

Synecdoche-Related Comprehension Challenges for Modern College of Business and Science EFL Students: A Case Study

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Abstract—This case study explores the comprehension challenges related to synecdoche among EFL students at the Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS). Recognizing a gap in the literature, the study aims to understand the difficulties students face when dealing with synecdochical contexts and to identify contributing factors. Two instruments were employed: a synecdoche comprehension test and a student questionnaire, completed by 96 MCBS students. Additionally, a teacher questionnaire was administered to 10 participants to gain further insights. The results reveal a wide range of understanding, with only 31 out of 69 participants passing the comprehension test, indicating a prevalent misunderstanding of synecdochical phrases. The teachers' questionnaire highlighted important variables affecting students' comprehension of synecdoche. The findings suggest a need for targeted teaching strategies to improve comprehension of synecdoche among EFL students.

Index Terms—synecdoche, comprehension challenges, MCBS

I. INTRODUCTION

Figurative language is a type of language in which words or statements have a meaning other than their literal interpretation. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) this language is integral to the depth and fluency of language, and it is regarded as the bedrock of linguistic competence. Additionally, Webb and Nation (2017) are of the view that figurative language is particularly important in relation to English language, and they consider it challenge for non-native speakers to acquire.

Comprehending figurative language necessitates a shift in perspective, requiring one to decode deeper meanings embedded within expressions and statements. According to French and Vettstein (2001) the necessity for a well-thought-out judgment is critical in figurative language utilization. It's important to pay regard to any figurative language; inappropriate utilization could potentially distort the intended meaning and make it difficult to comprehend and interpret. Thus, it can be said that the mastery of figurative language requires a high level of linguistic competence. This underscores the need for effective strategies and tools to facilitate the learning and usage of rhetorical and figurative language.

Of the several kinds of metaphorical language, synecdoche, where some part symbolizes the entire, or the other way around, holds a unique place due to its common usage in everyday conversation and literature (Burke, 1945). According to Oxford University dictionary (2023), synecdoche is a figurative term of speech that describes something in its entirety, even when it only represents just a part of it. For example, "Hollywood is known for producing blockbuster movies." The synecdoche here is using "Hollywood" to refer to the whole American film industry. Synecdoche is, in fact, a rhetorical device in which a characteristic or segment of an entity is used to represent the whole entity, or in which the whole entity is employed to designate a specific characteristic or segment. It can also use a general term to refer to a specific term or a specific term to refer to a general term. Using the word threads figuratively to substitute clothes and heels instead of high-heeled shoes are examples to illustrate how this distinctive rhetorical form functions. Effective communication depends not just on our capacity for understanding literal contexts, but also on our capacity for understanding and interpreting metaphors.

Synecdoche is a common and important rhetorical device in various types of texts, such as literature, journalism, advertising, and politics. It can have different purposes and effects in communication and discourse, such as simplifying, emphasizing, persuading, or creating imagery and symbolism. According to Frisella (2017), synecdoche is a flexible figurative tool used in the text for many different purposes, which the authors intend to convey in a non-literal way. A statement or phrase might seem deeper or more expressive when synecdoche is used to enhance the language. A writer can utilize synecdoche to give a character or narrator a powerful voice. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) report that the proficiency of EFL learners is often distinguished by their understanding and application of figurative language, including synecdoche. The crux of language learning should not be limited to merely grasping the individual meaning of a word or understanding syntactical structures. In contrast, it encompasses the understanding of the dynamic interaction among words in figurative language.

It is stated by Brook (1958) that synecdoche and metonymy are the two most important figurative language tropes.

Accordingly, synecdoche is deemed as an effective rhetorical device that enables speakers to convey and communicate different meanings and messages based on the context and aim of the text, but subsequently, it poses challenges for many EFL learners, especially if they lack linguistic and cultural knowledge of the text. The comprehension of synecdoche can be influenced by various factors, such as language background, previous knowledge, and familiarity with literary texts. Moreover, the comprehension of synecdoche can affect reading comprehension and text analysis in general. In the discipline of linguistics, it is well-acknowledged that understanding and utilization of rhetorical devices like synecdoche can greatly influence how a text is interpreted. Referring to what was stated by Stanford News (2019) synecdoche is a literary device that is often employed to induce strong and everlasting images in the mind of a reader. The same source additionally draws attention to how little changes in language usage can reflect the biased perceptions of the speakers.

