

HOW EFL LEARNERS UTILIZE MULTIMODAL RESOURCES TO COMPREHEND METAPHOR USING DISNEY'S FROZEN SOUNDTRACK

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Abstract

This study explored how EFL learners utilized multimodal resources to comprehend metaphorical meanings using Disney's *Frozen* soundtrack in an Indonesian EFL classroom. Employing a qualitative approach within the framework of Classroom Action Research (CAR), the study involved 36 Grade 8 students at a private junior high school in Karawang, West Java, Indonesia. Data were collected through non-participant classroom observations, metaphor comprehension tasks, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The findings revealed that learners utilized multimodal resources through three interconnected processes: utilizing visual resources to interpret metaphorical meanings, utilizing songs and lyrics to construct emotional meanings, and utilizing classroom interaction for collaborative meaning-making. Although some learners experienced difficulties in interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary and complex metaphorical expressions, multimodal resources combined with teacher scaffolding supported their comprehension and engagement. These findings contribute to the growing body of research on multimodal pedagogy by providing insights into how Indonesian EFL learners utilize multiple semiotic resources to comprehend metaphorical meanings in authentic language learning contexts.

Keywords: *EFL learners; metaphor comprehension; multimodal resources; Disney's Frozen soundtrack; Classroom Action Research*

A. Introduction

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning aims to develop learners' communicative competence, including the ability to interpret implied, figurative, and culturally embedded meanings (Faisal, 2025). Metaphor comprehension is particularly important because it enables

learners to construct meanings beyond literal interpretations (Wardana, 2024). As learners increasingly engage with digital media, literature, films, songs, and social interactions, multimodal literacy has become essential for interpreting and constructing meaning through multiple semiotic resources (Carcamo & Pino, 2025;



Karatza, 2022). In contemporary learning environments, meaning is increasingly constructed through multiple modes rather than language alone (Tandiana et al., 2023), while multimodal texts have been shown to support learners' engagement and comprehension in Indonesian EFL classrooms (Kusumaningrum et al., 2024).

Linguistic competence extends beyond the knowledge of syntax and vocabulary to include the ability to interpret figurative language and construct meanings from complex linguistic inputs. Figurative language, such as similes, idioms, hyperboles, and metaphors, enriches communication by expressing abstract ideas and experiences in meaningful ways (Alnujaidi, 2023). However, EFL learners often encounter difficulties in interpreting non-literal expressions due to limited contextual, cultural, and linguistic knowledge as well as a tendency to rely on literal interpretations (Al-Mashhadani et al., 2024; Veliz & Smith, 2021).

Among various forms of figurative language, metaphors have received considerable scholarly attention because of their cognitive and communicative significance. According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980), metaphors are not merely linguistic devices but conceptual mechanisms through which individuals understand and structure abstract

experiences. Metaphors are widely used in everyday communication and various forms of discourse. Wardana (2024) emphasized that metaphor comprehension enables learners to construct meanings beyond literal interpretations, while metaphorical competence supports engagement with authentic texts and communicative situations. Similarly, Afifi (2021) highlighted that understanding metaphorical language is essential for developing learners' academic literacy and meaning-making abilities in EFL contexts.

Despite its importance, metaphor comprehension remains challenging for EFL learners due to limited linguistic knowledge, cultural awareness, and contextual understanding (Al-Mashhadani et al., 2024). Learners often struggle to interpret abstract metaphorical meanings and relate them to real-world experiences (Veliz & Smith, 2021). These difficulties are particularly evident in Indonesian EFL contexts, where limited exposure to authentic language use makes metaphorical expressions difficult to understand (Wardana, 2024). The increasing use of multimodal texts further highlights the importance of multimodal literacy in supporting comprehension and meaning-making processes (Ngadiso et al., 2026).



To address these challenges, researchers have increasingly explored multimodal approaches in language learning. Multimodal resources integrate text, images, audio, video, and gestures to support meaning-making and help learners connect prior knowledge with new information (Ngadiso et al., 2026). By providing multiple sources of information, multimodal learning environments facilitate deeper comprehension of abstract concepts. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of multimodal literacy in EFL education (Karatza, 2022), while multimodal resources have been shown to support learners' engagement and meaning-making (Carcamo & Pino, 2025).

