STUDENTS' AND LECTURERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE FACTORS INFLUENCING ONE'S METAPHOR COMPETENCE

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ABSTRACT

This article aimed to see the perspective of lecturers and students regarding the factors influencing people's metaphor competence in daily life. Twenty-one students were interviewed and ten lecturers were sent a questionnaire asking about the factors that might influence the use of metaphors. The results show that both lecturers and students agree that language mastery is not the only one which determines the ability of people in comprehending and producing metaphors. Other non-linguistic factors such as habits, environment, personality, social network, logical thinking and general knowledge also influence people. The respondents propose that metaphors are to be taught to students not only in language subjects but also in other subjects such as Character Building or other social subjects.

Keywords: *students' perspectives, lecturers' perspective, metaphor competence*

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini menjelaskan perspektif mahasiswa dan dosen terhadap faktor yang memengaruhi kompetensi seseorang dalam menggunakan metafora di kehidupan sehari-hari. Data diperoleh dari hasil wawancara dengan dua puluh satu mahasiswa dan kuesioner yang dikirim ke sepuluh dosen. Wawancara dan kuesioner menanyakan faktor yang bisa memengaruhi penggunaan metafora. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dosen dan mahasiswa setuju jika penguasaan bahasa bukan merupakan satu-satunya faktor yang memengaruhi kemampuan seseorang dalam memahami dan membuat metafora. Faktor non-linguistik lain seperti kebiasaan, lingkungan, kepribadian, jaringan sosial, kemampuan berpikir logis, dan pengetahuan umum juga berpengaruh. Responden mengusulkan bahwa metafora tidak hanya diajarkan di mata kuliah bahasa, tetapi juga di mata kuliah lain seperti Character Building, atau mata kuliah sosial yang lain.

Kata kunci: *perspektif mahasiswa, perspektif dosen, kompetensi metafora*

INTRODUCTION

Metaphor is defined as one of the figurative language referring to the use of one expression to describe an entity which is usually the abstract thing (Knowles and Moon, 2006). Metaphor is not only used in literary work such as in poetry or prose but it is also used in our daily life; it is not a matter of language but it is also a matter of life, a matter of the way of thinking (Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003). Research regarding the use of metaphors has been carried out in Indonesia (Kwelju, 2005; Dewi, 2010; Herlina, 2011) and outside Indonesia (Black, 2004; Littlemore, 2010). Research correlating metaphor competence and language mastery were conducted by Yumarmanto (2001), Littlemore ((2001, 2010), and Hashemian and Nezhas 2006). Most of the results indicated that language mastery influenced the use of metaphors positively meaning that the higher one's language mastery, the better metaphor competence he has. In reality, we can see that a person who has high language mastery does not always use metaphor in their communication. Therefore, this article investigates the linguistic and non-linguistic factors influencing one's metaphor competence and whether it is worth teaching metaphors to students.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research applied qualitative data using the techniques of free interviews to 21 students divided in 5 group discussions and 10 teachers. The purpose is to find out their opinions regarding the factors influencing somebody's metaphor comprehension and production. Besides asking the factors being investigated from the quantitative method, i.e. Students' exposure to English, English proficiency and Learning styles, the participants were also free to express their opinions about other variables that might influence somebody's metaphors, whether metaphors are still used nowadays and should be taught for students or not and in what subjects they are to be taught. Finally, they were also requested to tell their experience in using metaphors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The way of interviewing respondent was done by explaining the metaphors briefly and then asking their opinion about the factors that might influence the student's metaphor competence, finally, they were guided to answer the factors of the students' background.

Three groups, when being asked about the factors influencing people in comprehending and producing metaphors, mentioned that language mastery influences most especially the vocabulary as without the vocabulary, people do not understand the expressions and are not able to use the expressions precisely. Two of the groups said that language mastery did influence but other factors were more influencing than the language as metaphors were not only a matter of language but also logic and analogy.