A. *Research Objectives*

This study aims to assess the degree to which EFL students have a grasp on synecdoche and identify factors contributing to misunderstandings. Undergraduate students are a suitable population to focus on because they need to read and interpret various types of texts for their academic work. They also need to enhance their critical thinking and analytical abilities to cope with various texts and rhetorical devices. Moreover, they need to improve their creativity and expression when using synecdoche and other figures of speech in their communication and discourse.

B. *Research Questions*

This study sought to identify synecdoche-related challenges in authentic texts for EFL Students. Consequently, the research was guided by two primary questions which are: (1) To what extent are EFL students able to comprehend synecdoche in authentic texts? (2) What are the major factors that affect EFL students' comprehension of synecdoche? By means of tackling these questions, the study hoped to provide insights into the potential challenges regarding EFL students' synecdoche comprehension as well as the contributing factors.

II. LITERATURE BACKGROUND

The comprehension of figurative language, singularly the concepts of metaphor and metonymy, is of great consequence for comprehending synecdoche. These forms of figurative language, including synecdoche, utilize one entity to enhance our understanding of another. A metonym replaces an object you wish to describe with something else associated with it. According to Betjemann (n.d.), a synecdoche is a type of metonym where the associated entity is a component or part of the object being described. For instance, in the sentence “we need boots on the ground as quickly as possible” the word ‘boots’ is a synecdoche where it represents soldiers, as boots are part of a soldier’s outfit. A well-known instance of synecdoche is “fifty keels plowed the deep,” where ‘keels,’ a part of a ship, symbolizes fifty ships sailing on the ocean.

Contrastingly, a metaphor is an imaginative way that describes something by referring to another object that embodies the qualities one intends to communicate. For instance, saying life is a highway implies that your life is ever lasting on the road and that things can come along on the way. A metaphor according to Hernández (2011) is a device in which a word or phrase is metaphorically employed, deviating from its true context. The phrase “Agamemnon, Shepherd of the People” exemplifies the employment of the word “shepherd” in a symbolic manner, even though shepherds don’t literally guide people. Thus, both synecdoche and metaphor are powerful tools in figurative language that enhance our understanding and interpretation of various concepts.

A. *The Definition and Etymology of the Term Synecdoche*

Synecdoche is a rhetorical device where a component is utilized to signify the entirety, or conversely, a single component is employed as a metaphor for its entirety. It barely connects with other forms of rhetoric as metaphor. In other words, this form of speech termed a synecdoche is a device by which a part is employed to express the whole or the opposite way around. Synecdoche, in simple terms, involves the use of a specific word, which typically represents a part of something, to depict the entire entity. For instance, the phrase “The White House announced today” the White House in the sentence stands as a symbol of the presidency or the United States government. Also, the phrase “the hired hands” in the sentence “the hired hands completed the work in record time” signifies the workers. For the word synecdoche origin, Wikipedia (2023) states that the term synecdoche is etymologically derived from Ancient Greek συνεκδοχή (sunekdokhḗ), which means “simultaneous understanding”.

B. *Metonymy vs. Synecdoche: What's the Difference?*

Synecdoche and metonymy have shared an intricate relationship over the history of linguistics. Even today, there has not been a clear line proven the difference between these two rhetorical terms since sometimes they are differentiated, and other times are blended. In fact, both metonymy and synecdoche are literary devices where one word is used to symbolize one more. Metonymy and synecdoche are closely related and quite similar. Hence, the similarities between the two rhetorical tools mentioned above can make it difficult to differentiate between them. Gibbs (1994) attempted to differentiate metonymy from synecdoche, noting that the two are not always easily distinguishable as both figures of speech utilize the relationship between larger and smaller entities. This differentiation may be most easily seen by

