



## The semantic aspects of Turkish dimension adjectives yüksek (high) and alçak (low)

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### Abstract

Lexical meaning is not limited to the meaning found in the dictionary; it also involves encyclopedic meaning, which presents knowledge of a society's culture and ways of thinking (Fillmore, 1975; Langacker, 1987). Research based on cognitive approaches underscores the role of the semantic component of language and acknowledges that it is important for understanding all other components. Particularly in lexical semantics research, theories and principles of cognitive linguistics have a determinant role. Lexical meaning is an outcome of our conceptualization. For this study, we sought to analyze the semantic aspects of the Turkish dimension adjectives yüksek (high) and alçak (low) with corpus data by referring to the Turkish National Corpus (TNC). Thus, we examined the Turkish adjectives yüksek/alçak+noun combinations in the TNC and revealed the distribution of these adjectives' semantic aspects, as well as the types of noun constructions in which these adjectives occur. According to the results, the most frequently used adj+noun constructions in Turkish are in the domains of ENTITY, DEGREE, and CIRCUMSTANCES. In addition, the semantic aspects of yüksek/alçak+noun constructions display a continuum from literal to figurative meanings involving metonymic, metaphonymic, and metaphoric uses.

*Keywords:* figurative meaning; metaphor; metonymy; dimension adjectives; high; low

## 1. Introduction

Defining *meaning* is a hard task: It is difficult to give a single, exact definition for the term. However, we can be certain that meaning is a conceptualization (Langacker, 1991). In the most general sense, *meaning* is a whole constituting two components: form and content (Saussure, 1998; Leech, 1975; Frawley, 1992). This whole display a variety of features when daily language use is considered because words in a language may have several types of meanings, such as literal or figurative. At this point, the need to define different types of meaning arises. For this study, we classified types of meaning as literal, non-literal, and figurative. Several studies have tried to define these meaning types; Gibbs and Colston (2012) suggested that such categorization is not clear-cut. They defined *literal* and *figurative* meaning as two ends of a continuum, and asserted that there is no sharp distinction between them. Parallel to this, Radden (2002) showed that literal, metonymic, and metaphoric meanings form a continuum on which some metonymic examples come very close to

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metaphoric ones when studying the English adjective *high*. Dirven (2002) elaborated the literal-figurative continuum on the basis of conceptual distance and closeness. Syrpa (2017) analyzed adj+noun constructions with the English adjective *big* within the framework of Langacker (1991), Croft (2009), and Sullivan (2013), and demonstrated the semantic distribution of the adjective by referring to the literal-metonymy-metaphor continuum proposed by Radden (2002).

We explored the semantic aspects of the Turkish dimension adjectives *yüksek* and *alçak* within a corpus linguistics view by referring to the Turkish National Corpus (TNC). With this aim, we sought to answer the following questions:

- What do the semantic distributions of the Turkish premodifier adjectives *yüksek* and *alçak* look like in adj+noun constructions in the TNC?
- With which nouns do the Turkish adjectives *yüksek* and *alçak* display constructional structures?

First, we will introduce the study's conceptual framework. Afterward, we will present the methodology and findings. Finally, we will discuss the results.

### 1.1. Literature review

In this section, we will briefly describe the theoretical background on which we base the semantic aspects of the Turkish adjectives *yüksek* and *alçak*. After introducing the concepts of *frames* (Fillmore, 1982, 1988) and *domains* (Langacker, 1987, 2008), we will explore the general characteristics of adj+noun constructions.

#### 1.1.1. Frames and domains

Fillmore (1982, 1988) claimed that a word's meaning is understood in terms of *frames*, which are conceptual structures similar to scripts or scenarios. In a frame, an event, situation, or object is described with participant roles, and frames are represented by the roles the words evoke. Frame roles can be defined as generalizable attributes for many situations, events, and entities. For example, the roles that the MEASURABLE\_ATTRIBUTES frame can evoke are ENTITY, DEGREE, CIRCUMSTANCES, and TIME. Dimension adjectives modify a noun that may possess any of the roles in this frame (Sullivan, 2013).

Langacker (1987, 2008) used the term *domain* for the cognitive structure reached through language. All kinds of cognitive information, concepts, perceptual experiences, or knowledge can manifest as a domain. We may need one or more domains to understand a concept. The domains structuring a lexical concept constitute the domain matrix of that concept. For instance, to conceptualize the TEMPERATURE domain, we also need conceptual knowledge on the DEGREE, HOT and COLD domains. Domains show variety, from basic domains such as SPACE, TIME, TEMPERATURE, and COLOR to abstract ones such as LOVE. The distinction between these two is founded on experiential grounding or embodiment (Evans & Green, 2006: 231).

Langacker (2008: 46-47) proposed that domains are at the most inclusive conceptual level when compared with frames, because frames cannot appropriately describe basic domains such as SPACE or COLOR. Thus, a frame can be compared with an abstract domain.

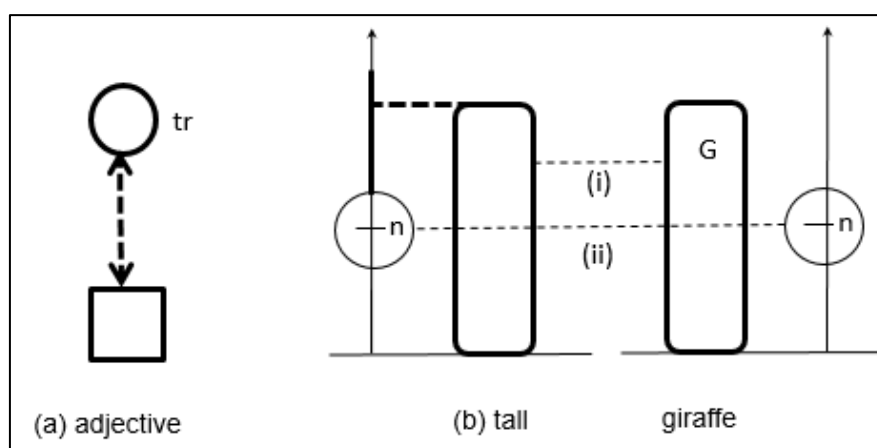
A linguistic expression belonging to a domain “chooses” specific conceptual content. Langacker called this conceptual content a “base.” The conceptual base of an expression is the background knowledge supporting the concept. When interpreted in a narrower context, the “base” comprises the parts of the domains, which are the focus of attention and represented in the scene (i.e., active domains). In addition, in the scene, attention is directed through a specific substructure called a

profile. Hence, the profile of an expression becomes prominent as a special focus of attention, and is the entity or relationship that a word denotes (Langacker, 2008: 66).

In Section 1.1.2, we discuss the conceptual framework of frames and domains in terms of adjective constructions.

### 1.1.2. Adjective constructions

Langacker (1987) considered adj+noun constructions to fall under *relational expressions* classes. Profiled relationships in constructions cause the participants who reveal the relationship to be at different levels of prominence. The most important participant, called the *trajector* (TR), is the primary focus point in which the construction is evaluated and defined. The second focus point and the participant are called landmarks (LMs). According to Langacker (2008: 114-117), an adjective is situated within the frame of a scale, the TR of which represents a specific characteristic. As shown in Figure 1(a), the adjective takes a single TR as a focal participant. This depends on the nature of adjectives because (1) the adjectives indicate both property and scale; and (2) these two are independent entities/things to be defined.