Within Indonesian EFL contexts, multimodal learning environments have been reported to enhance learners' engagement, comprehension, and participation (Firdausya et al., 2023; Sahuruddin et al., 2025). Drawing on Kress' (2010) theory of multimodality, this study views meaning-making as the result of interactions among multiple semiotic modes that support learners in interpreting metaphorical expressions. Through the interaction of visual, auditory, and linguistic resources, learners may construct deeper understandings of abstract concepts that are often difficult to access through language alone.

Previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of multimodal approaches in improving learners' metaphor comprehension, language skills, reading comprehension, engagement, and motivation (Golfam & Nahavandi, 2021; Kaowiwattanakul, 2025; Yawiloeng, 2022). Multimodal learning has also been found to enhance learners' comprehension, motivation, engagement, participation, and positive learning experiences (Apriliasari & Novita, 2024; Çeşme & Geçikli, 2025; Pratiwi & Trisanti, 2025; Qin & Wang, 2021). However, the mechanisms through which learners utilize multimodal resources to construct metaphorical meanings remain underexplored, particularly in Indonesian EFL classrooms. Despite these findings, limited research has examined how multimodal resources facilitate metaphor comprehension among Indonesian EFL learners. Most previous studies have focused on reading comprehension, multimodal literacy, learner preferences, and classroom engagement rather than on how EFL learners utilize multimodal resources to comprehend metaphorical meanings in authentic materials such as songs (Hidayat et al., 2024; Ngadiso et al., 2026). Addressing this gap, this study explores how EFL learners utilize multimodal resources to comprehend metaphor using Disney's *Frozen* soundtrack.



A. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach within the framework of Classroom Action Research (CAR) proposed by Kemmis et al. (2014) to explore how EFL learners utilize multimodal resources to comprehend metaphor using Disney's *Frozen* soundtrack in an Indonesian EFL classroom. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it enables researchers to explore learners' experiences, perspectives, and meaning-making processes in natural classroom settings (Yanto & Ramdani, 2023). In this study, multimodal resources referred to the integration of PowerPoint presentations, music videos, song lyrics, teacher explanations, and collaborative classroom discussions to support learners' interpretation of metaphorical expressions.

Although Classroom Action Research commonly involves multiple cycles, the number of cycles may be adapted according to the research objectives and classroom context (Kemmis et al., 2014; Prakoso & Yanto, 2024). Therefore, this study intentionally implemented one action cycle because its primary objective was to explore how multimodal resources facilitated learners' metaphor comprehension rather than to evaluate continuous instructional improvement

across repeated cycles. Within this cycle, the action focused on implementing multimodal learning activities using Disney's *Frozen* soundtrack, while the reflection stage was used to evaluate learners' experiences and the implementation of multimodal instruction rather than to inform the development of a subsequent action cycle.

The study was conducted at a private junior high school in Karawang, West Java, Indonesia, involving 36 Grade 8 students. The CAR cycle consisted of four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. During the planning stage, the researcher prepared lesson plans, PowerPoint presentations, lyric worksheets, observation sheets, interview protocols, and metaphor comprehension tasks. During the acting stage, learners participated in two instructional meetings, each lasting approximately 80 minutes, which integrated multiple multimodal resources, including PowerPoint presentations, music videos, song lyrics, teacher explanations, and collaborative classroom discussions. The first meeting introduced English metaphors through explicit instruction and guided classroom discussions using PowerPoint presentations. The second meeting focused on metaphor learning through Disney's *Frozen* soundtrack by integrating music videos, lyric worksheets, teacher guidance, and collaborative discussions to



facilitate learners' interpretation of metaphorical expressions. During the observing stage, learners' participation, classroom interactions, engagement, and responses to the multimodal learning activities were documented. The reflecting stage was conducted to evaluate learners' metaphor comprehension and the implementation of the instructional activities.

Data were collected through non-participant classroom observations, metaphor comprehension tasks, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Classroom observations focused on learners' participation, engagement, interactions, and responses throughout the learning process. The metaphor comprehension task required learners to interpret metaphorical expressions from selected songs in Disney's *Frozen* soundtrack and explain their meanings in their own words. Although all 36 Grade 8 students participated in the classroom activities, only 19 students completed the metaphor comprehension task and submitted complete responses; therefore, only these responses were included in the analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five students selected through purposive sampling based on task completion, willingness to participate, and their ability to describe their learning experiences during the

multimodal learning activities. Documentation included lesson plans, PowerPoint presentations, lyric worksheets, students' completed tasks, classroom photographs, and field notes to support data interpretation.