establishing exactly what each concept means. Despite the closeness and similarity between metonymy and synecdoche, there is a minute distinction between the two devices. According to Wiesen (2023) the difference between metonymy and synecdoche can be quite subtle. He sees that metonymy is a rhetorical tool used to describe one thing by means of describing it as different but related in concept. On the other hand, synecdoche involves using a part of something to symbolize the whole, or vice versa. Wiesen (2023) believes that the major difference between the two devices is in the relationship between the object or thing that is being referred to and the actual term being used. As for Hasa (2018) the main difference between the terms is that Synecdoche is a form of figurative language where a segment stands in for the entirety, whereas metonymy is another type of rhetoric that employs metaphors for something intimately related to it. According to Sato (1978), both concepts are characterized by a structure that links the part to the whole.

C. Typology of Synecdoche

Synecdoche, a rhetorical device, is primarily categorized into two forms: microcosm and macrocosm. Microcosm is a form of synecdoche that uses a part of something to symbolize the whole. For instance, Burke (1941) uses the phrase: *I need a hand*, where ‘hand’ represents the need for an entire person’s assistance. Conversely, macrocosm, which is less frequently used, employs the whole to signify a part. This is exemplified by Enelow (2014) with the term ‘society,’ often used to denote ‘high society.’ Both microcosm and macrocosm provide distinctive methods to convey meaning using parts and wholes. Maity (2021) provides an expanded perspective on these two general categories by introducing more specific forms of synecdoche. These classifications contribute to a more detailed comprehension of this rhetorical device and its diverse applications.

(a) *The species for the genus*: In this type of synecdoche genus is expressed by the species as in: “The farmer has a hundred head of cattle in his pasture.” In this example the species “head” is employed to substitute the genus cattle.

(b) *The genus for the species*: This type differs from the first in that the class in which the idea or object is to be expressed is selected and used instead of the idea or object itself, as in the example: He seemed to be a kind creature at heart, despite his severe appearance. (here the genus ‘creature’ is used instead of the species, which is “man”).

(c) *The material for the thing made*: Essentially, in this type of synecdoche, a component represents its matter - the material that constitutes the thing. However, this material is not the whole essence of the thing. The whole essence is what the object is. For example, consider the sentence, ‘The actor nervously walked onto the boards for his first performance.’ Here, ‘boards’ stand as the stage, which is made from boards. But the essence of ‘boards’ in this context is not just the material, but the stage itself.

(d) *A container and what it contains*: “Can I eat this box?” is a synecdoche where “box” refers to the food inside of it rather than the box itself.

D. Previous Studies

Very few studies have addressed synecdoche from different angles, despite the variety of research carried out in figurative language. Paradoxically, significant gaps regarding synecdoche-related challenges with authentic texts for EFL students and the factors leading to such linguistic challenges still exist in the relevant literature. Synecdoche is thoroughly examined as a cognitive and communication approach by Nerlich and Clarke (1999) the study highlights that while metaphor has been the focus of much research in rhetoric, literary theory, and cognitive semantics, metonymy and particularly synecdoche have not been subjected to the same degree of assessment. Suzuki (2021) in his study “An Acceptable Classification of Metonymy and Synecdoche” offers a theoretical and computational approach to understanding and classifying metonymy and synecdoche, providing a foundation for further research in this area. Although Suzuki’s study gives a theoretical framework for understanding metonymy and synecdoche, it does not address the practical challenges of interpreting these figurative patterns, especially in the context of EFL students. This is where the current study comes in, addressing this gap by focusing on the practical challenges faced by EFL students. In a further study, Ibrahim (2021) provides an in-depth analysis of the use of synecdoche in the English language, and he has reached the findings that synecdoche can add a layer of richness to language, making it more dynamic and engaging when used correctly. In their study “Synecdoche: Between Rhetoric and Cognitive Semantic.” Al-Kawwaz and Mohammed (2014) describes synecdoche as a cognitive and communicative strategy. It explores various interpretations of synecdoche, and she reaches the conclusion that both the synecdoche definition and its types remain unclear, making it a vague rhetorical class. The two last studies that have been reviewed, although not addressing synecdoche-related challenges, can still be a useful resource in that they give an in-depth understanding of synecdoche and how it works in cognition and communication. They could also be useful in spotting figurative difficulties and determining the reasons for incorrect synecdoche readings.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To bridge the gap in related literature to better understand the challenges faced by EFL students in dealing with synecdochical contexts and to identify the factors contributing to these challenges, further research is needed, based on previous studies. The lack of linguistic and cultural knowledge of students often contributes to the challenges, leading to the misinterpretation of metaphors. These problems are exacerbated when students comprehend metaphorical content according to its literal version, particularly in discourses containing synecdochical patterns. Accordingly, for students to