**Figure 1.** The focal participant of the adjective and the adj+noun construction (Langacker, 2008: 116, 187)

In light of these findings, Langacker (2008:187) explained the component structure of a *tall giraffe*, as depicted in Figure 1(b). As seen in the figure, *tall*—which is a scalar adjective—“chooses” giraffe as the TR and profiles a non-processual relationship. In this scale, the part labeled with *n* includes the range of specifications that are accepted as normal. *Tall* assigns the height of a physical object in the vertical dimension, and the encyclopedic knowledge related to a giraffe (*G*) shows that giraffe is somewhere above the norm. According to Langacker, a *tall giraffe* carries two meanings: the first is the knowledge that “a giraffe is tall in terms of a scale when typical human experience is considered,” and the second is the knowledge that “a giraffe is tall when compared with other giraffes.” Correspondence (i) in Figure 1(b) represents the basic conceptual overlap defining the adj+noun construction. The height, specified by *tall*, can then be interpreted with respect to any norm that might suggest itself, the default being typical human experience (Langacker, 2008: 187). In addition, in Correspondence (ii), the norm of the adjective can be defined with the characteristic height of the giraffe. Langacker argued that these two explanations for *tall giraffe* construction do not depend on a difference in their componential structure, but rather on how these meanings are integrated, as presented in the schema. Taylor (2002: 220) asserted that adjectives are a different class that does not share the same characteristics, and examined the relational profile for the prototypical adjective *tall* as follows: When *tall* is used attributively as in “a tall man,” the noun has a nominal profile. On the other hand, when the adjective is used predicatively, as in “The man is tall,” it profiles a stative temporal

relation. Tall invokes the vertical dimension of an entity in its semantic structure. An entity is accepted to be tall when its height exceeds the amount of the norm for that kind of entity. For this reason, *tall* is a relational item, and its TR is a noun. The TR (an entity that is claimed to be *tall*) profiles a relation in the vertical dimension, exceeding the limit of the norm. In a frame-based model, Sullivan (2013) reconsidered the “tall man” adj+noun construction. According to Sullivan (2013: 26), a domain will often contain elements that are shared across many related frames (e.g., the EXERCISING FRAME is profiled in the BODY domain). In a former study, Sullivan (2009: 31) described the “tall man” construction by the substructures in the MEASURABLE\_ATTRIBUTES frame. These substructure criteria are domains such as ENTITY, DEGREE, CIRCUMSTANCES, and TIME. According to these criteria, “man” indicates an ENTITY and becomes prominent as an autonomous element, where “tall” is a dependent element because the *man* fills in a role existing in the frame constituted by *tall*.

In Section 1.1.3, we will discuss the semantic aspects of adjectives by referring to the above related literature.

### 1.1.3. The semantic continuum of adjectives

In the literature on adjective semantics, the nouns that the adjectives modify can be located across a very wide range on the meaning scale. Studies grounding on the cognitive view (Radden, 2002; Dirven, 2002; Syrpa, 2017) show that adjectives have their meanings on a continuum. In his study on the English *high*, Radden (2002) indicated that this adjective has a continuum of various meanings, from literal to metonymic and metaphoric. For example, in *high building*, the adjective *high* keeps its literal meaning by representing the physical dimension, whereas the meanings of constructions such as *high wave*, *high temperature* (metonymy), *high price*, and *high quality* (metaphor) move away from literal meaning gradually, and gain extensional meanings. At the end of the continuum, *high* stops manifesting the physical dimension as its meaning becomes completely figurative by gaining metaphorical meaning.

Dirven (2002) elaborated the literal-figurative continuum proposed by Radden (2002) by using conceptual distance and conceptual closeness as determiners. He claimed that metonymic and metaphoric extensions arise with *conceptual distance* and *conceptual closeness*, and that these meaning extensions can show different degrees of figurativity in each category. Dirven (2002: 107) revealed the meaning categories along the literal-figurative continuum as follows: The structure of thought is categorized as literalness and non-literalness. In this vein, pre-metonymy, metonymy, post-metonymy, and metaphor are classified under non-literalness. In addition, each subcategory has a gradation in itself. As a result, Dirven demonstrated a continuum with literalness at one end and complex figurativeness at the other. On this continuum, pre-metonymy and some degrees of metonymy are considered non-figurative, and post-metonymy and metaphor are considered complex figurative. Syrpa (2017: 91) examined this literal-figurative continuum proposed by Dirven (2002) by analyzing the English adjective *big*. She scrutinized four figurative and non-figurative meanings in addition to the literal meaning, which encompasses the physical dimension. In the present study, we explain the semantic aspects of *high/low*+noun constructions by referring to cognitive mechanisms.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Data collection

We analyzed the semantic aspects of the Turkish adjectives *yüksek* and *alçak* in light of the conceptual framework described above. We derived the adjectives from the Turkish National Corpus (TNC), which is composed of 50 million words; it is a balanced and representative corpus of

contemporary Turkish that consists of samples of textual data across a wide variety of genres, covering a period of 24 years (1990–2013) (Aksan et al., 2012; <https://v3.tnc.org.tr/tnc/about-tnc>).

Since we used corpus data and included frequency calculations, we adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches in the present study. However, this study leans more toward the qualitative side.

We made corpus queries on the website of the corpus, then analyzed the data by copying them to a spreadsheet. We limited the data drawn from the corpus with adj+noun combinations; we excluded adjective pronouns, verbs, proper nouns, and fully fixed constructions from the database. When comprising the database, we did not apply limitations for text types and years.

Some *yüksek/alçak*+noun constructions are fixed as a phrase and have a specialized collocative meaning. These constructions indicate different categories. Therefore, *yüksek/alçak*+noun constructions exhibit a great number of categories. *Yüksek* yields a number of collocations that are compound nouns to label certain institutions and councils; for example, *yüksek öğretim* (higher education), *yüksek mahkeme* (high court), *yüksek kurul* (high council), *Yüksek Öğretmen Okulu* (High School Teacher), *Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu* (Higher [lit. “high”] Education Council), *Yüksek Askeri Şûra* (High Military Council), *Yüksek Seçim Kurulu* (Supreme [lit. “high”] Election Board), and *Yüksek Planlama Kurulu* (Higher [lit. “high”] Planning Council). In these examples, *yüksek* gives the meaning “high level” to the institutions. These constructions are used as proper names. Apart from these, there are constructions referred to as compounds in the Turkish dictionary, such as *yüksek kan basıncı* (high blood pressure), *yüksek lisans* (bachelor’s degree [lit. “high graduate”]), *yüksekokul* (high school), *yükseköğretim* (higher education), and *yükseköğretim* (high training). We excluded such examples from the study because they deserve to be analyzed and discussed as the topic of separate research.

## 2.2. Data analysis

We took the following steps when examining the corpus data:

- We obtained the Turkish adjectives *yüksek* and *alçak* from the TNC.
- We copied each paragraph containing each occurrence to a spreadsheet within the context the adjective was used.
- We excluded adjective pronouns, proper names, and verbs from the data; we only selected adj+noun constructions.
- Among these, we excluded proper names, the names of institutions and councils such as *Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu* (lit. “High Education Council”), *Yüksek Askeri Şûra* (lit. “High Military Council”), fully fixed constructions, and nouns that are used as technical terms, such as *yüksek lisans* (lit. “high graduate”) and *alçak kabartma* (lit. “low relief”).
- We identified the nouns modified in adj+noun constructions.
- We determined the domains that the identified nouns represent.
- We categorized modified nouns according to the literal-figurative continuum proposed by Dirven (2002).
- We calculated the frequencies and percentiles of the uses categorized according to the semantic type.
- We determined the characteristics of the constructions in the examples.

We intuitively analyzed the figurative uses of *yüksek/alçak*+noun constructions in the database using the basic approaches to conceptual metaphors and metonymies within a cognitive linguistics framework (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1993 & 1987; Radden & Kövecses, 1999; Radden, 2002, Dirven, 2002). We identified the source domains and semantic categories with regard to the

conceptual meaning of the adjectives *yüksek* and *alçak* in the Turkish Language Society Current Dictionary (2019).

Table 1 depicts the total numbers of adjectives gathered for the analysis in line with the limitations and steps followed.

**Table 1.** Data gathered from the TNC

Adjectives	Total	Tokens	Types
yüksek	2501	1648	459
alçak	1176	951	210

We analyzed all the examples regarding the context in which they were used, and we categorized the adjectives according to the meaning they gained within their given context. From this analysis, we identified five meaning categories, as seen in Table 2. When categorizing meaning types, we classified the examples according to different cognitive mechanisms, such as metonymy and metaphor, in light of the conceptual framework proposed by Radden (2002) and Dirven (2002).

**Table 2.** Meaning categories

1	2	3	4	5
	non-literal +	non-literal +	non-literal +	non-literal +
Literal	non-figurative	figurative	figurative	figurative
	pre-metonymy	metonymy	metaphtonymy	metaphor

We discuss the findings gathered from the analysis in line with Langacker's theory of domains, Fillmore's frame semantics, and Sullivan's view on metaphorical aspects of adjectives, which we explain by referring to the MEASURABLE\_ATTRIBUTES frame.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Semantic aspects of *yüksek/alçak* + nouns

In this part, we will address our findings based on five categories of meaning.

##### 3.1.1. Literal meaning

Literal meanings of the adjectives *yüksek* and *alçak* are presented in Table 3 based on the Turkish Language Society Current Dictionary (2019).

