



Connecting World Lexicons: Figurative Language's Role in BBC News Listening for Intercultural Competence

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Abstract

This research investigated the dynamic relationship between figurative language and intercultural competence among university students engaged with BBC News broadcasts. The research focused on language acquisition and listening skills to explore how metaphors, similes, and idiomatic expressions could facilitate communication in diverse linguistic contexts. Guided by a constructivist model and serving in the dual roles of a United Nations ambassador and an English lecturer, the focus was on nurturing critical thinking and autonomous learning within a cohort of 23 English education students in North Sumatra, Indonesia. The primary objective was to emphasize the significance of English proficiency in fostering global partnerships. The findings revealed effective listening skill strategies, including selective attention, recalling prior knowledge, evaluating and repeating the phrases, and contextualization. These strategies yielded benefits such as cultural discovery, enhanced language comprehension, and empathy building. Observations emphasized the importance of background cultural knowledge, managing passage length, and addressing cultural competence topics. Understanding figurative language was essential for cultural students, enhancing creative thinking and fostering comprehensive global citizenship.

Keywords: *Figurative language, News listening, Intercultural competence*

1. Introduction

Global diversity, linguistic adaptability, and multiculturalism are essential components of language training for individuals seeking opportunities in an international environment because it fosters connections beyond nationality to recognize their unique cultural background (Syahrin et al., 2023). Language teachers' ongoing professional development in cultural competency is crucial for preparing students as interculturalists who question and critically, ethically, and responsively act on how we perceive, interact, and make sense of the world, shaping our beliefs and socially appropriate behaviors in every nations (Dmitriyeva & Nikiforova, 2016). However, language students are often unaware of how their cultural lens differs from others. The consensus on the specific cultural content for foreign language curricula remains limited (Jenabagha et al., 2021). Additionally, students find their initial enthusiasm for cultural learning diminish as they grapple with basic language elements such as grammar and vocabulary in the first year of study, contradicting with the fact that the primary goal of teaching a foreign language is not only to impart language skills but also to naturally introduce the target culture.

In some educational institutions, intercultural competency might not be explicitly integrated into the curriculum, creating gaps that necessitate this research, including: First, formal education systems always prioritize academic subject knowledge because the school cares a lot of grades rather than teaching students about different cultures, neglecting holistic personal development. Second, some educational institutions lack

international students, so students cannot have authentic opportunities to engage with people from different cultural backgrounds (Fung & Macaro, 2021). Third, the existence of native instructors can provide excellent proficiency in language use, pronunciation, and cultural differentiation. This authenticity enhances students' language skills and deepens their understanding within cultural contexts. For instance, a native English instructor can naturally demonstrate the correct usage of idioms and colloquial expressions to enrich students' language skills. Fourth, the existence of non-native teachers can provide an understanding of students' challenges and share helpful learning tips from their own experiences. For example, a non-native English teacher can give practical advice on overcoming language difficulties based on their learning journey. Their cultural sensitivity can create a friendly learning atmosphere, adjust teaching methods for students by sharing their language or culture, and make it easier to understand language and cultural details. In brief, the ability to incorporate the language and cultural experiences into teaching practices are a fundamental position for all long-term English students to become culturally competent.

Teaching multilingualism in university-level English education is crucial for holistic linguistic development as it goes beyond language proficiency. Language students must master the diplomatic expression of opinions, initiate conversations, and handle disagreements to interact with people in other countries (Demirkol, 2019). In university-level English education, cultural competence shapes a comprehensive learning experience. Language students, beyond their socio-professional roles, are individuals socialized in a specific culture, fostering an understanding of stereotypes, assumptions, and discriminations while English, as a universal language, transcends national boundaries. English teachers should nurture intercultural sensitivity while enabling critical assessment of perspectives within different cultures. In this research, foreign language teachers impact education by conveying values through materials like newspapers, videos, or pictures, recognizing that most resources are based on native speakers.