fully understand the source text's content or message, they must comprehend not only the literal but also the figurative meaning of words. Moreover, there is also a noticeable gap in the figurative language literature regarding the factors that lead EFL students to misunderstand these rhetorical models. According to Liu et al. (2022) English data are the most reliable evidence of linguistic model's ability to consider figurative languages, which results in a lack of resources as well as research in another language. This research primarily aims to address this gap and contribute to being aware of EFL students' comprehension challenges with figurative language. This study's main purpose is to close this gap by identifying the synecdoche-related problems as well as figuring out what factors contribute to any misunderstandings of synecdochical patterns in authentic texts. Additionally, the study provides fruitful insights into teaching and learning figurative language in general and synecdoche in particular.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. *Research Design*

To determine what challenges EFL students experience while understanding synecdoche in written discourse and the factors influencing their comprehension of this figurative device, the current research employed a combination of approaches. The research was bifurcated into two sections. The first section involved a synecdoche comprehension test, which was quantitative, designed to statistically assess EFL students' understanding of synecdoche in authentic texts. The second section employed two questionnaires. The first questionnaire aimed to gather data about the participants' experiences and challenges with synecdochical expressions in authentic texts. The second questionnaire was used to collect data from teachers about the factors influencing EFL students' comprehension of synecdoche-related challenges, their teaching strategies, and any suggestions for improvement. This blend of quantitative methods offers a comprehensive understanding of how students handle this rhetorical device.

B. *The Participants*

The current study was conducted with a diverse group of participants, all of who were students from the Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS) in Muscat, Oman. These 96 students, enrolled in academic writing courses during the fall semester of the 2023-2024 academic year, were selected through purposive sampling from a variety of classes. A significant criterion for their selection was their proficiency in English, demonstrated either by a valid IELTS score of Band 5.0 or higher, or by their participation in the CEAP program for one year prior to their enrollment in the General Education Department. This proficiency in English is crucial as it underscores the participants' ability to handle basic communication in their field and exhibits their partial command of the language. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that students who joined the CEAP program had undergone an intensive one-year course aimed at enhancing their English language skills before they embarked on their journey in the General Education Department. The participant pool was not only diverse in terms of their English language proficiency but also in terms of gender, with 41% being males and 59% females. In addition to these students, the study also included 10 teachers from the General Education Department at MCBS and from other high education institutions. These teachers, selected based on their experience in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and their interaction with the student participants, afforded the study a further depth dimension. This blend of participants ensured a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by EFL students when dealing with synecdoche within written discourse.

C. *Instruments*

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges EFL students face when dealing with synecdoche within authentic texts, and the factors influencing their ability to comprehend this figurative device, the study employed three key instruments for data collection. Firstly, a diagnostic written test was administered to 69 students. This test served as a practical tool to find answer to the first research question that: To what extent are EFL students able to comprehend synecdoche in authentic texts? The students were asked to summarize their understanding of each item, providing a direct measure of their comprehension of synecdoche. Secondly, a students' questionnaire was distributed among the same 69 students. This questionnaire aimed to identify specific challenges related to synecdoche that the students encounter in various texts. By doing so, it provided primary data on the issues faced by students when dealing with synecdoche in authentic texts. Lastly, a separate teacher questionnaire was disseminated among 10 teachers participating in the study. This questionnaire sought to gather the teachers' perspectives on the factors influencing EFL students' comprehension of synecdochical patterns. It also collected their suggestions for improvement, offering valuable insights from an instructional viewpoint. Each of these three tools contributes to a comprehensive knowledge of the challenges and underlying factors associated with EFL students' understanding of synecdoche in authentic texts.