**Table 3.** Dictionary meaning

Yüksek	Alçak
Being a large distance from bottom to top; the opposite of low	not measuring much from the base; the opposite of high

As understood from their dictionary meanings, the adjectives *yüksek* and *alçak* are used to modify concrete entities; they literally point to the vertical axis. As shown in Figure 2, in their semantic structures, *yüksek* and *alçak* are associated with the vertical dimension of an entity and profile the part above or below the norm. These adjectives have relational items, and the modified nouns are perceived as the TR. In these constructions, the TR and LM are perceived as complete forms; in other

words, the profiled entity is in the active zone as a whole (Langacker, 1991: 189). In these nouns, a degree that exceeds (*yüksek*) and does not exceed (*alçak*) the norm on the vertical dimension is profiled. In line with the information above, the adjectives evoke the ENTITY substructure of the MEASURABLE\_ATTRIBUTES frame. This relation between the two adjectives is illustrated in Figure 2.

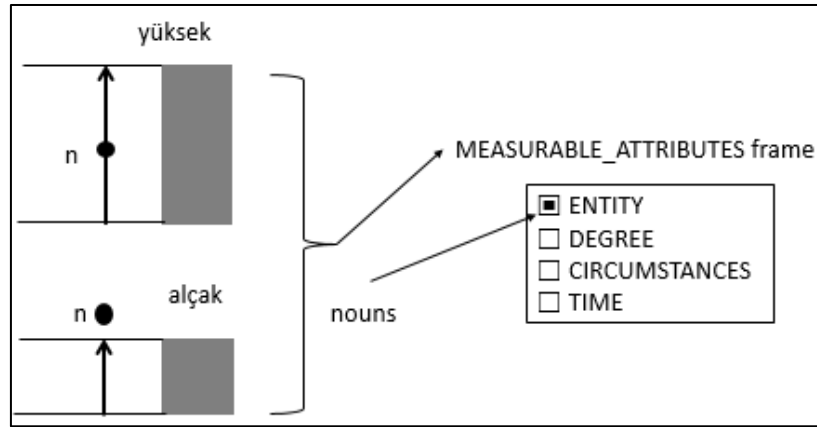


Figure 2. Literal meaning: *yüksek* and *alçak*

A total of 6.9% of the occurrences with *yüksek*, and 21.45% of the occurrences with *alçak*, were used with their literal meanings. Examples of occurrences from the Turkish corpus for *yüksek* are given in (1), and examples for *alçak* are given in (2):

- (1) a. Örneğin **yüksek bir dağa** tırmanırken yürüyüş, kaya tırmanışı, buzul tırmanışı gibi teknikler bir arada kullanılabilir. (W-QF05A1B-4672-42)  
(For example, actions such as hiking, rock climbing, and glacier climbing can be used together while climbing a **high mountain**.)
- b. Meteoroloji ajansı yetkilileri, **yüksek binaları** sallayan şiddetli depremin merkezinin, Sunda boğazının 40 kilometre altında olduğunu kaydettiler. (W-SE30D1B-2100-328)  
(Meteorological agency officials noted that the center of the severe earthquake that shook **high buildings** was 40 kilometers below the Sunda Strait.)
- c. ...**yüksek duvarları**, onları çeviren bacaları ve herhangi bir tehlikeye karşı anında çalmaya hazır sirenleriyle birer endüstriyel kale gibi görünüyor. (W-TE36E1B-3353-349)  
(...they look like industrial castles with **high walls**, chimneys that encircle them, and sirens ready to sound instantly against any danger.)

In the sentences in Example (1), *yüksek* profiles an ENTITY such as a *mountain* (1a), *building* (1b), and *wall* (1c) as the TR. Accordingly, in its literal meaning, the premodifier adjective *yüksek* shows that the entities modified are above the norm and profile the vertical extent of the nouns or the TR.

- (2) a. ... iki küçük koltuğun arasındaki **alçak sehpa** duran mermerden bir satranç takımıydı. (W-NA16B2A-1242-1092)  
(...it was a marble chess set that sits on the **low coffee table** between the two small armchairs.)
- b. ...ve 3. merdivene, **alçak duvara** oturur gibi oturur. (W-LA14B1A-1709-929)  
(...and he sits on the third ladder as if sitting on a low wall.)
- c. ...rutubet kokusuyla, sıvaları dökülen **alçak yapılarıyla**, dürüst ve yalnız kalmış insanlarıyla... (W-GA16B2A-1931-892)

(...with the smell of humidity, *low structures* with falling plasters, honest and lonely people.)

- d. Pastanelerde *alçak topuklu* iş ayakkabılarını giymiş kadınlar servis yapıyor, kentin en iyi giyimli kadınları kaldırımlardan geçiyorlardı. (W-NA16B0A-1683-932)

(In the bakeries, women in *low-heeled* work shoes were serving, and the best dressed women of the city were passing by on the sidewalks.)

As seen in the examples in (2), *alçak* also profiles an ENTITY such as *coffee table* (2a), *wall* (2b), *structure* (2c), and *heel* (2d) as the TR, whose extent is below the norm in the vertical extent. In these examples, the entities are in the active zone with their whole dimension, and the profiles of the entities modified are below the norm.

In literal uses of the premodifier adjectives *yüksek* and *alçak*, the adjectives profile the whole referent of the TR; that is, the whole entity is in the active zone. When two adjectives are compared, it is possible to assert that *alçak* is used more frequently than *yüksek* in its literal meaning.

### 3.1.2. Non-literal and non-figurative meanings: Pre-metonymy

The second semantic category, namely, pre-metonymy, is used for partially or weakly metonymic occurrences (Dirven, 2002; Radden, 2002). In this category, the adjectives *yüksek* and *alçak* protect their vertical extent reference; however, the examples in this category also exhibit partial or weak spatial perceptions beyond the limit in the active zone. In other words, the region in the active zone exceeds the average. In these constructions, the TR and LM are perceived in a given relation; that is, the profiled entity and its active zone are inconsistent (Langacker, 1991: 190). The TR profiled is above or below the norm on the scale, yet this time, the active zone is perceived with only one dimension. The examples in this category partially or weakly include UP FOR UP+MORE metonymy for *yüksek* and DOWN FOR DOWN+LESS metonymy for *alçak*. Since the active zones of the entities are profiled with one dimension and the modified nouns do not participate as undifferentiated wholes in the profiled relationship, these examples belong to the non-literal as well as non-figurative part of the continuum, exhibiting a low degree of metonymicity or a pre-metonymic status, and have non-literal meanings (Syrpa, 2017: 98). Hence, the two conceptual domains UP and MORE or DOWN and LESS are still conflated at this stage. According to Grady (1997: 25), a stage of deconflation must occur before we can speak about distinct concepts that are bound in cognitive structure. It is possible to summarize this semantic aspect by UP FOR UP+MORE and DOWN FOR DOWN+LESS cognitive mechanisms in Grady's (1997) and Radden's (2002) terms. As seen in Figure 3, the premodifier adjectives *yüksek* and *alçak* evoke the ENTITY substructure of the MEASURABLE\_ATTRIBUTES frame in terms of pre-metonymic meaning.

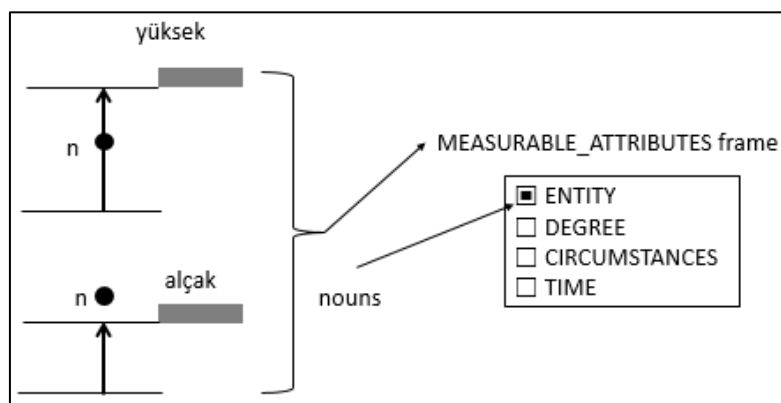


Figure 3. Pre-metonymy: *yüksek* and *alçak*



According to the findings gathered from the corpus data, only 2.9% of occurrences with *yüksek* and 12.09% of occurrences with *alçak* belong to the category referred to as pre-metonymy. Some examples are depicted in Example (3) for *yüksek* and Example (4) for *alçak*:

- (3) a. Dere kenarlarındaki taşlık ve kayalıklarda, **yüksek steplerde** yaşar. (W-RB04A1A-1160-37)  
(It lives in rocky areas close to **high steppes** near streams.)
- b. 75.8 km<sup>2</sup> yüzölçümüne sahip adanın **en yüksek yeri** 564 metredir. (W-PC06A1B-3963-6)  
(The island, the **highest point** [lit. “place”] of which is 564 meters, has an area of 75.8 km<sup>2</sup>.)
- c. ...geniş ve **yüksek bir mekana** sahip olan orta bölüm, ... yolculara hizmet işlevlerine ayrılmıştır. (W-QG03A1B-2531-123)  
(The middle part, which has a wide and **high space**...is reserved for the passengers.)