The other factors that might influence one's metaphor competence according to the students were environment, in this case they said that people liked to imitate what other people say. Other people in this case could be friends, or prominent people from media, or an influencing event in which people were talking using metaphors, or they might also be their friends. Also, one group mentioned habits as one of the factors, meaning society habit or the culture of the people in which they usually expressed their intention indirectly. Another factor mentioned is knowledge; in this case, knowledge of the world in order to relate the meaning from one expression to another expression. Three groups

mentioned logical and analytical thinking as one of the factors because according to them the interpretation of the metaphor meaning needed logical and analytical thinking. One group said that creative people usually used metaphors. Another student said *"lha memang ada orang yang suka pakai metaphor ada yang kalau ngomong langsung langsung aja"* (some people like expressing ideas using metaphors and some others prefer using direct expressions. The last factor stated is willingness, i.e. whether the people are willing to use metaphors or not.

Regarding the English ability or exposure, in general, all groups agreed that the more the students practiced their English, the higher their metaphor competence would be. However, they also stated again that the English exposure only helped but there were other factors that also support the students' mastery of metaphors.

Regarding the question of English exposure i.e. which exposure in English that might influence people in their metaphor competence, 4 (four) groups mentioned listening as the first choice followed by speaking. Reading was also mentioned by two groups but and writing was only mentioned by one student. However, her reason was that she liked writing. The reason was that by listening people were stimulated to imitate to what other people said. Speaking became the first choice of the students because in speaking, people were influenced by their emotion, feelings, especially in responding to what other people say. Thus, when the person spoke using metaphors, the interlocutors tended to use the same thing.

Learning styles, or in the forum group discussion communicated as the people's characters, also influences the metaphor competence. All groups agreed that learning styles became the influencing factor as the people who were good at English did not always use metaphors. In general, they said that expressive, and talkative people tended to use metaphors but the serious ones rarely used metaphors as they rarely talked.

The next topic is about the use of metaphors in life i.e. whether they used metaphors in their conversations or not. Students needed time to think and said that they never thought about metaphors when speaking. Finally, they answered yes but not much and they only used metaphors for some cases. The cases were different from one group and the others. One group said that metaphors were only used in the formal media such as news paper in order to make the topic more famous and became the topic of the society. However, the other four groups had the opinion that they used metaphors in informal situation such as mocking friends, or talking about teachers to make something funnier. Besides, they used metaphors in expressing something that was difficult to describe or to speak indirectly or to be more polite. One student who liked writing said that he used metaphors a lot in his writing especially when he would make something clearer and would give imagination to his readers. This student also expressed that *metaphor itu khan bagus tho, Mam, lucu, jelas, dan biasanya diinget orang lho Mam* – metaphor is very good. It is funny and clear (in describing something) and people usually remember the metaphors.

The next topic put forward was whether students needed to be taught/encouraged about metaphors and in what subjects. One group informed that it was not necessarily to teach metaphors as they would be expressed automatically depending on the situation. The other groups agreed that students needed to be taught to use metaphors in speaking and writing as they needed metaphors although in the real metaphors were used only for some cases.

The last topic was the question asking in what subjects should the students learn metaphor from, two groups stated in language class such as in Indonesian or in English as metaphor is language and people needed vocabulary in order to understand and use metaphors. These two groups also mentioned Character Building class especially in Character Building 1 because the topic was self development in which students should be able to express something clearly and politely. However, the two other groups did not have any ideas about the subjects (*wah apa ya, nggak tau Mam, nggak*

kepikir, mungkin Bahasa. Ngkali sih – well, we are not sure, may in language class). The complete results can be found in Table 1.