D. *Research Procedure*

Initially, the reliability and validity of the used instruments were checked. After that, throughout the course of four weeks, the data-gathering procedure for the current study was meticulously conducted. The study commenced with the recruitment of participants, who were selected from five classes taught by the researcher at the Modern College of Business and Science, Muscat, Oman. These students were enrolled in academic writing courses (Eng 101 & Eng 102) in the General Education Department. Data collection was a collaborative effort between the researcher and two other

lecturers teaching in the same department. The participants were then engaged in a series of instruments designed to assess their comprehension and interpretation of synecdoche. This included a paper-based test taken by 69 students, which comprised 15 synecdoche statements that the students were required to read and interpret within a 30-minute timeframe without any external assistance. In addition to this, the students completed a questionnaire, providing further data for the study. A separate questionnaire was also distributed to teachers, aiming to gather their perspectives on the factors influencing EFL students' understanding of synecdochical patterns in authentic texts and their suggestions for improvement. This provided valuable insights from an instructional viewpoint. All these activities were conducted on campus at the Modern College of Business and Science, Muscat, Oman. The sequence of events began with the synecdoche test, followed by the student questionnaire. This comprehensive procedure ensures transparency and replicability in how the study was conducted.

V. RESULTS

The degree to which EFL students can comprehend synecdoche in authentic texts was examined using two separate instruments: a synecdoche comprehension test specifically designed for purpose and a student questionnaire.

A. *Synecdoche Comprehension Test*

As demonstrated in Table 1, a test comprising 15 items based on synecdoche was administered to 69 Omani EFL students from the Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS) in Muscat, Oman. It should be noted that the maximum achievable score for this test was 15. The students' scores provide insights into their understanding of synecdoche in written discourse.

TABLE 1
SYNECDOCHE COMPREHENSION TEST

| <i>Participants Passed</i> | <i>Students Failed</i> | <i>Minimum Score</i> | <i>Maximum Score</i> | <i>Mean (X)</i> | <i>Standard Deviation (SD)</i> | <i>Standard Error of Mean</i> |
|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 31 | 48 | 4 | 13 | 2.79 | 7.70 | 0.34 |

As shown in Table 1, 31 out of 69 participants taking the test have obtained a passing score, with six students achieving 13 out of 15. A significant number of students, 38 in total, did not pass the test and 9 out of them obtained a score lower than 4. As demonstrated, the wide range of scores from 4 to 13 among participants signifies a significant variation in their comprehension levels. In terms of the average score, about 3 out of 15 was shown by the mean value of 2.79. According to this low average, many students misunderstand synecdochical phrases in the written discourse. The standard deviation was very high at 7.70, indicating widespread scores and further highlighting the differences in the level of understanding among the participants. The standard error of mean was calculated to be 0.34, showing the precision of the mean score estimate. This suggests that if the same test was to be administered to a different group drawn from the same population, we could expect the average score to be within about 0.34 points of the current mean score (about 68%) most of the time. Overall, although there were some participants who showed a solid grasp of synecdoche in written language, the findings show that there are still many students who find synecdoche challenging.

B. *Students' Questionnaire*

The study discusses the findings of an assessment questionnaire carried out in 69 MCBS students to find synecdoche comprehension problems, as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
EFL STUDENTS' OPINIONS ON THE SYNECDOCHE COMPREHENSION CHALLENGES IN WRITTEN DISCOURSES

