

Chapter One

Introduction

The first chapter of this research provides the introduction of the study. In this chapter, some important points are listed. First, the background of the study discussed why the researcher is concerned and interested in investigating the students' strategies. The problems of the research are explained in this study. The investigations of the study are limited to make the research become effective. The research questions are provided in this chapter as the guidance for the analysis of the study on strategies in understanding figurative language. Furthermore, the importance of analysis will also show benefits of this research for certain people. Finally, the chapter organization is explained by showing the descriptions of each chapter.

Background of the Study

Some experts have offered some definitions of figurative language. Harya (2016) defined figurative language as language that use words or expressions that have a meaning that differs from the literal meaning. Figurative language can be found in advertisements, songs, poems, etc. Some words in figurative language have meanings that are not literal. According to Arifah (2016) Even if the words express precise meaning, the descriptive terms in figurative language have a meaning that is not literal.

While the literal meaning can easily be understood by students, the meaning of figurative language will not be understood unless students intentionally learn

about figurative language. It is because the figurative language does not translate well from language to other language. A simple phrase *a piece of cake* which has literal and figurative meaning can be as a good illustration. *A piece of cake* has literal meaning as a slice of cake. It will be different with figurative meaning of a piece of cake. For example, *the math test is a piece of cake*. It does not mean the math test is a cake, but the math test is easy as the figurative meaning of it.

In order to find the most successful language learning process, researchers, teachers, and students must understand the importance of figurative language and how EFL learners acquire figurative language in developing their proficiency. According to Fussel and Moss (1992) figurative language expresses emotion as writing experience and context. Nurcitrawati et. al (2019) people conveys emotions with words or aesthetics that have different meanings or do not have literal connotations through figurative language. Yunanda et. al (2021) students learn new words that they are unfamiliar with. The new word becomes easier to memorize, allowing students to expand students' vocabulary

The use of figurative language is commonly used in songs and written well in the lyrics of songs. Arifah (2016) defined song lyrics as “a short poem in a number of verses to set to music to be sung” (p.14). In this study, the researcher analyzed the strategies in understanding figurative language in English songs. In its lyrics, the songwriters or composers often elaborate the language to be more aesthetic using figurative language to get listeners attracted to listen the song. The use of figurative language in song can help listeners grasp that song lyrics can represent messages that must be understood by understanding them thoroughly in

terms of categories. Figurative languages have various forms. Some of them are often used in texts or song lyrics that be used in learning. Figurative languages are also used in daily conversation with a simpler form than being used for literary works. It can be an idiomatic expression. The vocabulary mastery is still limited that one word that has one meaning, not yet into contextual meaning.

Some studies have offered the students' difficulties encountered figurative language and the strategies in understanding figurative language. One of the most common forms of figurative language used is the idiom. Kreuz and Roberts (1993) found that idiomatic expressions are very common in English and constitute 20% of the figurative language in contemporary American literature. According to Orfan (2020) Afgan EFL students faced the number of difficulties studying idioms, which were mostly due to a lack of cultural understanding about idioms, a lack of analogues for English idioms in their native tongue, and foreign words in idioms. Some strategies were applied to encounter the challenges. The finding revealed that using English idiom in sentences, predicting context, and speaking in English outside of the classroom are the strategies to understand English idiom. Gathgia and Njoroge (2016) revealed that "the strategy of delving into the etymology of English idioms is one of the most effective teaching strategies and especially so when idioms exhibit incongruity between form and meaning" (p. 38).

However, although there are many studies concerning the strategies to understand figurative language in language English teaching, the research in the same area in university level remains limited. Students' difficulties came from mainly lack of cultural knowledge and lack of experience dealing with figurative

language. Most previous studies in the same field has used a quantitative approach, while this study has taken a qualitative approach in order to obtain more in-depth results based on the students' perspectives. Exploring how figurative language in English song is perceived and understood to develop effective strategies for understanding figurative language is a discussion that should be pursued further.

Based on researcher's investigation, the EED students in Islamic Private University often listen to English songs. They listen to English song with various purposes. The purposes are learning new vocabulary, having song as language input, trying to know the ideas on song, learning the figurative language in English song. However, some students express their concern that they find some difficulties in understanding figurative language in song. One challenge their mentioned was that the students lack English vocabulary mastery. They revealed that the unfamiliar words make them become more difficult to get to know the context and the meaning of figurative language. Based on the above background, the research is the interested in students' strategies in understanding figurative language in English songs. The aim of the proposed study is to investigate the students' strategies to understand figurative language.