Table 1 The Summary of the Students' Interview

No.	Topics	Summary of the answer	Explanation
1.	The mastery of the language influences the ability to comprehend and produce metaphors	Yes (3 groups); the most influencing (1 group)	In order to express what they want to say; especially dealing with the vocabulary
		No (2)	Language mastery influences but there are other factors that are more influencing
2.	The influence of the frequency of the students' exposure to English i.e. using English in speaking, listening and reading, writing. The most influencing aspect.	Basically the more people use their English, the more mastery they will have including the metaphors. Listening and reading, speaking, reading and writing*, listening at anything, listening and speaking, listening (not much influence from reading.	This information is based on the students' experiences. Most of them learned metaphors from listening, then they imitate the metaphors by expressing them in speaking. One student stated about reading and writing as she likes reading and writing instead of speaking.
3.	People learning styles or characteristics	Yes, but not much; Yes;Yes, this is the most influencing; Yes, it seems to be.	How can somebody use metaphor if he does not know the vocabulary? People who are good at English do not always use metaphors. "soalnya ada orang yang kalau ngomong lurus lurus dan langsung tembak"
4.	Other factors	Environment; social network (trend, media)	Imitating other people/sources especially the influencing ones; to make the ideas clearer
		Knowledge and the quickness in thinking.	In order to use metaphors people should know the knowledge from the two domains
		Logic	To make the analogy between the two things
		Creativity	Creative in using the language
		Experience	In life and in using metaphors
5.	Do you use metaphors in everyday life? In what occasions?	Yes; sometimes	Mocking others, guyon, to speak indirectly especially close friends When describing somebody such as teacher. Metaphors are used for formal speaking. Metaphors are beautiful – ya pokoknya bagus deh kalau pakai metaphor, jadi lebih jelas gitu)
		No, rarely,	only in some cases such as when the metaphors becomes the people's trends

The results from the lecturers' Questionnaires

The questions for lecturers were given in the form of questionnaires and sent by email. There were seven respondents; 4 (four) of them were English teachers teaching English for MKU, Culture, Linguistics, and Literature and the other three were from Mathematics, Information Technology and International Correlation. The questions are divided into two parts. The first part, similar to those of the students, consisted of 6 (six) questions i.e. Factors influencing the people's metaphor competence, Metaphor competence and English ability, Metaphor competence and English Exposure, Metaphor and learning styles, the use of metaphors in our daily life and the teaching of metaphors. Lecturers were supposed to answer the questions and give an explanation regarding their answers. The second part focuses on the factors influencing the people's ability in metaphor comprehension and metaphor production. The eleven (11) factors were taken from the results of the students' background and the students' interview regarding these factors i.e. the language mastery, listening practice, reading practice, writing practice, speaking practice, one's character of learning styles, logical and one's analytical competence, experience, influencing of environment, habit/culture and the interpersonal communication. In this part lecturers were supposed to rate by number 1 to the most influencing factor and number 11 to the least influencing. They were allowed to give the same number if they thought that the value of the ordering was equal. The questionnaire was written in Indonesian.

Results from Part 1 the lecturers' opinions regarding metaphors competence and it implication in teaching were as follows.

Question number one was, in general, what factors influencing people in comprehending and using metaphors. The main answers of all lecturers (English and non-English lecturers) were the same, that there were four main factors, education, environment, knowledge and analogy. Education meant the more educated one person was, the greater possibility he used metaphors. Environment referred to the habit, contexts and texts, situation, culture and people surrounding. When people around him (because of the habits or culture) used metaphors, he had no choice except trying to understand and used metaphors as well. When the texts, or the physical contexts such TV media or other mass media used metaphors, in general people would be influenced to use and understand metaphors. The third factor was the knowledge of somebody. The broader the knowledge either of the general one or the environment one had, the better and the more precisely he would be in applying metaphors. The non English lecturers added that the specific social knowledge (e.g. economics, politics, socio culture, law, international matters) was needed in social in order to understand and produce metaphors. The last factor was analogy. Analogy was needed to connect the topic being discussed and the expressions used in metaphors so that it would be easier for the people to understand.

The lecturers also mentioned that metaphors were used to make the expression "funnier" and convey the message precisely without hurting others. They also said that we should make sure that the interlocutors understand the expressions used in metaphors in order to create the possibility of the positive or negative emotion of the hearers.

Question number two was, whether people who have good English language mastery are also good at comprehending and expressing metaphors. One English lecturer answered that English language tended to influence the metaphor competence. The reason was that metaphors could be found in academic English and therefore if someone had the TOEFL scores of 550 or IELTS of 6.0, he would be influenced when he read or encountered the metaphors in the texts. Then, when he wrote or spoke he would use it. However, the other six agreed that the mastery of the English language would not make people good at metaphor competence. The reasons were varied. In communication, there was a possibility that one just used simple English and therefore, he did not use metaphors. He would use metaphors if he was forced to. Another reason was that the ability to use metaphors was determined by the ability to select the appropriate words/expressions according to the topic and not from the ability of

the English language. In addition, English metaphors could always be applied to Indonesian or vice versa.