| Item no. | Statements | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Mean (X) | Standard Deviation |
|----------|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------|--------------------|
| 1 | I find it easy to understand synecdoche in written discourse. | 9 (13.04%) | 15 (21.74%) | 5 (7.25%) | 22 (31.88%) | 18 (26.09%) | 2.75 | 1.23 |
| 2 | I struggle to understand the intended meaning of synecdochical expressions in texts. | 20 (28.99%) | 17 (24.64%) | 7 (10.14%) | 10 (14.49%) | 15 (21.74%) | 2.86 | 1.36 |
| 3 | I often rely on context clues within the text to understand synecdoche phrases. | 16 (23.19%) | 21 (30.43%) | 5 (7.25%) | 14 (20.29%) | 13 (18.84%) | 2.81 | 1.34 |
| 4 | I often encounter difficulties when trying to understand synecdoche in texts. | 19 (27.54%) | 12 (17.39%) | 9 (13.04%) | 11 (15.94%) | 18 (26.09%) | 2.87 | 1.38 |
| 5 | I find it difficult to translate synecdoche from English into my native language. | 12 (17.39%) | 23 (33.33%) | 12 (17.39%) | 13 (18.84%) | 9 (13.04%) | 3.07 | 1.19 |
| 6 | I find it challenging to identify synecdoche in written discourse. | 9 (13.04%) | 25 (36.23%) | 5 (7.25%) | 13 (18.84%) | 17 (24.64%) | 3.13 | 1.24 |
| 7 | I tend to understand the synecdoche content in the texts according to its literal interpretation. | 6 (8.70%) | 18 (26.09%) | 22 (31.88%) | 13 (18.84%) | 10 (14.49%) | 3.01 | 1.18 |
| 8 | I often mentally convert synecdoche contents I read into my native language without understanding their cultural contexts. | 23 (33.33%) | 17 (24.64%) | 1 (1.45%) | 17 (24.64%) | 11(15.94) | 3.20 | 1.27 |
| 9 | I often need to use external resources (like dictionaries or the internet) to understand synecdoche in the texts. | 16(23.19) | 21(30.43) | 9(13.04) | 14(20.29) | 9(13.04) | 3.13 | 1.24 |
| 10 | When reading, I tend to take synecdoche phrases literally. | 19(27.54) | 26(37.68) | 5 (7.25%) | 12(17.39) | 7(10.14) | 3.26 | 1.21 |

As shown in Table 2 and regarding the first statement, a considerable number of participants, specifically 57.97%, reported experiencing difficulties in understanding synecdoche in authentic texts, suggesting that comprehending synecdoche is a challenge. The average value, as evidenced by a mean score of 2.75, along with a standard deviation of 1.23, provides statistical proof of this. In response to the statement (2) more than half of the participants (53.63%) acknowledged challenges related to synecdoche comprehension, particularly in grasping the intended meaning of synecdochical expressions in texts. A mean score of 2.86, along with a standard deviation of 1.136, actively confirms this challenge. As to the statement (3) most participants (53.62%), with a mean score of 2.81 and a standard deviation of 1.34, do rely on textual context cues to interpret synecdoche phrases to grasp synecdoche in texts. The fact that such a large percentage of participants rely on this method for comprehending synecdochical phrases indicates the challenges which EFL students face in comprehending this figurative device. About the statement (4), the standard deviation (SD) is 1.38 and the mean score is 2.87, indicating a variation in the responses around the mean. This demonstrates a range of experiences among the students in comprehending synecdoche phrases in texts. Furthermore, 44.93% of participants did agree or strongly agree, suggesting that a significant number of students often encounter challenges when trying to understand synecdoche in texts. The aforementioned situation further highlights the difficulty many EFL students face in understanding texts containing synecdoche. Mean scores for the four items mentioned above were indeed below 3". This demonstrates that participants generally find it challenging to understand synecdoche in texts.

With reference to the statement (5), a significant proportion of the participants (50.72%) find it difficult to translate synecdoche from English into their native language, as a mean score of 3.07 and a standard deviation of 1.19 actively indicate this. Respecting the statement (6) it was found that identifying synecdoche in written discourse is a challenge for 49.27% of the students, with a mean score of 3.13 and an SD of 1.24. The participants' responses to the statement (7) "I tend to understand the synecdoche content in the texts according to its literal interpretation" were mixed, with 34.79% agreeing or strongly agreeing, reflected by a mean score of 3.01 and an SD of 1.18. These findings reveal that EFL students encounter challenges in understanding synecdoche in written texts. What is more, a substantial proportion of students (57.97%) confess to internally translating synecdoche contents into their mother tongue, disregarding their cultural contexts. This is evidenced by a mean score of 3.20 and a standard deviation of 1.27 for the statement (8): "I often mentally convert synecdoche contents I read into my native language without understanding their cultural contexts". Respecting the statement (9), more than half of the students (53.62%) often resort to external resources such as dictionaries or the internet for understanding synecdoche in texts, as suggested by a mean score of 3.13 and an SD of 1.24 for the statement "I often need to use external resources to understand synecdoche in texts". Based on the statement (10), when reading, most students (65.22%) tend to take synecdoche phrases literally, as signified by a mean score of 3.26 and an SD of 1.21 for the statement "When reading, I tend to take synecdoche phrases literally".