Identification of Problem

Figurative language has been learned by students in Department of English Language Education at Yogyakarta. They learned figurative language by using song in Literary Appreciation course. Based on the observation, the researcher

found some problems encountered by students while learning figurative language. There are two problems in based on observation.

The first is what students feel about the difficulties encountered in understanding the figurative language in a song. Students usually find this problem that they cannot really understand about the meaning of figurative language which is ambiguous. Students' perceptions of online discussions will show what obstacles they personally feel because each person's abilities are different. They revealed that the unfamiliar words make them become more difficult to get to know the context and the meaning of figurative language.

The second is the students' understanding of figurative language is still very small. Almost all courses in this department use academic and literal language, so the students have limited knowledge in understanding figurative language. Learning about figurative language is only found in the literary appreciation class which is an elective course. Elective courses can be chosen by the students starting from third semester in one private university in Yogyakarta. Whereas figurative language is an important aspect of the language that must be learned because many books and other learning resources use figurative language such as novels, poems etc. The researcher is interested in exploring students' strategies in understanding figurative language in English songs.

Delimitation of Problem

In this research, the researcher focuses on examining the strategies that be used by students in understanding figurative language in song. While learning

English the students will confront figurative language in song, video, poetry, novel, and movie. The researcher only focused on the figurative language that be used in song because the songs are close with the students rather than novels and others. The investigations of the study are limited to make the research become effective. First, the researcher only focuses on examining students' strategies to understand figurative language. Second, the participants of this research are the students of English Language Education Department in a Islamic private university at Yogyakarta.

Research Question

The researcher has proposed the research question for this research. There will be an research question as a research guideline. The question is:

What are the students' strategies in understanding figurative language in English songs?

The Objectives of the Research

Based on the research question, the research objectivee can be:

The purpose of this research is to find out the strategies that be used by students in understanding figurative language in English songs.

Significance of the Research

This research is expected to give some benefits and good impact for others. This is beneficial especially for students, teachers, lecturers, and other researchers. The significance of the research is presented below:

For students. It is beneficial for students. Students can use the strategies to find effective way to understand figurative language in lyric of song. It is because the results of this study would help students know how to use songs that can help them learn figurative language from a different viewpoint than the previous research that tried to prove the strategy's effectiveness. They will know the effective ways to understand figurative language through song. The students can build their habits to enhance hearing song in English and paying attention into the song which has figurative languages in their lyrics. They can learn by themselves and increase their ability.

For the teachers. This study is beneficial for the teachers. The teachers can make effective learning processes to learn figurative language. The teachers can be more focused on the material that can make students understand about figurative language. The teachers also can know about student's perspective so they can build the suitable teaching style or teaching method to make them enjoy the learning processes. The lecturers also can know step by step how to learn figurative language and build their own effective way.

For other researchers. This study also can be used as references to support their study or research in the same kind of field or topics. Research on the attitudes of students on the use of songs in the learning of figurative languages is intended to be another guide for those who wish to perform research from other viewpoints and objectives. They can take the result of this study and make a comparison or make new methodological research. This study has some limitations, so for other researcher can make evaluations to make their study is better and minimize the

limitations of their study. Because of that the educational research can be developed better time by time.

Organization of the research

This research contains five chapters. Chapter one discusses the background of the research, identification of the research, delimitation of the problem, research questions, objective of the research and the significance of the research. Chapter two is the literature review. It provides a definition of figurative language, student attitudes and songs in understanding figurative language in using songs. Chapter three is the methodology. This chapter explains about how the research will be conducted by the researcher. This chapter discusses the methods, the instruments, the participants, settings and data gathering techniques. In this chapter, the researcher also explains how to analyze the data. Chapter four contains the finding and discussion. This chapter presents the result of data analysis. The conclusion and recommendation is set out in Chapter five. This chapter discusses general answers to the research questions and the researcher's recommendations. Teachers, students and other researchers are briefed on the guidelines. The recommendations are given to teachers, students and other researchers.