The collected data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, consisting of six phases: familiarization with the data, initial coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition and naming, and report production. Coding was conducted manually by identifying recurring patterns across classroom observations, metaphor comprehension tasks, interview transcripts, and documentation. The initial codes were subsequently organized into broader themes representing how EFL learners utilized multimodal resources to comprehend metaphorical meanings. These themes were then reviewed and refined to ensure consistency with the dataset before being interpreted. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, method triangulation was employed by comparing data obtained from classroom observations, metaphor comprehension tasks, interviews, and documentation.



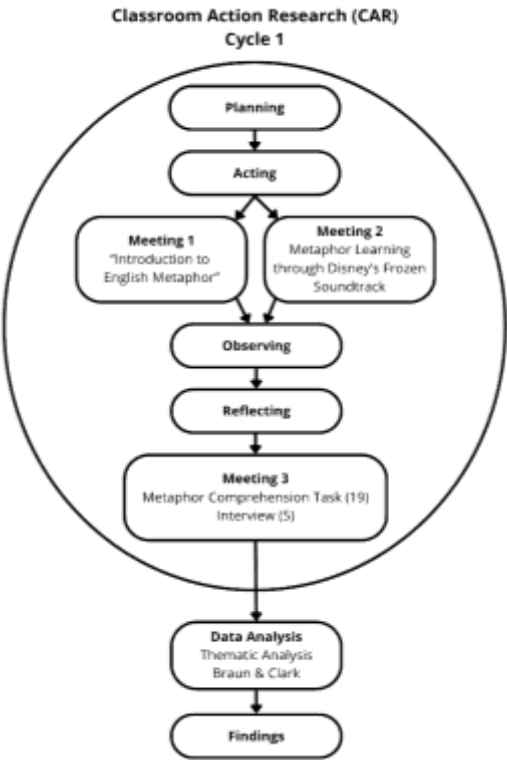


Figure 1. Research Flowchart

B. Findings and Discussion

Through thematic analysis of metaphor comprehension tasks, interviews, classroom observations, and documentation, three themes emerged regarding how EFL learners utilized multimodal resources to comprehend metaphorical meanings using Disney's *Frozen* soundtrack. These themes include (1) utilizing visual resources to interpret metaphors, (2) utilizing songs and lyrics to construct emotional meanings, and (3) utilizing collaborative classroom interactions to negotiate metaphorical meanings.

1. Findings

a. Learners Utilized Visual Resources to Interpret Metaphorical Meanings

The findings indicated that learners actively utilized multiple multimodal resources to comprehend metaphorical meanings. Among these resources, Disney's *Frozen* music videos played a particularly important role by providing visual contexts that supported learners' interpretation of abstract metaphorical expressions.

Table 1. Multimodal Resources Used Throughout the Learning Activities

Multimodal Resource	Learners' Utilization
Music videos	Connected metaphorical expressions with visual scenes and story contexts.
Song lyrics	Identified and interpreted metaphorical expressions in the lyrics.
Songs and music	Related metaphorical meanings to emotions conveyed through the songs.
Classroom discussions	Negotiated and refined



metaphorical
interpretations
collaboratively.

For example, several interview participants reported that their previous familiarity with Disney's *Frozen* helped them interpret the metaphorical expressions presented in the songs. P2 explained, "*Karena pernah nonton Frozen, jadi aku kebayang ceritanya. Jadi lebih gampang ngerti maksud liriknya*" ("Because I had watched *Frozen* before, I could imagine the storyline. It made it easier to understand the meaning of the lyrics"). Similarly, P4 stated, "*Kalau udah tahu filmnya, jadi lebih paham kenapa liriknya kayak gitu*" ("If we already know the movie, it becomes easier to understand why the lyrics are expressed that way"). These responses suggest that learners utilized their prior knowledge and visual familiarity with the film to interpret metaphorical expressions. Visual representations functioned as contextual scaffolding that supported learners in moving from literal to figurative interpretations.