These findings underscore the complexities involved in understanding and translating synecdoche among EFL students, highlighting the need for more effective instructional strategies.

C. Teachers' Questionnaire

The study's findings on teachers' perspectives regarding the factors that affect EFL students' understanding of synecdochical patterns in authentic texts are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE FACTORS THAT AFFECT EFL STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF SYNECDOCHICAL PATTERNS IN AUTHENTIC TEXTS

| Item no. | Statements | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Mean (X) | Standard Deviation |
|----------|--|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|----------|--------------------|
| 1 | To understand synecdoche contexts in content, it is important for students to have profound knowledge of this figurative device. | 5 (33.33%) | 7 (46.67%) | 2 (13.33%) | 1 (6.67%) | 0 (0%) | 4.13 | 0.83 |
| 2 | The intricacy of the sentence structure is an important factor in students' synecdoche comprehension. | 7 (46.67%) | 4 (26.67%) | 1 (6.67%) | 2 (13.33%) | 1 (6.67%) | 4.07 | 0.96 |
| 3 | The students' familiarity with the author's style is a key factor influencing how well they comprehend synecdoche. | 4 (26.67%) | 6 (40%) | 1 (6.67%) | 3 (20%) | 1 (6.67%) | 3.6 | 1.083 |
| 4 | The students' ability to infer meaning has significant influence on their comprehension of synecdoche. | 5 (33.33%) | 7 (46.67%) | 2 (13.33%) | 1 (6.67%) | 0 (0%) | 4.13 | 0.83 |
| 5 | The motivation to learn English has a major influence on the students' ability to understand synecdoche. | 8 (53.33%) | 4 (26.67%) | 0 (0%) | 2 (13.33%) | 1 (6.67%) | 4.27 | 0.92 |
| 6 | The students' English grammar proficiency is an important factor in their comprehension of synecdoche contexts. | 3 (20%) | 9 (60%) | 1 (6.67%) | 1 (6.67%) | 1 (6.67%) | 3.93 | 0.70 |
| 7 | The students' ability to analyze text significantly influences their comprehension of synecdoche. | 3 (20%) | 8 (53.33%) | 2 (13.33%) | 2 (13.33%) | 0 (0%) | 3.93 | 0.70 |
| 8 | The students' cognitive development significantly influences their comprehension of synecdoche. | 10 (66.67%) | 3 (20%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (6.67%) | 1 (6.67%) | 4.47 | 0.83 |
| 9 | The students' cultural background significantly influences their comprehension of synecdoche. | 9 (60%) | 4 (26.67%) | 2 (13.33%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 4.47 | 0.64 |
| 10 | Reading habits play a big role in students' synecdoche comprehension. | 4 (26.67%) | 6 (40%) | 1 (6.67%) | 2 (13.33%) | 2 (13.33%) | 3.73 | 1.01 |

Based on the statement 1, it is crucial to have a deep understanding of synecdoche to understand its contexts, 80% of participants expressed either agreement or strong agreement, with an overall mean score of 4.13 indicating mostly positive responses. Moreover, as stated by statement 2, the intricacy of sentence structure is also seen as a major factor on synecdoche comprehension, with 73.33% indicating agreement or strong agreement, although this slightly greater standard deviation of 0.96 suggests a wider spread of responses. With a mention of statement 3, students' familiarity with the author's style arouses a range of responses, evidenced by the standard deviation of 1.083, indicating that only 66.67% of participants agreed or strongly agreed. As per statement 4, the ability to infer meaning received positive responses, with 80% of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing, and a mean score of 4.13. About statement 5, the motivation to learn English received the highest level of agreement, with 80% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing, and a mean score of 4.27, indicating a strong influence on students' ability to understand synecdoche.