Question number three was about metaphor competence and English Exposure. In general, six out of seven lecturers agreed that higher frequency of the people in speaking, reading, listening and writing in English would help them to understand and use metaphors. The more people are encountered with the authentic text either written or spoken, the more influenced they would be and the more possibilities that they comprehended and used metaphors. Mastering English would make them easier in understanding metaphors. In this case, one lecturer answered that although people were exposed to the English language, if they could not understand the metaphors, the exposure would not be useful.

Regarding the most influence practice of language skills that influenced the people's metaphors competence, four lecturers (one from the non English lecturers) answered that reading was the most influencing. The reason was that in general people especially students gained the knowledge from the English texts that could be found in everyday life. Another reason was that most metaphors could be found in the written texts such as books, and magazines. The more people found metaphors in the texts, the more they remembered and the more possibility that they used the metaphors in speaking. One of the four lecturers who answered that the influencing language practice were reading and writing. The reason was that people who found metaphors in a text could also review and re-read the same metaphors again. Because of that, they would remember the metaphors and would be able to use them in writing. However, when they listened, they might understand the metaphors, but their knowledge from the listening did not make them used metaphors in speaking. Two lecturers both of whom were the non English ones, stated that speaking was the most influencing because by speaking people would be able to convey the message more clearly by using metaphors and in speaking people could make 'improvisation' in language.

Question number four was about Metaphor and Learning Styles/Character. Regarding the question whether one's learning style or character would influence the use of metaphors, all lecturers agreed to the idea. One lecturer answered "maybe" but the reason indicated that he agreed. The reasons were varied. The extrovert, humourous, and easy going people tended to use more metaphors in order to create a relaxing atmosphere. The higher the people's linguistic intelligence was, the more easily they would comprehend and use metaphors. The similar reason was that people who were open and like learning, would use the language they learn, and increase their language ability including their metaphor competence, on the other hand, people who were not open in learning and using the language, would be slow in metaphor competence. Another explanation was that sarcastic people would use metaphors. People were different in responding the metaphors they heard, some of them understood quickly and some others understood slowly. Some people learnt by listening, some others by reading, or writing. Then, metaphor was a matter of choice depending on the person. Some people liked using metaphors, others using illustrations, or other things to illustrate what they want to express.

Question number five was about the use of metaphors in everyday life. Six teachers confirmed that metaphors were still used in our everyday life. The general reason was to clarify the difficult, abstract and complex concepts, and to arise the certain emotion in order to create an atmosphere so that people would remember the topic as intended by the speakers. Another reason was to make the situation informal and to avoid the formal conversations. In our daily life, metaphors were used in the up to date topics discussed at a certain time however, in simple communication, metaphors were not used. One teacher said that the use of metaphor depended on the situation, especially the environment. The last reason was that people use metaphors to express something sarcastically.

Question number six was about the teaching of metaphors. All the seven lecturers agreed that students should be taught about metaphors. However, they had different opinions regarding the subjects in which metaphors should be included. Three of the lecturers mentioned literature such as

poetry and play; the addition subjects stated is linguistic semantics, pragmatics, discourse, reading comprehension. And there were other subjects that were not mentioned specifically except the explanation using the terms "influencing subjects" and "etc.". The non-English department lecturers had different opinions. The information technology lecturer mentioned that *Bahasa Indonesia*, mathematics, Character Building I (Character Building the lesson dealing with the people's self development) and the international relation lecturers stated that metaphors should be inserted in certain topics in every subject for example in discussing economics, politics, social and international relation.