This interpretation was further supported by classroom observations. During the learning activities, learners frequently referred to visual scenes from the music videos when discussing metaphorical expressions and explaining their interpretations. They referred to

visual scenes and story contexts presented in the music videos to connect abstract metaphorical meanings with the storyline. These observations indicate that the visual contexts presented in the music videos supported learners' construction of metaphorical meanings by providing concrete references that reduced the cognitive demands associated with interpreting figurative language.

b. Learners Utilized Songs and Lyrics to Construct Emotional Meanings

These findings suggest that learners utilized songs and lyrics as multimodal resources to construct emotional meanings through the integration of linguistic and auditory modes. By integrating lyrical content with musical elements, learners associated metaphorical expressions with emotions, personal experiences, and situations represented in Disney's *Frozen* soundtrack. Rather than relying solely on the literal meanings of the lyrics, learners utilized emotional cues conveyed through the songs to develop deeper understandings of metaphorical meanings.

Table 2. Examples of Learners' Interpretations of Metaphorical Expressions

Metaphorical Expression	Learners' Interpretation	Interpretation Theme
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<i>The cold never bothered me anyway</i>	Loneliness, insecurity	Emotional
<i>A kingdom of isolation</i>	Withdrawing from others, being alone	Contextual
<i>Let the storm rage on</i>	Anger, personal struggles	Emotional
<i>Love is an open door</i>	Opportunity, relationships	Contextual
<i>My heart is frozen</i>	Sadness, heartbreak	Emotional

Interview findings further demonstrated that learners relied on both the song lyrics and the emotions conveyed through the songs when interpreting metaphorical expressions. For example, P1 stated, "*Belajar pakai lagu lebih seru, jadi lebih gampang ngerti maksud dari liriknya*" ("Learning through songs was more enjoyable, so it was easier to understand the meaning of the lyrics"). Similarly, P3 explained, "*Lagunya membantu memahami perasaan yang ada di lirik, jadi lebih mudah menebak arti metaforanya*" ("The songs helped me understand the emotions expressed in the lyrics, making it easier to interpret the metaphors"). These responses suggest that learners utilized songs not only to understand the literal meanings of the lyrics but also to connect metaphorical expressions with emotions represented in the songs. Music therefore functioned as an important resource that

supported learners in constructing emotional meanings through both linguistic and auditory modes.

Classroom observations further supported these interview findings. During the learning activities, learners frequently referred to both the song lyrics and the emotions conveyed through the songs when discussing metaphorical expressions. Rather than relying solely on the textual meanings of the lyrics, they connected emotional situations represented in the songs with their own experiences to interpret metaphorical meanings. These observations indicate that the combination of songs and lyrics supported learners in constructing emotional meanings by encouraging emotional engagement and contextual understanding of figurative language.

c. Learners Utilized Classroom Interaction for Collaborative Meaning-Making

The findings indicated that learners actively utilized classroom interaction to negotiate and construct metaphorical meanings collaboratively. Through classroom discussions, teacher guidance, and peer interactions, learners exchanged ideas, clarified misunderstandings, and refined their interpretations of metaphorical expressions. These interactions enabled learners to compare different perspectives and collaboratively



construct deeper understandings of figurative language.

Table 3. How Learners Utilized Multimodal Resources to Comprehend Metaphors

Classroom Interaction	Learners' Utilization
Teacher guidance	Asked questions and clarified metaphorical meanings with teacher support.
Peer discussions	Exchanged ideas and compared interpretations with classmates.
Collaborative interpretation	Negotiated and refined metaphorical meanings through discussion.

Interview findings further revealed that learners perceived learning metaphors through songs as more enjoyable and meaningful. Participants described the activities as providing new learning experiences and making metaphorical expressions easier to understand. As P1 stated, "*Belajar pakai lagu lebih seru dan tidak membosankan, jadi lebih bisa membayangkan dan lebih mudah memahami arti dari metafora*" ("Learning through songs was more engaging and less monotonous, which helped me visualize the meanings and understand

metaphorical expressions more easily"). Similarly, P5 commented that "*menggunakan lagu memberikan pengalaman baru dalam belajar bahasa Inggris*" ("using songs provided a new experience in learning English"). These responses suggest that classroom interaction created a supportive learning environment in which learners actively participated in discussing and interpreting metaphorical expressions. Learning through songs also encouraged learners to engage more confidently in collaborative meaning-making activities.