Various socio-cultural learning theories support the principles of intercultural communication in language acquisition. First, cultural schema theory emphasizes the impact of cultural background, knowledge, and resources on language learners, influencing their communicative abilities. Students usually rely on their own culture and translate the words based on native language familiarity, a phenomenon known as interlanguage, showcasing differences from the target language (Tuncel & Paker, 2018). Second, Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory is vital for comprehending second language acquisition with four stages guiding active knowledge construction (sensorimotor, pre-operational, operational, and concrete operational). In this case, language students engage with their environment through explaining, debating, role-playing, comparing, connecting, and other activities. Language teachers play a crucial role in providing suitable materials for this active learning process (Susilo, 2019). Third, intercultural communication relies on diverse contexts, involving interactions between individuals of different languages and countries, those using a lingua franca, or people in the same country with various languages, one of whom is a native speaker. This approach equips students with a foundation to become global citizens and empower them to take action in the world (Luo et al., 2021).

Effective intercultural communication relies on strong listening skills to understand messages from diverse cultural perspectives (Zulfikar et al., 2020). English news broadcast as one of the learning resources in language classroom can present valuable learning opportunities for various reasons. First, news broadcasts provides authentic

language contexts and rich cultural knowledge to help students broaden their horizons and improve language skills. Second, news broadcasts enable discussions on current topics while connecting students to relevant issues. Last, their topic adaptability allows teachers to use them for diverse listening activities and enhance the language learning experience. For English students, understanding news broadcasts reflects their language proficiency because of several challenges can arise from insufficient background knowledge, unfamiliar vocabulary in connected speech, and a lack of opportunity to negotiate meaning in unfamiliar contexts and cultures. A preliminary observation in this research reveals specific issues, such as: First, many students find it challenging to comprehend news reports on international affairs due to a lack of background knowledge. Second, most students struggle with news broadcast terminology, which is less commonly used and more extensive than other learning materials. In contrast, proficiency in vocabulary is crucial for understanding news broadcasts, which cover a wide range of topics such as politics, economics, military affairs, and so on. Third, most English beginners often struggle with the native speed of news broadcasts (160 words per minute) and may start with a slower pace (60 words per minute). Fourth, students face difficulty summarizing news within a limited time since they must navigate through a vast amount of information. In brief, students grapple with background knowledge, terminology, vocabulary, listening speed, and information processing when engaging with news broadcasts (Zhang, 2019).

Adapting to 21st-century education demands cultural competence in university-level English education driven by several factors. First, the globalization of education has brought forth a diverse student population, necessitating an inclusive curriculum that values and understands students from various cultural backgrounds. Second, access to diverse learning resources, such as authentic online articles and multimedia content, can significantly enhance students' language competency and deepen their familiarity with diverse cultural contexts. Third, placing an emphasis on critical thinking within the curriculum positively impacts cultural competence by challenging stereotypes and fostering a respectful approach to intercultural communication. Fourth, integrating project-based learning can foster teamwork and encourage the development of intercultural communication skills. Fifth, leveraging technology in education can further enhance cultural competence by enabling real-time communication, connecting Indonesian students globally, and facilitating intercultural exchanges through virtual collaborations, online forums, and language exchange platforms. This holistic approach ensures that students are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in a globally interconnected world (Asri, 2023).

As digital media continues to shape the landscape of information consumption, the focus of this research is to examine how university students immersed in the rich linguistic context of BBC News by employing figurative language in their communication. Figurative language, encompassing metaphors, similes, and idiomatic expressions, serves as a powerful tool for conveying cultural values by encapsulating unique concepts, beliefs, and experiences (Hudzaifah & Heryono, 2023). Cultural metaphors and idioms effectively communicate nuances influenced by factors like nationality, ethnicity, religion, and social class. For instance, the Japanese term "*mono no aware*" embodies the appreciation of impermanence and transience. Similarly, the African proverb "it takes a village to raise a child" emphasizes community and collective responsibility in child-rearing. Figurative language extends to emotions, as seen in the Spanish phrase "*mi casa es su casa*," expressing hospitality and generosity (Afifah & Irawan, 2023). These examples highlight how figurative language provides deeper insights into a community's collective feelings,

