed education must be learner-centred, teachers must be a guide showing special interest to students to help them make suitable choices for themselves.

6 out of 12 teachers creating metaphors in "Comprehensive structure" category showed highest mean scores for existentialism. Metaphors created by teachers believing that curriculum is a comprehensive structure including everything are in this category. Teachers with this view of curriculum mostly believed in a learner-centred education which helped students become aware of their own responsibilities and shape their own future.

### **Results, Discussion and Suggestions**

This study aims to compare classroom teachers' educational beliefs and their metaphorical perceptions of curriculum. With this aim, initially classroom teachers' educational beliefs and their metaphorical perceptions related to curriculum were specified and secondly the relationship between teachers' educational beliefs and metaphorical perceptions was tried to be revealed.

The results of the study revealed that classroom teachers highly adopted modern philosophies of education such as existentialism, progressivism and reconstructionism. These three philosophies were followed by perennialism and at a very low level of essentialism.

A detailed examination of the collected data showed that according to their answers to the items in the scale most of the teachers had the highest mean score in existentialism among five educational philosophies. It is stated in the literature that teachers with an existentialist view of education accept the differentness of each student and gives special care to them, make students aware of the reason for their existence, guide them to take their own responsibilities and draw their own routes (Ergün, 2014). Similar to the results of the current study, Altınkurt, Yılmaz and Oğuz (2012) also expressed that most of the teachers have an existentialist view of education. Also, findings of some other studies such as Ilgaz, Bülbül and Çuhadar (2013) and Alkın-Şahin, Tunca and Ulubey (2014) showed that teachers mostly agreed with existentialist ideas among other philosophies of education. On the other hand, findings of some other studies, in which teachers, teacher candidates and administrators participated, showed that progressivism, reconstructionism or empiricism were adopted more than other philosophical beliefs of education (Çoban, 2004; Doğanay & Sarı, 2003; Duman, 2008; Duman & Ulubey, 2008; Karadağ, Baloğlu & Kaya, 2009; Koçak, Ulusoy & Önen, 2012; Tekin & Üstün, 2008; Türkeli, 2011).

The findings of both this study and above mentioned studies show that teachers, teacher candidates and administrators mostly adopt modern philosophical views of education like existentialism, progressivism, reconstructionism and empiricism. This situation can clearly be seen as a positive development. However, revealing the effects of this situation on teaching-learning processes obviously requires interviews, observations, self-evaluations, evaluation of student products, and data from more detailed data collection processes from classrooms and school administrations. In this context, mixed method research studies can be considered as powerful studies as they enable confirmation of information coming from different sources (Mertkan, 2015). Hence, this study compared findings from Educational Beliefs Scale (EBS) (Yılmaz, Altinkurt & Çokluk, 2011) and metaphors revealing teachers' perceptions about curriculum, teaching and learning.

At this stage, first the meanings teachers attribute to the curriculum were identified by using metaphors. 239 of the 315 participating teachers created metaphors and explained the reasons why they created them. A total of 120 metaphors were created and the most frequently repeated metaphors were *tree, octopus, smart phone, chameleon, earth, maze, pomegranate, navigation device, play dough, Pollyanna, compass, ball, Voltran, jigsaw puzzle and star*. Review of the literature revealed that many metaphors created in this study were also created in similar studies. In Gültekin (2013)'s study with teacher candidates includes some similar metaphors such as *tree, brain, chameleon, sun, tortoise, guide maze, play-dough, compass, chain*. Another study Örtten and Erginer (2016) includes *tree, agenda, brain, clock, octopus, dough, compass, train, jigsaw puzzle* and Semerci (2007) includes *tree, compass and sun* metaphors.