Lecturers' Opinions about the Factors Correlating to Metaphor Comprehension

The eleven factors from this research and the results of the students' discussion were assumed to correlate to metaphor competence. In this part, the lecturers were to make order by giving number 1 to the most correlating factor and 11 for the least one. The highest mean of the most important factor according to the teachers was habits (3.1429) and the least important was the exposure in speaking exposure (8.7143). In metaphor comprehension if the groups based on the mean were divided into three, then the most correlating factors were not the linguistic ones but they were habit, environment and social network. Meanwhile, the last three factors were from the language exposure i.e. the average of the four skills, writing and finally speaking. Experience, characters and logic were in the fourth, sixth and seven. Language competence i.e. reading and listening were in the 5th, 8th and 9th. It means that all the non-linguistic factors except logic belonged to the first half of the correlated factors and all linguistic factors were in the second half except for the language competence whose position was in the 5th. This also indicated that according to lecturers the dominant factors influencing the metaphor comprehension were non-linguistic.

Lecturers' Opinion about the Factors Correlating to the Metaphor Production

The results of the factors correlating to metaphor production were similar to those of the metaphor production. The first three aspects that were included in the most correlated ones were not the linguistic factors; they are environment, habit, and social network. Meanwhile, the least three correlating language were also the same i.e. correlating factors dealing with language exposure, listening, writing and speaking. Meanwhile, like in metaphor comprehension, the first half of the factors were non linguistics except the language competence, and the second half was the exposure to the English language except for the factors of experience. However, the standard deviation of the opinion in language competence was big i.e. 3.86067 for metaphor comprehension and 4.19183 for language production. This fact indicated there was a big variance among the opinion. In facts, in both metaphor comprehension and production, the non linguistic factors were more dominant than the linguistic ones. The similarity was that the position of the language competence in metaphor comprehension and production was near, i.e. the 4th and 5th, the position of character is number 6th. Then, the exposure of speaking has the least correlation.

Table 2 The Means of the Factors Correlating
with Metaphor Comprehension According to the Lecturers

no	factors	min	max	mean	std.dev
1	habit	1	6	3.1429	1.9518
2	environment	1	7	3.4286	2.0702
3	social network	1	8	4.2857	2.21467
4	experience	2	7	4.5714	2.0702
5	language competence	1	11	4.7143	3.86067
6	character	2	9	5	2.38048
7	logic/analytic	2	9	5.1429	2.73426
8	reading	1	10	5.7143	3.59232
9	listening	3	11	7.4286	2.69921

10	language exposure	4.25	9.5	7.6071	1.68855
11	writing	5	11	8.5714	1.90238
12	speaking	6	11	8.7143	2.05866

Table 3 The Means of the Factors Correlating
with Metaphor Production According to the Lecturers

no	factors	min	max	mean	Std.Deviation
1	environment	3	6	3.8571	1.21499
2	habit	1	6	3.8571	1.77281
3	social network	1	6	4	1.91485
4	language competence	1	10	4.2857	4.19183
5	logic/analytic	1	8	4.2857	2.62769
6	character	2	9	4.4286	2.29907
7	reading	1	8	5.1429	3.02372
8	experience	2	8	5.1429	2.47848
9	language exposure	4.25	9.5	7.1071	1.88114
10	writing	1	11	7.4286	3.45722
11	listening	3	11	7.5714	2.43975
12	speaking	4	11	8.2857	2.62769

From all the results above, it can be seen that, overall, the correlation between the students' metaphor competence and their background show are not strong.

CONCLUSION

This article intends to find the students and lecturers' perspectives on the factors influencing students or people in general in comprehending and producing metaphors.

According to students, the mastery of the language is important especially in vocabulary as the basic knowledge; the aspects of English exposure that influence in metaphor competence are listening and speaking; learning styles and personality also influence the metaphor competence but not much. Other non-linguistic factors which are mentioned are environment, social network, media, knowledge and the quickness in thinking.

Lecturers had the similar opinions that besides linguistic factors, non linguistic factors also influence people in understanding and producing metaphors. In metaphor comprehension, the most dominant factor is habits and the least was speaking exposure. The highest three influencing factors are habit, environment, and social network, and the three lowest factors are from the language exposure i.e. the average of English exposure in general, followed by writing and speaking. Both students and lecturers agree on three things. First, metaphors are still used nowadays in everyday communication; second, students need to learn metaphors; third, metaphors should not only be taught in language courses but in general courses as well such as in social subjects and Character Building.

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