personality, and identity. In Indonesia, the concept of “*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*” (unity in diversity) emphasizes the importance of intercultural competence due to the nation’s multi-ethnicity, boasting around 1000 ethnic groups. People living in Indonesia must maintain good relationships with others, showcasing competence in cross-cultural communication. However, language students, particularly those with non-native English proficiency, face challenges in interpreting figurative language. Research findings reveal that students encounter difficulties processing and comprehending figurative language, impacting their overall understanding of news content compared to native speakers (Hudzaifah & Heryono, 2023). The inability to interpret figurative language has been identified as a factor leading to a breakdown in text comprehension, potentially causing frustration and discouraging readers from continuing their reading tasks. This breakdown extends to listening comprehension, particularly when students struggle with understanding conversational phrases containing figurative language expressions. Despite these challenges, prior research suggests that figurative language can also serve as a tool to enhance comprehension and express students’ creativity and original thoughts (Afifah & Irawan, 2023). Additionally, some scholars argue that difficulties in appreciating and understanding other cultures, often linked to interpreting figurative language, can contribute to conflicts and wars between nations (Asri, 2023). As a gap of this research, another previous research shows that almost foreign language learners rarely understand to use metaphors by connecting ideas and thoughts in gaining new vocabularies because the words are used in a figurative sense beyond their literal meanings. For instance, expressions like “the mouth of a river (*muara sungai*)”, “the eye of a needle (*lubang jarum*)”, and “the head of the company (*pimpinan perusahaan*)”, are everyday phrases that metaphorically extend the meanings of body parts to describe other concepts. In this context, “mouth” refers to the opening of a river, “eye” refers to the small opening in a needle, and “head” refers to the leader or top position in a company. These examples illustrate how metaphors are used to convey abstract or complex ideas by drawing on familiar and concrete concepts (Hudzaifah & Heryono, 2023). Furthermore, this research aims to observe the relationship between figurative language and intercultural competence in understanding language acquisition and listening skills. The choice of BBC News as a listening medium is grounded in its reputation for delivering news with a global perspective, offering a diverse range of languages and cultural variations. Thus, the research question is: How does figurative analysis in BBC news listening contribute to the enhancement of intercultural competency?

2. Method

This research utilizes a qualitative research design. It aims to investigate, comprehend, and interpret social phenomena within their authentic environments. This methodology entails gathering and analyzing non-numeric data such as text, video, or audio to gain insights into concepts, perspectives, or lived experiences. Furthermore, this qualitative study is performed by using constructivism paradigm with the aim to explore the subjective meanings, perspectives, and interpretations of participants (Vo, 2021). By focusing on the 17th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), the researcher who takes a role as an English lecturer and a United Nations ambassador prioritizes English proficiency with a dedicated commitment as a means of strengthening global partnerships to promoting Sustainable Development Goals. Through the use of technology such as news broadcasts, this research aims to expose students to diverse cultural perspectives while providing constructive feedback on their language use.

The aim of this research to adopt a constructivist model is to foster autonomous learning and cultivate critical thinking skills among a group of 23 English education students in North Sumatra, Indonesia. The subjects of this research are selected based on specific inclusion criteria, such as: 1) Participants must be English education students currently enrolled in a university program, 2) Students must voluntarily agree to participate in this research, and 3) Participants must have attended at least 85% of their classes. Subjects are chosen using a random sampling method to ensure that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. This approach helps in obtaining a representative sample, reducing selection bias, and enhancing the generalizability of the research findings. A sample size of 23 students is deemed sufficient to achieve the research objectives while maintaining the depth and quality of data collection and analysis. A smaller sample size ensures that each student receives adequate attention and support throughout the research treatment and allows for more detailed and in-depth qualitative analysis through interviews and observations.