Classroom observations further demonstrated that learners actively exchanged ideas, compared interpretations, and negotiated metaphorical meanings with both peers and the teacher. When encountering unfamiliar metaphorical expressions, learners frequently sought clarification through discussion before reaching a shared understanding. These interactions indicate that collaborative classroom activities supported learners in refining their interpretations and constructing metaphorical meanings collectively. These findings indicate that classroom interaction functioned as an important interactive multimodal resource by enabling learners to collaboratively negotiate, refine, and construct metaphorical meanings through social interaction.



2. Discussion

a. Learners Utilized Visual Resources to Interpret Metaphorical Meanings

This finding can be explained through Kress' (2010) theory of multimodality, which conceptualizes meaning-making as the interaction of multiple semiotic modes rather than language alone. In the present study, learners did not rely solely on linguistic information from the song lyrics but actively utilized visual cues presented in Disney's *Frozen* music videos to construct metaphorical meanings. By integrating visual and linguistic resources, learners connected abstract metaphorical expressions with concrete visual contexts, enabling them to move beyond literal interpretations and develop deeper understandings of figurative language.

The findings are consistent with Golfam & Nahavandi (2021), who reported that multimodal metaphor instruction enhanced EFL learners' metaphor comprehension. Similarly, Yawiloeng (2022) found that multimodal texts supported learners' comprehension by providing multiple sources of information for meaning-making, while Kaowiwattanakul (2025) highlighted the contribution of visual and textual integration to language learning. Likewise, Carcamo and Pino (2025) argued that multimodal learning environments facilitate meaning-making

by integrating multiple semiotic resources that support learners' interpretation of complex concepts. Building on these studies, the present research demonstrates that Indonesian EFL learners actively utilized their familiarity with Disney's *Frozen* soundtrack to interpret metaphorical expressions. Learners relied on visual scenes and contextual situations presented in Disney's *Frozen* music videos to bridge literal and figurative meanings, indicating that visual context functioned as an important scaffold for metaphor comprehension.

These findings extend previous research by demonstrating that visual resources not only facilitate comprehension but also enable learners to actively construct metaphorical meanings through the integration of visual and linguistic information. The interview findings further revealed that learners drew upon their prior familiarity with Disney's *Frozen* to connect visual scenes with metaphorical expressions, suggesting that visual context supported both meaning-making and interpretation. Therefore, visual materials such as films, animations, and music videos can serve as valuable pedagogical resources for metaphor instruction by providing authentic contextual support that helps learners access figurative meanings that are often difficult to understand through text-based instruction alone.



b. Learners Utilized Songs and Lyrics to Construct Emotional Meanings

This finding can be understood from a multimodal perspective, in which meaning is constructed through the interaction of linguistic and auditory modes (Kress, 2010). In the present study, learners utilized songs and lyrics not only to identify metaphorical expressions but also to interpret the emotions conveyed through the songs. The integration of music and language appeared to stimulate emotional engagement, allowing learners to connect abstract metaphorical concepts with familiar experiences and feelings. As a result, learners constructed metaphorical meanings through both linguistic and emotional understanding.

The findings support Çeşme & Geçikli (2025), who reported that multimodal interventions positively influenced learners' confidence, motivation, and emotional experiences in EFL contexts. Similarly, Carcamo & Pino (2025) emphasized that multimodal learning environments promote meaning-making by engaging learners through multiple semiotic resources, while Firdausya et al. (2023) found that multimodal literacy activities increased learners' engagement and participation in language learning. The present study extends these findings by demonstrating that learners utilized emotional experiences represented in

songs to construct metaphorical meanings, suggesting that affective engagement contributed to metaphor comprehension. These findings highlight the importance of selecting authentic and emotionally meaningful materials in metaphor instruction. Songs that are relevant to learners' experiences and interests may encourage emotional engagement, enhance participation, and support deeper comprehension of figurative language. Consequently, metaphor learning becomes a process that integrates both cognitive and affective dimensions of language learning.

c. Learners Utilized Classroom Interaction for Collaborative Meaning-Making

This finding can be explained through Kress' (2010) theory of multimodality, which emphasizes that meaning is constructed through the interaction of multiple semiotic resources and social interaction. In the present study, learners utilized classroom interaction alongside visual, auditory, and linguistic resources to negotiate and construct metaphorical meanings collaboratively. Through discussions with peers and teacher guidance, learners exchanged ideas, compared different interpretations, clarified misunderstandings, and refined their understanding of metaphorical expressions. These interactions enabled



learners to actively participate in the meaning-making process rather than relying solely on individual interpretation.