As understood from the sentences in Example (3), *yüksek* profiles concrete spatial concepts such as *step*, *place*, *site*, and *peak*, which are perceived with one direction as if their vertical and horizontal extents were in the active zone. Thus, the adjective does not have conceptual access to a different semantic domain and refers to the vertical extension of an ENTITY, which is above the norm. In these examples, the adjective has not yet gone far beyond its conceptual content.

- (4) a. **Alçak ovalarda** henüz kirlenmemiş havuz, kanal, gölet, arklar gibi su birikintilerinde veya bunların kenarlarında ... (W-RB04A1A-1160-153)  
(...in **low plains**, in puddles such as pools, channels, ponds, arcs, or their edges that have not yet been contaminated.)
- b. Genellikle dik kıyılardan oluşan bu kesimde yer yer **alçak kıyılara** da rastlanır. (W-GD02A2A-1023-98)  
(In this area generally composed of steep coasts, one also encounters **low coasts**.)
- c. **Alçak yerlere** çöken sis gibi insanları birbirini görmekten dahi mahrum eden mutsuzluğu hissetmeniz uzun sürmeyecek. (W-UE36E1B-3356-73)  
(It will not take long to feel the unhappiness that deprives people of even seeing each other, like the fog collapsing in **low places**.)

In Example (4), the modifier indicates a conceptualization in a single domain. The extension of the adjective refers to a vertical ENTITY that has (partially) horizontal meaning and is below the norm the TR profiles as an ENTITY such as *area*, *floor*, *region*, *plain*, *plateau*, *valley*, *cloud*, *sky*, and *flight*, which is below the norm on the scale; the active zone is perceived only with its one dimension.

### 3.1.3. Figurative meaning: Metonymy

Some examples in the non-literal meaning category go slightly beyond literal meaning and gain figurativity. These examples do not profile a physical entity. Research on figurative meaning asserts that figurative constructions are motivated by two cognitive mechanisms: metaphor and metonymy (Kövecses, 2010; Gibbs, 1994; Radden, 2002). Examples conceptualized by the contiguity relationship within the same domain are motivated by metonymies, whereas examples conceptualized by the mappings between different conceptual domains are motivated by metaphors (Kövecses, 2010). In this case, as the meaning becomes figurative, the two semantic domains begin to deconflate but protect their contiguity relationship. This is a metonymic relationship conceptualized with UP FOR MORE and DOWN FOR LESS metonymies. In line with this information, the third semantic category of the continuum with *yüksek/alçak*+noun constructions involves metonymic uses that indicate a DEGREE in

the same domain. In these occurrences, *yüksek* and *alçak* are used figuratively because they substitute an entity within the same conceptual domain (Radden, 2002: 411). Here, to perceive the TR, we need a gradable scale. Thus, these examples belong to the metonymy extent of the continuum. Metonymic occurrences are those that have conceptual contiguity, and these examples evoke the DEGREE substructure of the MEASURABLE ATTRIBUTES frame. In other words, the modified nouns that stand for an entity are understood by a degree on a scale in vertical extension. As seen in Figure 4, when used metonymically, *yüksek* and *alçak* do not ground on a physical entity as a norm. Instead, these adjectives are ground on a scale as a norm and exhibit a degree on two separate ends of a scale.

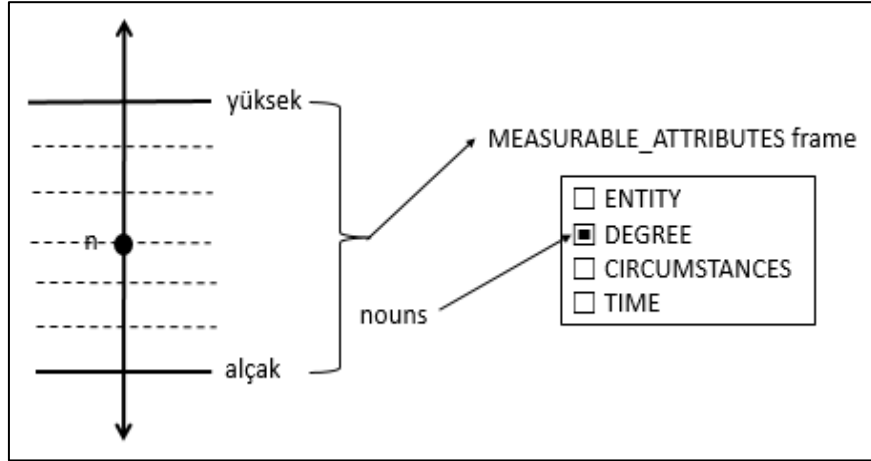


Figure 4. Metonymy: *yüksek* and *alçak*

The corpus occurrences that exemplify this use are presented in (5) and (6). These examples represent a gradation, degree, or segmentation on a scale. For example, at a *high temperature* in 5(a), there is a gradation on the TEMPERATURE scale. The scale of verticality stands for degrees of temperature in the TEMPERATURE domain. This conceptualization can be explained with the UP FOR MORE metonymy, which is grounded on EFFECT FOR CAUSE since the warm temperature makes the measurement of the thermometer rise (Radden, 2002: 409).

In the corpus occurrences, 40.4% of *yüksek*+noun constructions and 35.12% of *alçak*+noun constructions were metonymic. These findings indicate that the metonymic part of the continuum includes the most frequent occurrences among the other semantic categories.

- (5) a. Buna karşılık küçük çocuklarda basit bir infeksiyonda bile **yüksek ateş** meydana gelebilir. (W-FC01A2A-1511-6)

(On the other hand, young children may experience a **high fever**, even with a simple infection.)

- b. Yurtta ısıklık çalmak, şarkı söylemek, **yüksek sesle** konuşmak, şıdıkk terlikle yürümek yassah. (W-EI22C4A-0868-9)

(It is forbidden to whistle, sing, **speak loudly** [lit. “with loud voice”], or to walk in slippers in the dormitory.)

- c. Düdüklü tencerede oluşan **yüksek basınç** sayesinde suyun kaynama sıcaklığı 100 C'den daha yukarlara çıkabilir. (W-QI22E1C-2910-133)

(Because of high pressure in the pressure cooker, the boiling temperature of water exceeds 100°C.)

In the examples, the adjectives profile TR that evoke DEGREE, such as *temperature*, *tension*, *pitch*, *volume*, *altitude* and *latitude*, the level of which is perceived as the norm. In these examples, the level

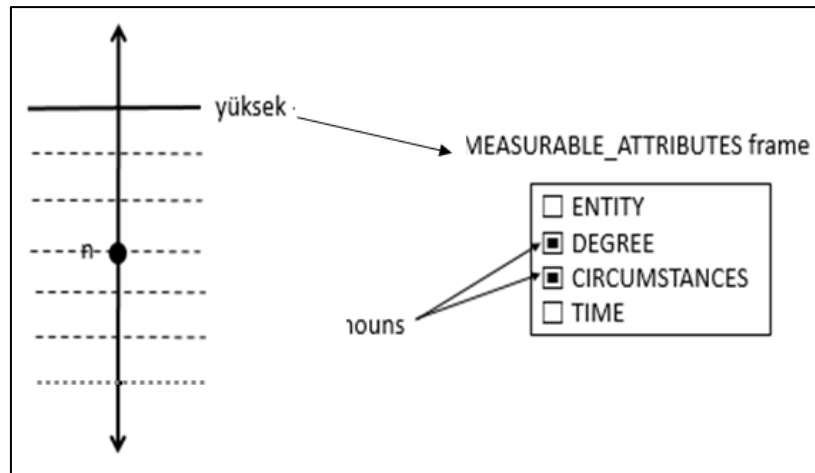
above the norm is in the active zone. For example, in 5(a), the increase in the numerical value as a unit of measurement is conceptualized by *yüksek ateş* (high temperature). Similarly, in the examples *yüksek ses* (high volume) and *yüksek basınç* (high pressure), contiguity relationships on the vertical scale are activated with the UP FOR MORE metonymy in the PITCH and PRESSURE domains. Apart from these examples, nouns indicating amounts or quantities that are profiled as TRs, such as *ratios*, *percentages*, *levels*, and *intensities*, are also grouped under this category.