The data collection procedures and data analysis are conducted in four phases. These research procedures involve university students engaging with BBC News broadcasts and podcasts on various cultural topics, emphasizing the identification and analysis of figurative language over a 7-week course. In the first phase, a 60-minute listening session and a 30-minute practice of presented listening comprehension strategies are conducted to heighten students' awareness of news content and discourse patterns. This research uses BBC News broadcasts as an instrument, incorporating a wide range of activities that help students develop intercultural communication skills, including listening to news texts from different cultures and listening to dialogues on science and technology trends dialogues, listening to storytelling podcasts, documentary narrations, comedy talks, and public speeches, all available on the BBC News website for download. Second phase involves the participants to utilize auditory stimuli, where they must demonstrate their listening proficiency by responding to spoken language and retaining information based on several indicators like knowledge grasp, identifying gist and details, and recognizing opinions from the BBC news broadcast (Wigdorowitz et al., 2023). Third phase involves the participants to interpret figurative expressions and assess the literal meaning in grasping the intended figurative language behind English storytelling in various cultural contexts. The data are analyzed by classifying the listening practice materials into several figurative language, such as alliteration, simile, personification, synecdoche, paradox, idiom, onomatopoeia, litotes, metaphor, and cliché (Masalimova et al., 2022). Fourth phase involves participants discussing figurative language and crucial aspects of news broadcast listening, providing feedback on presentations, and offering additional listening materials.

As a form of test-retest reliability, the students had a 15-minute communication language interview with two experienced interviewers; one was a native speaker, and the other was an English lecturer via Google meeting. During the interview session, emphasis is placed on discussing raised issues rather than text comprehension, and potential biases due to miscultural understanding are checked as a part of building a mutual understanding of cultural differences by both of them.

3. Results

Drawing from a well-established background rationale and a robust methodology, this section explicates the findings related to the use of figurative language in BBC News listening as a means to foster intercultural competence as follows:

3.1. Findings

Listening Strategy 1: Selective Attention on Difficult Segments of Words or Phrases in News Text

In today's special report, we explore the idea that "Failure is the Best Lesson Learned." It is like fixing a broken toy with glue – life's mistakes can be patched up with the sticky tape of experience. Our investigation shows that facing failure is not like falling off a bike; it is more like learning to ride in a bumpy place, where each fall becomes a chance to climb higher. Taking inspiration from around the world, we learn that failure is not the end but a pause, like a comma adding meaning to our life sentence. Just like a gardener tends to a garden, failure is not the end but a place where success seeds grow. Speaking to experts, we find that failure is like a GPS, redirecting our journey in unexpected ways, turning detours into exciting paths. With a bit of humor, we discover that failure is not the bad guy in life's story; it is the funny part, the unexpected twist that makes our story interesting. Wrapping up, we see that failure is not a stop sign but a guide, leading us through the complicated roads of learning. In life's school, failure is the best teacher, offering lessons not in books but in the stories of experience, reminding us that every mistake gets us a bit closer to success.

Elements identification:

1. Identify words where metaphorical expressions are used in BBC News that carry deeper symbolic meanings, such as: a) Personification, a form of figurative language describing human characteristic to non-human entities is evident in "failure is not the end but a pause, like a comma adding meaning to our life sentence", and students demonstrate their comprehension through alternative expressions: "think of failure as the rain that helps your success garden bloom, not the storm that washes it away", imagining failure as "the soil where the roots of success take hold, not the rock blocking the path", and "the sunlight that nurtures the growth of success, not the dark cloud that hides it." b) Metaphorical is illustrated in phrase like: "with a bit of humor, we discover that failure is not the bad guy in life's story; it is the funny part, the unexpected twist that makes our story interesting", and students rephrase this, turning "not the bad guy in life's story" into: "it is like having a comedian where you can share funny jokes in our life's play", "having a silly friend is bringing unexpected surprises in life's story", and "having a funny plot to bring joy for our stories." c) Litotes, another form of figurative language expressing ideas through negation, is exemplified in: "failure is not a stop sign but a guide, leading us through the complicated roads of learning" and the students transform this into: "a guiding teacher on the map of learning, steering us through challenges instead of blocking progress" and "a friendly sign along the path of learning to provide guidance on the challenging learning."
2. Notice idiom expressions to the English language that may be tricky for non-native speakers. The idiom "facing failure is not like falling off a bike" is transformed by students into alternatives like "unlike a bike accident; it is more like navigating the ups and downs to keep moving ahead" and "learning how to stay steady on two wheels," as well as "handling difficulties is not like a bike crash; it is more like getting the hang of riding smoothly without losing balance."
3. Explore puns and wordplay for rhetorical effect to better understand the linguistic devices. Phrase like "it is like fixing a broken toy with glue" is deciphered and expanded upon by students including similes as one form of figurative language, such as "it is similar to putting a puzzle together; you mend the pieces to make it whole again" and