The findings are consistent with Qin and Wang (2021), who reported that multimodal pedagogical practices promoted learners' engagement and participation through collaborative classroom interaction. Similarly, Yawiloeng (2022) found that multimodal learning environments supported by instructional scaffolding facilitated learners' comprehension and fostered meaningful learning experiences. Firdausya et al. (2023) likewise demonstrated that multimodal literacy activities increased learners' participation and collaborative engagement in language learning. Building on these studies, the present research demonstrates that Indonesian EFL learners utilized classroom interaction not only to participate actively in learning activities but also to negotiate, refine, and collaboratively construct metaphorical meanings through interaction with peers and teacher guidance. These findings indicate that classroom interaction functioned not merely as an opportunity for learners to exchange ideas but also as an interactive multimodal resource that supported collaborative meaning-making and the refinement of metaphorical interpretations.

Despite these benefits, some learners continued to experience difficulties in interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary and complex metaphorical expressions. Classroom observations indicated that several learners still required teacher guidance when identifying and interpreting metaphorical language independently. These findings suggest that although learners effectively utilized multimodal resources throughout the learning process, teacher scaffolding remained essential in supporting metaphor comprehension, particularly when learners encountered unfamiliar linguistic expressions. Teacher guidance helped learners clarify misunderstandings, negotiate meanings, and develop more accurate interpretations of metaphorical expressions. Overall, the findings highlight that classroom interaction functioned as an important interactive multimodal resource that supported collaborative meaning-making. By integrating visual, auditory, linguistic, and interactive modes through teacher guidance and peer discussions, learners were able to construct deeper understandings of metaphorical meanings while simultaneously enhancing engagement, participation, and communicative competence.



C. Conclusion

This study explored how EFL learners utilized multimodal resources to comprehend metaphorical meanings using Disney's *Frozen* soundtrack in an Indonesian EFL classroom. The findings revealed that learners utilized multiple multimodal resources through three interconnected processes. First, learners utilized visual resources, particularly Disney's *Frozen* music videos, to connect metaphorical expressions with concrete contexts, facilitating the transition from literal to figurative interpretation. Second, learners utilized songs and lyrics to construct emotional meanings by relating metaphorical expressions to their personal feelings and experiences. Third, learners utilized classroom discussions and teacher guidance to negotiate, refine, and collaboratively construct metaphorical meanings.

Drawing on Kress' (2010) theory of multimodality, the findings demonstrate that learners comprehended metaphorical meanings through the interaction of visual, auditory, linguistic, and interactive modes rather than through language alone. Although some learners experienced difficulties related to unfamiliar vocabulary and complex metaphorical expressions, they utilized multimodal resources together with teacher scaffolding and peer interaction to support their understanding. These

findings contribute to the growing body of research on multimodal learning by providing insights into how Indonesian EFL learners utilize multiple semiotic resources to comprehend metaphorical meanings in authentic learning contexts. Overall, the study highlights that multimodal instruction can create meaningful learning opportunities by enabling learners to actively utilize visual, auditory, linguistic, and interactive resources in constructing metaphorical meanings.

Based on the findings of this study, EFL teachers are encouraged to design learning activities that enable learners to actively utilize multimodal resources, such as songs, music videos, visual materials, classroom discussions, and teacher guidance, to comprehend metaphorical meanings. Integrating visual, auditory, linguistic, and interactive modes may help learners interpret figurative language more effectively while promoting meaningful engagement in the learning process. Teachers should also provide appropriate instructional scaffolding to support learners in interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary and complex metaphorical expressions.

For future research, studies involving larger and more diverse groups of participants across different educational levels are recommended to provide broader insights into how EFL learners



utilize multimodal resources to comprehend figurative language. Future researchers may also investigate the use of various multimodal materials, such as films, digital storytelling, social media content, literary texts, or artificial intelligence assisted learning environments, to explore how different semiotic resources contribute to learners' metaphor comprehension in diverse EFL contexts.

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