On the basis of created metaphors and the explanations for their creations, seven categories were formed and they were named as *"transformable structure", "guide", "mechanism", "vehicle", "basis in education", "problem generating structure" and "comprehensive structure"*. In Özdemir (2012)'s study analyzing metaphors teacher candidates' create to explain curriculum, the categories generated were *"pathfinder", "organisation/mechanism", "vehicle", "essential component", "a shape giving mold", "a constantly changing concept"*. The categories *"pathfinder", "organisation/mechanism", "vehicle", "essential component", a constantly changing concept"* are very similar to the categories generated in this study. Likewise, the categories in this study were very similar to the categories generated in Gültekin (2013)'s study which were *"a phenomenon open to improvement", "guide", "shape giver", "a problem generating complex structure", "milestone", "a systematic whole", "a wide array"*.

Metaphors created by classroom teachers were also divided into three groups according to their qualities and these groups were *"negative, positive, both negative and positive"*. The results of the study showed that majority of teachers saw curriculum as a guiding, supportive and beneficial element of educational processes bridging the gap between teachers and students. Gültekin (2013) also expresses that teacher candidates have positive opinions about curriculum after a similar research aiming to reveal teacher candidates perceptions of curriculum through metaphors. The findings of Örtten ve Enginer (2016)'s study also showed parallelism with the current study. Their study was carried out to identify academicians views of curriculum development and its findings revealed that academicians had positive opinions about curriculum development. Despite not being half of the total number, a considerable number of teachers view the curriculum as a problem generating unnecessary structure. In Çırak-Kurt (2017)'s study to reveal middle school teachers' metaphorical perceptions of curriculum Çırak-Kurt found that teachers generally developed negative perception about curriculum. The metaphorical categories *"constantly changing structure", "beautifully designed on the outside but ugly on the inside", "a pile of information", "an unrealistic structure", "a structure lacking infrastructure", "problem generating complex structure"* created in Çırak-Kurt (2017) study are similar to the negative categories created in the present study.

The last part of the findings of the study is about the relationship between classroom teachers' educational beliefs and their metaphorical perceptions related to curriculum. The findings of the study reveal that categories such as *"transformable structure", "guide", "mechanism", "tool", "basis in education"* which indicate

positive perceptions related to curriculum are mostly generated by teachers who have an existentialist view of education. Thus in these categories, they generated concepts belonging to constructivist understanding such as compass, sun, birds, navigation, lamp, road map, orchestra, brain, water, skeletal system, cement, rainbow, heart, etc. On the other hand, a considerable number of teachers who believe in existentialist, progressivist and reconstructionist ideas created negative metaphors related to the curriculum such as *chameleon, jigsaw puzzle, maze, ball of strings, empty glass, refrigerator and broken ladder* under the category of "problem generating structure". Content analysis of the metaphors showed that the reason for this negative ideas is generally claimed to be linked with frequent changes in the curricula and teachers being unable to adequately adapt themselves to these changes.

The results of the study showed that classroom teachers mostly adopted existentialist view of education and they produced more positive metaphors than negative metaphors about the curriculum. However, it is important to point out that a considerable number of teachers have negative perceptions about the curriculum even though they have existentialist, progressivist and reconstructionist views of education. Although the reason for this negative ideas is generally claimed to be linked with frequent changes in the curricula and teachers being unable to adequately adapt themselves to these changes, an in depth study of the case with some qualitative and mixed method studies can have a meaningful contribution the related literature.

In the light of the above-mentioned conclusions, the following views are recommended:

1. Although the results of the study showed that the majority of teachers have positive opinions about curriculum, a considerable amount of teachers have negative opinions about curriculum. An in-service training program developed in accordance with the needs of teachers and aiming to help them clearly understand the dynamics and basic philosophy of curriculum can help minimising these negative opinions.
2. The findings of the study showed that the majority of classroom teachers have existentialist views of education In order to maintain this positive situation and further improve training of qualified teachers higher education institutions can provide learning environments which help teacher candidates internalise philosophical foundations of teaching-learning process.
3. Another finding of the study showed that the majority of classroom teachers considered curriculum functional and their views were found parallel with existentialist philosophy. Career development activities can be planned to effectively implement this into in-class activities.
4. The results of the present study showed that the majority of classroom teachers had existentialist views of education. Comprehensive studies can be designed to reveal whether they implement this philosophical views in their classrooms.
5. The present study was carried out with classroom teachers. New studies with other branches can be carried out

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