“imagine it is like reconnecting the dots on a coloring page; you fix the gaps to create a beautiful picture.”

4. Focusing on comparisons or analogies embedded in figurative language to grasp a clear news content. Phrase like “failure is like a GPS, redirecting our journey in unexpected ways, turning detours into exciting paths” is analyzed by students, resulting in alternative interpretations such as “view failure as a compass on your exploration, redirecting your path in unexpected ways and making side trips more interesting” and “picture failure as a navigator in your adventure, leading you through unexpected routes and transforming diversions into interesting paths.”

Listening Strategy 2: Recalling Prior Knowledge in News Text

In recent global developments, countries are rolling up their sleeves to tackle the climate crisis head-on. While some nations aim to be the green pioneers, others find themselves in a tug-of-war with environmental challenges. It is a puzzle of initiatives and setbacks, where the stakes are high. Despite the urgency, the Earth remains a shared canvas on which every country paints its commitment to sustainability. The climate agenda is an ongoing story, where each chapter represents a step towards a greener future. As the world grapples with these challenges, it is a reminder that we share the responsibility of safeguarding our precious home for generations to come.

Elements identification:

1. Encouraging students to identify common ideas while listening to the news text. Phrase like “shared canvas” is a symbolism to represent ideas or qualities, in this case, it represents all countries working together for addressing climate change. Similarly, the phrase “rolling up their sleeves” is an allusion, emphasizing the readiness and preparation of countries to fight the climate crisis together.
2. Recognizing environmental terminology, like “tug-of-war with environmental challenges” uses metonymy, where it represents the struggle and competition of countries when dealing with environmental issues. Moreover, the term “green pioneers” implies a positive connotation, but the irony, is defined as a contradiction between expectation and outcome, lies in some nations striving for leadership while grappling with challenges.
3. Prompting students to predict potential future actions based on the news text. The term “ongoing story” acts as an oxymoron, creating a paradox by emphasizing that the climate crisis story keeps going, even though stories usually end. After that, make a discussion about listening predictions by using KWL (Know, Want, Learn) chart, such as: 1) What I Know (a. Climate crisis is a significant global issue, b. Leaders worldwide are taking action, or c. Some nations are working to be green pioneers); 2) What I Want to Know (a. What specific actions are being taken to tackle the climate crisis?, b. How do nations become green pioneers?, or c. What ongoing initiatives represent steps towards a greener future?); and 3) What I Learned (Compare what you knew and what you learned to see how accurate your predictions were after fill in the “What I Learned” column with new information you gained from the news).

Listening Strategy 3: Evaluation and Repetition through News Dialogue

Ji-Yeon: Min-Ho, have you ever noticed how our culture is like a puzzle with unexpected connections?

Min-Ho: Absolutely, Ji-Yeon! It's like a dance between the old and the new. What's your favorite example?

Ji-Yeon: Well, think about the traditional hanbok. It's not just clothing; it carries stories from the past and links generations together.

Min-Ho: That's interesting! And what about our language? We use sayings like "hanbatang (한 바탕)." It's not just about eating; it's like sharing a special moment with others.

Ji-Yeon: Exactly! It's like each phrase is a small window into our culture. By the way, have you noticed how K-dramas have become quite popular globally?

Min-Ho: Oh, absolutely! They're almost like a universal language. People from different places are hooked on the drama and the stories.

Ji-Yeon: It's like our stories are traveling the world in unexpected ways. Now, let's see how much you've caught on. I've got a quick quiz for you about Korean culture.