- (6) a. Söylenecekler, söylenen şeyin önemine göre yüksek veya **alçak sesle** söyleniyor. (W-DA16B1A-1504-992)  
(What to say is said in a loud or **low voice** depending on the importance of what is being said.)
- b. **Alçak gerilim** için kesme bağlama bedeli 7.1 YTL, orta gerilim için de 60.6 YTL olarak belirlendi. (W-RF25D1B-2146-98)  
(The cutoff connection fee was determined as 7.1 YTL for **low voltage** and 60.6 YTL for medium voltage.)
- c. Engibeli bir arazide, çok **alçak irtifada**, sesteki iki kat hızlı uçabilen F-16, üstün bir savaş uçağı. (W-BE39C1A-0857-226)  
(The F-16 is a superior fighter aircraft, capable of flying over rough terrain, at very low altitudes, and is twice as fast as sound.)

*Alçak* can also profile TRs such as *volume*, *voltage*, *altitude*, *latitude*, *heat*, *pressure*, *frequency* and *orbit* and motivate these LMs with the DOWN FOR LESS metonymy. The examples that belong to the metonymy part of the continuum are first conceptualized with an EFFECT FOR CAUSE metonymy and then scaled to the DOWN FOR LESS metonymy. These occurrences suggest that examples experienced both with and without spatial perception can be graded on the vertical scale with metonymic motivation.

#### 3.1.4. Figurative meaning: Metaphtonymy

Some figurative examples on the continuum lose the conceptualization of vertical extension; we call this stage of the continuum metaphtonymic meaning; Dirven (2002) referred to it as post-metonymy. At this stage, the semantic content begins to deconflate; however, it has still not become completely metaphoric, as a part of the conceptual access is still contiguous. This category involves partially metonymic and partially metaphoric motivations. Occurrences in the metaphtonymy part of the continuum are those that cannot “decide” where to stand in the continuum. The conceptualization is possible with the UP FOR DEGREE metonymy in a single domain and the UP IS MORE metaphor in two distinct domains. Here, the meaning deconflates and begins to lose the meaning UP. The ground of the conceptualizations in this relationship is the UP FOR MORE metonymy, which is based on the THING FOR ITS REPRESENTATION, and the MORE IS UP metaphor, which indicates a mapping relationship between UP and MORE. Since they are shown in numerical values, the examples here are close to the metonymy part; on the other hand, they are close to the metaphor part since it evokes the CIRCUMSTANCES substructure in the MEASURABLE ATTRIBUTES frame. Therefore, these examples vacillate between two ends of the continuum.



**Figure 5.** Metaphtonymy: *yüksek*

As presented in Figure 5, nouns or TRs profiled by *yüksek* have the characteristics of both the DEGREE and CIRCUMSTANCES domains. In addition, in these examples, the opposite of *alçak* is no longer *yüksek*. Instead, for this semantic category of the continuum, the word *düşük* (lit. “low” in English) is preferred in Turkish. Metaphthonymic examples comprise 12.4% of the examples, and the related occurrences in the corpus are depicted in (7):

- (7) a. ...sözleşme ürünlerini aşırı **yüksek fiyatlarda** satmaya çalışmasıdır. (W-KF10A2A-1864-93)  
 (...trying to sell contract products at extremely **high prices**.)
- b. ...pekala **yüksek gelirli** ama aynı zamanda daha büyük olan hane halkının bireylerinin refah düzeyi... (W-MF10A2A-1862-2091)  
 (...what about the welfare level of **high income**, but also larger household members...)
- c. ... Kelly Holmes gibi şampiyonların da yer aldığı 40 elit atlete daha **yüksek para** verildi. (W-SI31D1B-2345-47)  
 (...40 elite athletes, including champions like Kelly Holmes, were given **higher** [more] **money**.)

As portrayed in 7(a), the word *price* in *yüksek fiyat* (high price) indicates a unit of currency, and is shown with a vertical line ascending from bottom to top in stock reports or currency graphs. In other words, it is possible to say that the price share is related to an ascending line on a graph. On the ground of this conceptualization lays the knowledge of representing the value of an entity with an amount of money. This conceptualization is motivated by the THING FOR ITS REPRESENTATION metonymy. Under this metonymy, it is possible to describe the contiguity between the highness of the prices and the highness of the amount of money with the UP FOR MORE metonymy in the same conceptual domain. On the other hand, the same conceptualization can be explained with a metaphoric relationship by the mappings between the source domain VERTICAL EXTENT and the target domain QUANTITY. This reveals itself with a conceptualization that is grounded on MORE metaphors (Radden, 2002: 409). Because of the reasons above, the examples in this category are accepted as metaphthonymic.

All the examples in this category are conceptualized both metonymically, where linguistic expressions are motivated by contiguity relationships within the same domain (HEIGHT and DEGREE), and metaphorically, where linguistic expressions are motivated by mappings between two distinct

domains (HEIGHT and QUANTITY). The TRs profiled by *yüksek* in this category are generally related to money issues or financial transactions such as *profit*, *budget*, and *income*.

### 3.1.5. Figurative meaning: Metaphor

In the metaphor part of the continuum, *yüksek* and *alçak* completely lose their dimension and vertical extent conceptualization. In metaphoric occurrences, they are related to concepts in distinct experiential domains and gain abstract meanings. These are the ones at the furthest extent of the literal-figurative continuum with the highest degree of figurativity.

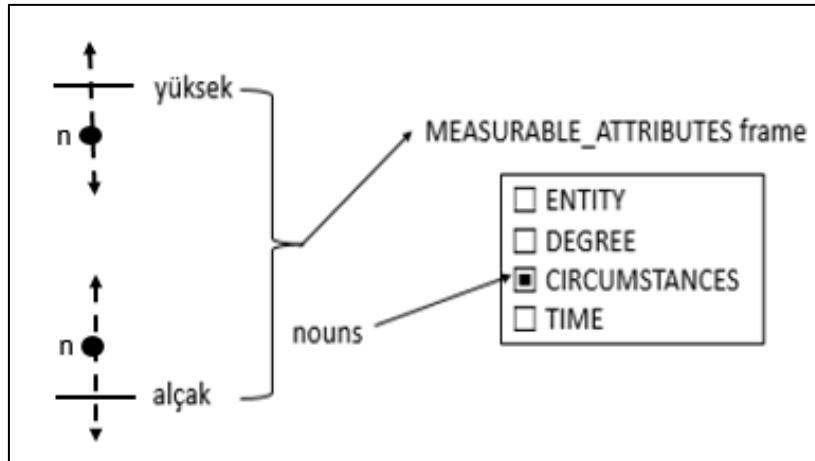


Figure 6. Metaphor: *yüksek* & *alçak*

As seen in Figure 6, in metaphorical occurrences, the adjectives *yüksek* and *alçak* indicate a degree above or below the norm. The two adjectives never have opposite meanings. They are used for abstract concepts in different domains. Thus, adjectives acquire a metaphorical meaning; that is, they lose their dimension meaning completely and refer to a scale of evaluation (Syrpa, 2017: 94), and they give evaluative meaning when used metaphorically. The metaphor that occurs in this part of the continuum shows a mapping between the evaluation of the *height* of the physical object and the evaluation of the *goodness*, *superiority* or *importance* of an abstract entity. In light of this, *yüksek* gives the metaphors GOOD/SUPERIOR/IMPORTANT IS UP, which is based on MORE IS UP. On the other hand, *alçak* gives two conceptual metaphors: BAD/WORTHLESS IS DOWN and MODEST IS DOWN.

In the TNC, 37.5% of *yüksek*+noun constructions and 31.34% of *alçak*+noun constructions involve metaphorical meaning. The uses of *yüksek* and *alçak* in the metaphor part of the continuum are exemplified in (8), (9) and (10).