Elements identification:

1. Evaluating how figurative language can strengthen key messages. Saying "it is like a dance between the old and the new" is a paradox to create a beautiful harmony by blending Korean cultural heritage with modernity. The phrase "hanbatang (한 바탕)" is an idiom in Korean, as a symbolism to represent the joy of sharing special moments over a meal. Describing K-dramas as a "universal language" is a cliché, as it is a commonly used expression to convey the understanding across different countries. "It's like our stories are traveling the world in unexpected ways" is a metaphor to convey the idea that Korean culture is spreading globally in surprising and unforeseen ways through drama and stories.
2. Assessing the repetition of figurative language by using assessment, such as multiple choice, questions, and role play technique. Example of multiple choice: 1) What does Ji-Yeon describe hanbok as in the dialogue? a. dance, b. clothing, c. history; 2) What does the phrase "hanbatang (한 바탕)" symbolize in Korean culture? a. quiet moment, b. big meal, c. solo journey; (3) How does Min-Ho describe the popularity of K-dramas in the dialogue? a. global bridge, b. universal language, c. cultural window. Example of questions: 1) How does Ji-Yeon suggest hanbok connects generations in the dialogue?; 2) What does Min-Ho mean by calling K-dramas a "universal language" in the conversation?
3. Analyzing how figurative languages and the term concepts are repeated differently in news reports across diverse cultural contexts for effective communication. For example: "Traditional hanbok" is the same concept with "wafuku (和服)" which consists of traditional Japanese clothing, including kimono and yukata, worn on formal occasions. In other countries, it is called "hanfu (汉服)" and "qipao (旗袍)." The Korean term "hanbatang (한 바탕)" aligns with the Japanese expression "issho ni taberu yorokobi", emphasizing the joy of eating together. In Chinese tradition, it is called "gongxiang meishi", signifying the pleasure of sharing delicious food together. Similarly, "K-dramas" in Korean culture align with "Bollywood films" in Indian culture and "Hollywood dramas" in American culture.

Listening Strategy 4: Contextualisation in the Present Time through Imagery

The test-takers hear the news report about "Global Business Etiquette" and fill in the blank with the appropriate figurative language that has been prepared in the table above!

1. In Japan, handing out business cards is not just a simple act; it is like passing in a formal relay, showing deep respect. (Answer: A ritual baton; Metaphor)

2. Chinese greetings are not only polite; they unfold like, with a slight bow stealing the spotlight, making titles and surnames shine. (Answer: A graceful performance; Simile)
3. The United Kingdom's view on business attire is not just about clothing choices; it is a commitment to a formal and respectable image, worn with the seriousness of a knight gearing up for a royal ceremony, not just (Answer: A mere choice; Litotes)
4. India's business hierarchy is not just a structure; it is a pyramid, with titles and positions as to be climbed, acknowledging each level with respect. (Answer: Climbing steps; Metaphor)
5. German punctuality is not just important; it is as emphasized as, unlocking doors to professionalism and respect. (Answer: A precious gem; Hyperbole)

Elements identification:

1. Providing real-life examples of how figurative language is used in professional settings and discussing its impact on cross-cultural understanding by using self-narrative. For example in the test number 1: "In Japan, exchanging business cards felt special, and it was more than a simple act by emphasizing the importance of the gesture with both hands in a formal way."
2. Using figurative language in formal or informal news contexts for accurate interpretation. For example in the test number 2: In formal situations, Chinese people prefer a firm but not too strong handshake. It is essential to stand up, greet customers politely, introduce yourself in group settings, and make an effort to remember names. In informal settings, a simple "nihao" or "hello" is used as a suitable introduction for any conversation.
3. Using visual aids such as infographics or images to illustrate each type of figurative language. For example in the test number 3: Make a picture chart with British people in formal attire on one side and a knight preparing for a royal ceremony on the other or it is called side-by-side comparison pictures. Label the formal attire side with "mere choice" and explain that it means more than just picking clothes. This assists students in grasping the unique way of expression, like saying less to mean more.

3.2. Discussion

The findings based on this research are expected to reveal the prevalent types of figurative language used by university students while listening to BBC News with an emphasis on intercultural topics. By using questionnaire and a brief interview with students, the benefits of figurative analysis and intercultural competence when listening to English news include: 1) Discovering cultural meanings through metaphor (75%), 2) Comprehending different cultures through some language expressions (82%), 3) Developing skills to recognize cultural subtitles in English news (65%), 4) Breaking down language barriers for global communication (82%), 5) Expanding vocabulary and appreciating language beauty (68%), 6) Building empathy through intercultural competence (73%), 7) Deciphering idiomatic expressions in texts (93%), 8) Exploring various viewpoints in literature (53%), 9) Exploring how countries handle similar issues and reflecting on their values and identity (78%), 10) Comparing cultural responses to global events (95%), 11) Deepening self-awareness (64%), and 12) Improving listening skills and cultural sensitivity by discerning between literal and figurative meanings in news stories (84%). This result is consistent with Davidovitch & Khyhniak (2018) who agree that learning figurative language can enhance comprehension of English culture and assist learners in delving into the customs, lifestyles, and history of English-speaking people.

Additionally, understanding figurative language expressions aids in negotiating and sharing ideas, strengthens interpersonal relationships, and fosters effective communication in intercultural contexts.

Previous research indicates that English news broadcasts pose challenges for understanding due to features like rapid speech, various accents, and sentence length or structure that are crucial for real-life communication (Altun, 2023). Another previous research proves that common factors contributing to listener difficulties include quickly forgetting what was heard, understanding words but not the intended message, losing track of the next part while thinking about meaning, being unable to form a mental representation from the words heard, becoming confused about the key ideas in the message, and failing to understand subsequent parts of the input due to earlier issues (Zhao et al., 2023). To explore this challenge further, the difficulties encountered in applying figurative analysis and intercultural competence when listening to English news are: 1) Not always familiar with the cultural meanings behind expressions (78%), 2) Figurative language in English news may not have direct equivalents in other countries' cultures, causing confusion (78%), 3) The speed at which English news is delivered can make it tricky to analyze figurative analysis and grasp the deeper cultural meanings (77%), 4) Figurative language often has multiple interpretations, making it harder to pinpoint the exact cultural context (65%), 5) Different English accents and dialects used in news broadcasts can add complexity and challenge to achieve intercultural understanding (58%), 6) Figurative analysis across various subjects in English news may sometimes feel overwhelming (63%), 7) Most figurative language rely on historical events that are unfamiliar to students (72%), 8) Creating a tension between understanding the news and maintaining our intercultural sensitivities because figurative language may not always align with cultural values (73%), and 9) Figurative language in English news can sometimes hide the actual message, making it challenging to develop intercultural competence as students may miss important details (86%).

The approach to apply figurative analysis and intercultural competence in English listening to news, such as: 1) Try to spot metaphors and idioms competence step by step (92%), 2) Take notes when come across unfamiliar idiomatic phrases in English news and look up their meanings later (85%), 3) Discuss English news with people from different cultures to gain various perspectives (65%), 4) Watch English news with subtitles to associate figurative expressions with their meanings (92%), 5) Use online resources and language apps to practice figurative analysis and its cultural background (97%), 6) Whenever encounter figurative language in English news, reflect on how it might be perceived in different cultures (76%), 7) Treat English news like a puzzle, trying to decode metaphors and idioms to reveal cultural stories (88%), 8) Seek news from various English-speaking regions to expose yourself to different figurative expressions and cultural perspectives (68%), 9) Take time to consider how figurative language in English news relates to my own cultural experiences (93%), 10) Be aware of stereotypes in news and actively look for different news sources to challenge biases (97%), 11) Approach English news with the mindset that every story, no matter how different, teaches valuable lessons about the world and various cultures (88%), and 12) Applying figurative analysis and intercultural competence in English news promotes tolerance and understanding, and this attitude inspires me to continuously improve these skills (93%).