Metaphorical expressions of *yüksek* that cover GOOD/SUPERIOR/IMPORTANT/MORE IS UP conceptualizations are presented in Example (8):

#### EVALUATION 1. GOOD/SUPERIOR/IMPORTANT/MORE IS UP

- (8) a. Bir vakit önce, yine pek **yüksek makam** tarafından tertip edilen müsabakanın takdir heyetine aza olarak tayin edilmiştim. (W-VG37E1B-3069-4)  
(A while ago, I was assigned as a judge by a **high degree** for a competence.)
- b. Kültürünü, yüksek zekâsını, kendi aç kitlelerinin önüne koymayı bildi. (W-II37C3A-1945-56)  
(He knew how to put his culture and **high intelligence** in front of the hungry public.)
- c. **Yüksek risk** altında değerlendirilen diğer bir grup ise yaşlılardır (65 yaş ve üstü). (W-VD36C1A-2703-165)

(Another group considered at **high risk** is the elderly [65 years and over].)

- d. Yapılan çalışmalar sonunda yüksek verimli, hastalıklara dayanıklı ve **yüksek kaliteli** çeşitler ıslah edilmiştir. (W-MC06A2A-2000-1410)

(As a result of the studies, high yielding, disease resistant, and **high quality** varieties have been improved.)

As presented in the examples, in constructions that are at the metaphorical stage of the continuum, nouns profiled by *yüksek* are represented by abstract domains such as SOCIAL LEVEL (degree, rank, position, authority, etc.), SYSTEM (council, education, teaching, etc.) and other similar abstract concepts (principle, risk, quality, technology, etc.). In these constructions, a similarity relationship is established between the *height* of the object in the source domain and the *level, superiority* and *intensity* of abstract concepts in the target domain.

At this stage, *alçak* comprises two metaphorical meanings on the evaluation scale of the continuum. In the first metaphoric meaning, BAD/UNIMPORTANT conceptual domains are mapped with a DOWN conceptual domain. The figurative meaning is grounded on the BAD/UNIMPORTANT/WORTHLESS IS DOWN conceptual metaphor. The occurrences illustrating this conceptual metaphor are portrayed in Example (9):

*EVALUATION 1. BAD/WORTHLESS IS DOWN*

- (9) a. ...her adi, **alçak insana** karşılık bir kahraman, her bencil siyasetçiye karşılık kendini milletine, vatanına adanmış bir lider muhakkak vardır. (W-RA16B2A-1246-1088)

(...there is certainly a hero for every ordinary, **mean** (lit. “low”) person, and a leader who devotes himself to his nation and homeland for every selfish politician.)

- c. ...kimin nerede çalıştığı, **alçak işleri** kimlerin, yüksekleri kimlerin yaptığı gibi meseleleri ele almak bana pek mümkün görünmüyor. (W-MD36E1B-2855-700)

(...it seems unlikely to me to address issues such as who works where, who does **low jobs**, [and] who does high jobs.)

In (9), *alçak* is used with animate nouns such as *humans* and *men*. In these constructions, the animate nouns profiled generally refer to a human or a collective noun, and the adjective assigns the meaning “bad” or “betrayer.” Thus, the adjective modifies the abstract features, such as a bad personality or a human’s poor behavior. In addition, the adjective profiles TRs that are metaphorically abstract nouns, such as *nation, culture, job, and level*. In these constructions, a similarity between the height of an entity in the source domain (to be physically low) and the features of the abstract concepts (to have less importance, to have a bad personality or behavior) is established. This conceptualization refers to the negative end pole of an axis of evaluation, which is motivated by the metaphor BAD/WORTHLESS IS DOWN.

The second metaphoric meaning of *alçak* on the scale of evaluation is MODEST IS DOWN. Unlike the former metaphorical meaning, this meaning points to a positive evaluative meaning. Examples in this category are presented in (10):

*EVALUATION 2. MODEST IS DOWN:*

- (10) a. Tanrıyı **alçak gönüllere**, insanlığa, sevgiye indiren Yunus Emre'ye... (W-CG37C0A-0225-800)

(To Yunus Emre, who reduced God to **low hearts**, humanity and love...)

- b. Yüce Tanrı "Gönül evlerinizi **alçak gönüllülük** süpürgesiyle süpürün." demiştir. (W-RA16B1A-1213-1099)

(God Almighty said “Sweep your homes of hearts with a broom of **humility** [lit.**low-heart**].”)

These constructions in (10) are driven by MODEST conceptual metaphors. Although this use is highly figurative and composite, we think it deserves attention in this study. This use has frequently emerged in the database and provides a clue for Turkish culture.

In the linguistic expressions motivated by MODEST IS DOWN, *alçak* does not yield the meaning “bad or worthless” as in the former conceptualization. In contrast, it has a positive meaning. *Alçak+gönül/gönüllülük* is a collocational expression specific to Turkish, the meaning of which is “modest” (Dictionary of Turkish Language Association). *Gönül* is a lexical item referring to the word *heart* in Turkish. However, this lexical item has a special place in Turkish culture. According to Ruhi (2007: 281), *gönül* is conceptualized as an ENTITY that opens itself up to others and reveals its innermost wishes. In this conceptualization, the profiled TR *gönül* refers to THE INNER UNIVERSE OF THE PERSON and REAL SELF THAT IS SHARED WITH OTHERS (Ruhi, 2013). Thus, the concept is a metonymy used as the REAL, ESSENTIAL SELF. In this category, when *alçak* collocates with *gönül*, the meaning “modest” emerges. This metaphor is also grounded on the LESS IS DOWN metaphor; however, this time, LOW is mapped with the concept MODEST. Thus, it does not comprise a negative evaluative meaning; instead, it signifies “the excess of the limit of material or spiritual value” because “low” refers to “the deepness of the person or self.” Here, the literal meaning of *alçak* corresponds to the depth and intensity of the person’s spiritual self.

### 3.2. Quantitative distribution of the semantic categories

The distribution of the semantic categories for *yüksek/alçak* + *noun* constructions, gathered from the corpus data, is depicted in Table 4:

**Table 4.** Distribution of adjectives and semantic categories

	Yüksek		Alçak	
		%		%
(1) Literal	114	6.9	204	21.45
(2) Pre-metonymy	47	2.9	115	12.09
(3) Metonymy	665	40.4	334	35.12
(4) Metapronymy	204	12.4	-	-
(5) Metaphor	618	37.5	298	31.34
	1648	100.00	951	100.00

The findings in Table 4 indicate that *yüksek* is most frequently used with its metonymic meaning on the literal-figurative continuum. The second most frequent occurrences are metaphoric. In the TNC, 40.4% of the occurrences obtained for *yüksek* are employed metonymically with UP FOR MORE on the grounds of the EFFECT FOR CAUSE metonymy; 37.5% of occurrences in the corpus are used metaphorically with the metaphor MORE/GOOD/SUPERIOR/IMPORTANT IS UP. On the other hand, the findings indicate that the corpus data give the result that the modifier *alçak* is also used metonymically, rather than other meaning types. Metonymic uses comprise 35.12% of occurrences, which are motivated by the conceptual metonymy DOWN FOR LESS based on EFFECT FOR CAUSE. A total of 31.34% of uses are metaphoric; these occurrences are motivated by the LESS IS DOWN

conceptual metaphor, which has elaborations such as BAD/WORTHLESS IS DOWN and MODEST IS DOWN in the corpus data. It is remarkable that there are no occurrences referring to the metaphonymy part of the continuum that involves the modifier *alçak* in the data. Consequently, *alçak* does not comprise any occurrences that are grounded on correlation- or metonymy-based metaphors. One reason for this is the preference of the word *düşük* (lit. “low”) instead of *alçak* as opposite to the constructions related to money or financial issues, such as *yüksek fiyat* (high price) in Turkish. For example, *düşük fiyat* (low price), *düşük gelir* (low income) is used, despite the constructions *alçak fiyat* (low price) and *alçak gelir* (low income) in Turkish.

### 3.3. Semantic aspects of *yüksek* and *alçak* according to the modified nouns

#### 3.3.1. Nouns modified by *yüksek*

The occurrences obtained from the TNC reveal that in 2,501 occurrences for *yüksek*+noun constructions, we analyzed 1,648 tokens. Among these adjective pronouns, we excluded verbs, constructions that name private institutions, and technical terms from the database.

Table 5 presents the distribution of the semantic categories on the literal-figurative continuum for the modifier.

**Table 5.** Distribution of semantic categories for *yüksek*

	1	2	3	4	5
Category	literal	non-literal + non-figurative	non-literal + figurative	non-literal + figurative	non-literal + figurative
		pre-metonymy	metonymy	metaphonymy	metaphor
Role	ENTITY	ENTITY	DEGREE	DEGREE CIRCUMSTANCES	CIRCUMSTANCES
		+ vertical + (partially) horizontal	+ above norm	+above norm	EVALUATION (I)
Explanation	+ vertical + above norm	+ above norm		UP FOR MORE (THING FOR ITS REPRESENTATION) MORE IS UP	MORE IS UP GOOD/SUPERIOR/U P/MORE/IMPOR T IS UP
		UP FOR UP+MORE	UP FOR MORE, (EFFECT FOR CAUSE)		
Example	bina (building), dağ (mountain), kule (tower),	yer (place), zirve (peak), bölge (region)	ateş (temperature), sıcaklık (heat), irtifa (altitude),	fiyat (price), faiz (interest), ücret (charge),	mevki (position), makam (position), risk (risk), kalite (quality),

Table 6 portrays the distribution of the nouns, modified according to semantic categories, as well as the substructures of the MEASURABLE\_ATTRIBUTES frame to which they belong.

**Table 6.** The distribution of nouns modified by *yüksek*

	Noun	Total	Substructure	Semantic category
1	Oran (ratio)	109	DEGREE	METONYMY



2	Ses (voice)	100	DEGREE	METONYMY
3	Düzey (level)	75	DEGREE	METONYMY
4	Sıcaklık (temperature)	48	DEGREE	METONYMY
5	Değer (value)	46	DEGREE	METONYMY
6	Enflasyon (inflation)	32	DEGREE+CIRCUMSTANCES	METAPHTONYMY
7	Faiz (interest)	28	DEGREE+CIRCUMSTANCES	METAPHTONYMY
8	Hız (speed)	28	DEGREE+CIRCUMSTANCES	METAPHTONYMY
9	Fiyat (price)	27	DEGREE+CIRCUMSTANCES	METAPHTONYMY
10	Kalite (quality)	26	DEGREE+CIRCUMSTANCES	METAPHTONYMY
11	Ücret (fee)	26	DEGREE+CIRCUMSTANCES	METAPHTONYMY
12	Gelir (income)	25	DEGREE+CIRCUMSTANCES	METAPHTONYMY
13	Tansiyon (tension)	25	DEGREE	METONYMY
14	Yer (place)	25	ENTITY (SPATIAL EXTENSION)	PRE-METONYMY
15	Seviye (level)	24	DEGREE	METONYMY
16	Teknoloji (technology)	23	CIRCUMSTANCES	METAPHOR
17	Basınç (pressure)	21	DEGREE+CIRCUMSTANCES	METAPHTONYMY
18	Doz (döşe)	21	DEGREE	METONYMY
19	Maliyet (cost)	19	DEGREE+CIRCUMSTANCES	METAPHTONYMY
20	Derece (degree)	18	DEGREE	METONYMY

The most frequently used *adjective+noun* constructions in the corpus data are consecutively *yüksek oran* (lit. “high ratio”), *yüksek ses* (lit. “high volume”), *yüksek düzey* (lit. “high level”), *yüksek sıcaklık* (lit. “high temperature”), and *yüksek değer* (lit. “high value”). In these constructions, what draws our attention is that the first 5 constructions refer to the DEGREE domain with metonymic meaning. The second most frequently profiled TRs refer to DEGREE and CIRCUMSTANCES domains together, which represent the metaphonymic meaning. In addition, although *yüksek* is a dimension adjective, none of the first 20 nouns refer to the physical size of an ENTITY, and therefore the literal part of the continuum.

### 3.3.2. Nouns modified by *alçak*

The occurrences obtained from the TNC reveal that in 1,176 occurrences, 954 tokens exemplified *alçak+noun* constructions when we excluded adjective pronouns, verbs, constructions that name private institutions, and technical terms.

Table 7 depicts the distribution of the semantic categories on the literal-figurative continuum for the modifier *alçak*. According to this summary, unlike *yüksek*, *alçak* has four semantic categories.

**Table 7.** Distribution of semantic categories for *alçak*

	1	2	3	4	5
Category	Literal	non-literal +	non-literal +	non-literal +	non-literal +
		non-figurative	figurative	figurative	figurative
		pre-metonymy	metonymy	metaphonymy	metaphor

Role	ENTITY	ENTITY	DEGREE	*	CIRCUMSTANCES
		+ vertical			
		+ (partially) horizontal	+ below norm	*	EVALUATION (I) EVALUATION (II)
Explanation	+ vertical	+ below norm			
	+ below norm		DOWN FOR LESS (EFFECT FOR CAUSE)	*	DOWN IS LESS (1)BAD/UNIMPORTANT IS DOWN (2)MODEST IS DOWN
Example	duvar (wall), bina (building), çit (hedge)	alan (area), bölge (region), ova (plain)	ses (volume), enlem (latitude), sıcaklık (temperature)	*	insan (human), adam (man), kültür (culture), gönül (heart)

Table 8 presents the distribution of the nouns modified according to the substructures of the MEASURABLE\_ATTRIBUTES frame to which they belong, as well as semantic categories.

**Table 8.** The distribution of nouns modified by *alçak*

	Token	Total	Substructure	Domain of experience
1	Ses (voice)	211	DEGREE	METONYMY
2	Gönül (heart)	152	CIRCUMSTANCES	METAPHOR
3	Basınç (pressure)	37	DEGREE	METONYMY
4	Duvar (wall)	33	ENTITY (PHYSICAL SIZE)	LITERAL
5	Adam (man)	20	ENTITY (ANIMATE ENTITY)	METAPHOR
6	Yer (place)	20	ENTITY (SPATIAL EXTENSION)	PRE-METONYMY
7	Herif (guy)	19	ENTITY (ANIMATE ENTITY)	METAPHOR
8	Yörünge (orbit)	14	DEGREE	METONYMY
9	Tavan (ceiling)	14	ENTITY (PHYSICAL SIZE)	LITERAL
10	Kapı (door)	10	ENTITY (PHYSICAL SIZE)	LITERAL
11	Sıcaklık (temperature)	9	DEGREE	METONYMY
12	Gerilim (tension)	9	DEGREE	METONYMY
13	Kahraman (hero)	9	CIRCUMSTANCE	METAPHOR
14	Masa (table)	9	ENTITY (PHYSICAL SIZE)	LITERAL
15	Yapı (building)	8	ENTITY (PHYSICAL SIZE)	LITERAL
16	Bitki (plant)	8	ENTITY (PHYSICAL SIZE)	LITERAL
17	Tepe (hill)	8	ENTITY (PHYSICAL SIZE)	LITERAL
18	Bölge (region)	8	ENTITY (SPATIAL EXTENSION)	PRE-METONYMY
19	Boy (height)	7	DEGREE	METONYMY
20	Tabure (stool)	7	ENTITY (PHYSICAL SIZE)	LITERAL

The most frequently occurring TRs that *alçak* profiles are *volume, heart (gönül), pressure, wall, and man*. Corpus findings show that the *alçak ses* (low volume) construction is the most frequently occurring construction with metonymic meaning that evokes the DEGREE substructure. The second most frequent occurrence is *alçak gönül* with metonymic meaning. However, when we examine Table 8 in detail, we can see that *alçak* profiles TRs that belong to the ENTITY domain. Although nouns profiled on the literal-figurative continuum denote distinct meaning categories, when compared with *yüksek*, *alçak* refers to more concrete concepts.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

In this study, for which we explored the semantic aspects of the Turkish premodifier adjectives *yüksek* and *alçak*, the distribution of the adjectives shows a literal-figurative continuum; one end of the axis indicates the literal meaning, while the opposite end refers to the metaphoric meaning. According to our results, Turkish literal meanings of *yüksek/alçak*+noun constructions profile physical entities that are above the limit accepted as the norm for *yüksek*, and below the limit accepted as the norm for *alçak*. Adjectives become figurative as they move forward to the literal meaning and evoke ENTITY, DEGREE and CIRCUMSTANCES frame roles. Occurrences obtained from the corpus data demonstrate that both *yüksek* and *alçak* are used metonymically when compared to their other senses. Figurative meanings of *yüksek* are motivated by UP FOR MORE (EFFECT FOR CAUSE) in the metonymic stage; by MORE IS UP (THING FOR ITS REPRESENTATION UP FOR MORE) in the metaphthonymic stage; and by MORE IS UP in the metaphoric stage along the literal-figurative continuum. Metaphoric occurrences obtained from the corpus for *yüksek* show instances of more elaborated conceptual metaphors such as GOOD/SUPERIOR/MORE/IMPORTANT IS UP. Figurative meanings of *alçak* are driven by DOWN FOR LESS (EFFECT FOR CAUSE) in the metonymic stage; and BAD/UNIMPORTANT/WORTHLESS IS DOWN and MODEST IS DOWN conceptual metaphors that are grounded on LESS IS DOWN in the metaphoric stage. There are no correlation-based or metonymy-based metaphoric instances for *alçak*; thus, there is no metaphthonymy category for this modifier.