Based on the observation, several points that needs to be considered when teaching intercultural competence are: 1) Background culture knowledge, 2) The length of English news passage, and 3) Culture teaching. First, students who engage their prior

knowledge before listening can better comprehend a passage. Conversely, students with limited or no access to background information on a topic may find it challenging to infer meaning, especially when they are not familiar with various English accents. Similarly, the powerful technique when students encounter new information is to let them use their existing knowledge to understand the meaning of a passage. Likewise, discussing familiar topics enhances the learning process, facilitates language use, and boosts students' confidence (Thir, 2023). This shows that English lecturers should help students to recall their prior knowledge, particularly before engaging with the new content (pre-listening phase). Second, length of a passage is considered a factor influencing the proficiency of listening skills. It is argued that excessively long passages can make learners tired, lose focus, draw students' attention, and causing them to miss the rest of the passage. To overcome these problems, English lecturers can encourage students to use note-taking, playing the passage multiple times, or giving the extended pause during listening tasks with authentic materials. Third, cultural teaching in this research is focused on elements like communication skills, limited to transferring knowledge by asking questions. English lecturers could have explored how people communicate, misunderstandings, nonverbal language, and body language in students' countries to deepen cultural understanding. Another previous research suggests that encouraging debates and arguments helps students critically analyze complex cultural patterns and controversial norms in various nations. As English aims to foster global citizenship, it prepares students for the international job market by emphasizing critical thinking, communication, and cultural sensitivity, making them valuable in various work environments (Valentini & Serratrice, 2023). Based on the proofs, the topics chosen by students to become culturally competent are: 1) Technology and innovation (83%), 2) Fashion and clothing (76%), 3) Art and entertainment (87%), 4) Job and careers (92%), 5) Holidays and Festivals (73%), 6) Cuisine (96%), 7) Custom and tradition (84%), 8) Education system (78%), 9) Global economic trends (67%), 10) Mental health awareness (63%), and 11) Social media influence (92%). Another previous research suggests that the approach to teaching English as an international language should not rely exclusively on the norms of native English speakers. Instead, it should incorporate the norms established by intercultural speakers from various backgrounds, taking into account their communication contexts and goals since effective communication skills are essential in today's world. Proficiency in English will significantly improve students' job and career prospects and it allows them to confidently compete at different levels (Zhu, 2023).

4. Conclusion

Understanding figurative language is crucial for cultural learners as it is intertwined with English language proficiency and intercultural communicative competence, which is an essential trait for global citizens with an "intercultural mindset." This mindset ensures that grammatically correct sentences sound natural to native speakers, creating a shared understanding of beliefs, values, and contextual topics. Moreover, developing the ability to interpret figurative language enhances creative thinking, communication skills, and deepens comprehension of both text and speech.

This research has several limitations that need consideration. First, there is subjectivity in analysis. This means that different researchers may interpret and code the data differently, which can lead to inconsistencies in the reliability of the results. Second, there is the issue of contextual understanding. Figurative language often relies heavily on context for accurate interpretation. If participants lack background knowledge on certain

news topics or cultural references, they might misunderstand the figurative language used. This lack of understanding could influence the conclusions drawn from the study, as it might not accurately capture participants' comprehension of the language. Third, there is the limitation of content selection. The specific BBC News content chosen for analysis might not fully represent the diversity of figurative language used in all news contexts. This could potentially skew the findings towards certain types of figurative language or news topics.

The recommendations for future research should focus on integrating figurative language interpretation into English teaching practices, especially for English language learners. This involves developing inclusive curricula that embrace various cultural perspectives, find out the strategies to overcome language and cultural barriers, identify best teaching practices for beginner or intermediate English levels by incorporating cross-cultural experiences in English teacher education programs, such as making cultural exchange programs, and inviting guest speakers and cultural experts to share their experiences about the positive attitude towards cultural differences. These strategies contribute to the development of English language teachers who seek English proficiency and build up a genuine appreciation for cultural diversity, promoting respect for the values and behaviors of various nations while preparing themselves for effective communication in an interconnected and culturally diverse world.

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