Figures 7 and 8 (below) outline the semantic aspects of the adjectives and the way they form the literal-metonymy-metaphor continuum, with reference to Dirven (2002).

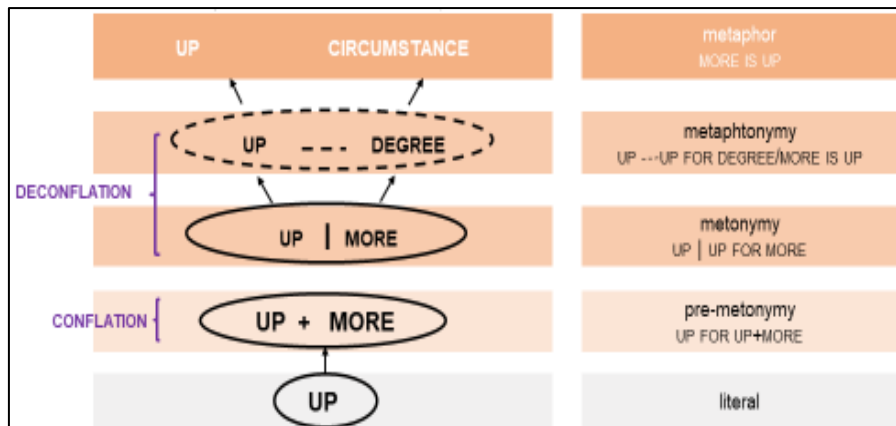
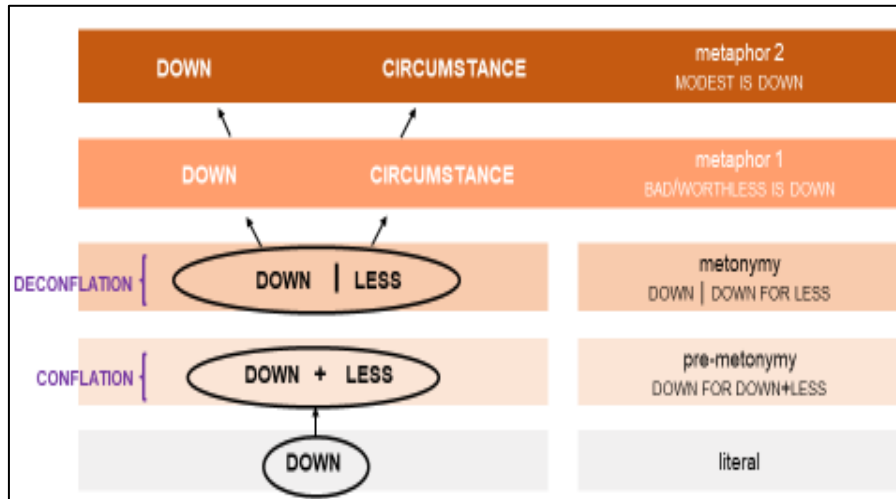


Figure 7. The stages of the literal-metonymy-metaphor continuum for *high*

Figure 7 indicates how *yüksek* moves from the literal UP meaning pole of the continuum, and how other senses deconflate as the meaning goes to the abstract figurative meaning pole step by step. As seen in the figure, the literal meaning refers to UP, which represents the extent above the norm on the vertical extension; when the premodifier adjective begins to gain a non-literal meaning, the adjective still does not have conceptual access to another semantic domain. At this stage, the two conceptual

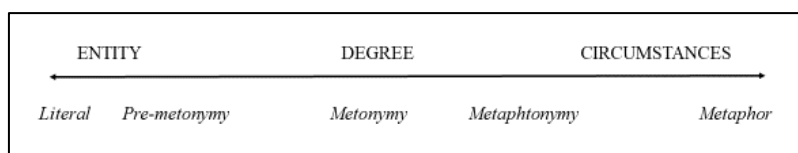
domains have not yet been deconflated. In the third step, although the two semantic domains are UP and MORE separately, they protect their contiguity relationship, which is a metonymic relationship and conceptualized with the UP FOR MORE metonymy. At the fourth stage of the continuum, the semantic content begins to deconflate; however, it has still not become metaphoric. The reason for this is that part of the conceptual access is still contiguous. The examples involve partially metonymic and partially metaphoric motivations with the UP FOR DEGREE metonymy in a single domain, and the UP IS MORE metaphor in two distinct domains at this stage. For this reason, this conceptualization is presented with dashed lines in Figure 7; the meaning deconflates and begins to lose the meaning of UP. In the last stage, the adjective gains metaphoric meaning and relates two completely distinct domains, which are HIGH and CIRCUMSTANCES.



**Figure 8.** The stages of the literal-metonymy-metaphor continuum for *alçak*

Figure 8 shows the stages where *alçak* moves from the literal DOWN meaning pole of the continuum to the abstract figurative meaning pole step by step. On the continuum, the literal meaning refers to the extent below the level accepted as the norm on the vertical extension. In the next step, the adjective still conflates in a single domain and acquires a pre-metonymic meaning; it displays the DOWN FOR DOWN+LESS conceptualization in the same domain. In the third stage, *alçak* becomes figurative and has access to another concept in the same domain. At this stage, the adjective gains a metonymic meaning with the DOWN FOR LESS metonymy. In the last stage, the adjective becomes metaphoric with a completely figurative meaning, where it exhibits a mapping between two distinct domains. This adjective yields two distinct metaphoric meanings, which refers to the scale of evaluation; it relates two completely distinct domains: BAD/WORTHLESS and DOWN, and MODEST and DOWN.

Parallel to the continuum of meaning scale in Figures 7 and 8, the domains modified also demonstrate a literal-figurative continuum. The most frequently used adj+noun constructions in Turkish are in the substructures ENTITY, DEGREE, and CIRCUMSTANCES, which are evoked by the MEASURABLE\_ATTRIBUTES frame. These substructures likewise form a continuum from concrete to abstract, the most concrete being ENTITY, and the least concrete being CIRCUMSTANCES, as presented in Figure 9.



**Figure 9.** The literal-figurative continuum of substructures

All the substructures shown in Figure 9 are shared; however, there are single variations in their conceptualizations. The adjectives share the same meanings in the PHYSICAL SIZE and DEGREE domains, which denote literal, pre-metonymic, and metonymic meanings. On the other hand, as the meaning becomes more figurative, the conceptualizations of *alçak* and *yüksek* begin to differentiate. The adjectives lose their ability to have opposite meanings when they diverge from their literal meanings and become figurative. Thus, after their metonymic conceptualizations, the adjectives gain different figurative conceptualizations. In this process, the nouns modified are more salient, and they designate the meaning of the adjectives.

This study on the semantic aspects of the Turkish dimension adjectives *yüksek* and *alçak*, within a corpus linguistics view, has revealed that these adjectives have various degrees of figuration. Our findings indicate that the premodifiers *yüksek* and *alçak* are used figuratively rather than literally. This once again proves the figurative nature of thought (Lakoff & Johnson; 1980; Gibbs, 1994; Kövecses, 2010). Parallel to the research that draws attention to the semantic aspects of adjectives in various languages (Syrpa, 2017; Dirven; 2002; Radden; 2002), our findings suggest that different degrees of figurativity in the occurrences are observed depending on conceptual distance and conceptual closeness. Occurrences for *yüksek* underline metaphoric and metonymic uses, whereas *alçak* mostly yields examples of occurrences with metonymic motivation.

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