As for statement 6, most participants (80%) agree or strongly agree that English grammar proficiency is an important factor in their comprehension of synecdoche, with a mean score of 3.93 and a standard deviation of 0.70 indicating a relatively narrow spread of responses. With a mean score of 3.93 and an equivalent mean deviation of 0.70, most participants (73.33%) agree or strongly agree that students' ability to analyze text has a considerable impact on their comprehension of synecdoche according to statement 7. Referencing to statement 8, cognitive development received the highest level of strong agreement, with 66.67% of students strongly agreeing and a mean score of 4.47, indicating moderate variation in responses. In terms of statement 9, most students (86.67%) agree or strongly agree that their cultural background significantly influences their comprehension of synecdoche, with a mean score of 4.47 and a relatively narrow standard deviation of 0.64. Finally, concerning statement 10, reading habits received mixed responses, with 66.67% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing, a mean score of 3.73, and a standard deviation of 1.01 indicating a wide spread of responses. These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of synecdoche comprehension among EFL students, with factors ranging from linguistic proficiency to cognitive development and cultural background playing significant roles.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Synecdoche Comprehension Test results show a significant variation in comprehension levels among the 69 participants. Only 31 students passed the test, with six scoring 13 out of 15. However, 38 students did not pass, and 9 scored lower than 4. The average score was approximately 3 out of 15, indicating many students struggle to comprehend synecdochical expressions in authentic texts. The high standard deviation of 7.70 suggests a wide range of comprehension levels. The standard error of the mean was 0.34, showing the precision of the mean score estimate. Overall, while some students have a solid understanding of synecdoche, many find it challenging. The students'

questionnaire further supports this, with 57.97% of participants experiencing difficulties in understanding synecdoche, and 50.72% finding it difficult to translate synecdoche from English into their native language (Arabic). As for the teachers' questionnaire, the results point to some important variables that affect how well EFL students comprehend synecdoche. A deep understanding of synecdoche, intricacy of sentence structure, familiarity with the author's style, ability to infer meaning, motivation to learn English, English grammar proficiency, ability to analyze text, cognitive development, cultural background, and reading habits were all identified as significant factors. Specifically, 80% of participants agreed that a deep understanding of synecdoche, the ability to infer meaning, and English grammar proficiency are crucial. The motivation to learn English received the highest level of agreement (80%) and the highest mean score (4.27), indicating its strong influence on students' ability to understand synecdoche. Cognitive development also received a high level of strong agreement (66.67%) with the highest mean score (4.47). However, responses varied more widely for other factors. For instance, while 73.33% agreed that the ability to analyze text is important, the standard deviation of 0.70 indicates a relatively narrow spread of responses. Reading habits received mixed responses, with a mean score of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 1.01 indicating a wide spread of responses. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of synecdoche comprehension among EFL students, with factors ranging from linguistic proficiency to cognitive development and cultural background playing significant roles. This highlights the need for a comprehensive approach in teaching and learning strategies to improve EFL students' understanding of synecdoche.

Per the findings, some recommendations have been made that: teachers provide more explicit instruction on synecdoche, including its use in different contexts. This could include exercises that allow students to practice identifying and interpreting synecdoche in texts. Teachers could also provide resources or strategies to help students translate synecdoche into their native language and encourage students to consider the cultural contexts of synecdoche when translating. Furthermore, teachers could guide students on how to effectively use external resources such as dictionaries or the internet for understanding synecdoche in authentic texts. They could also provide instruction on how to interpret synecdoche patterns beyond their literal meanings. Subsequently, more investigation may be required to determine the impact that these strategies have on students' synecdoche understanding and their overall language proficiency. This could provide valuable insights for improving English language teaching practices. These recommendations are consistent across all three sets of findings, highlighting the importance of explicit instruction, practice, translation support, use of external resources, and further research in enhancing students' understanding of synecdoche.

APPENDIX

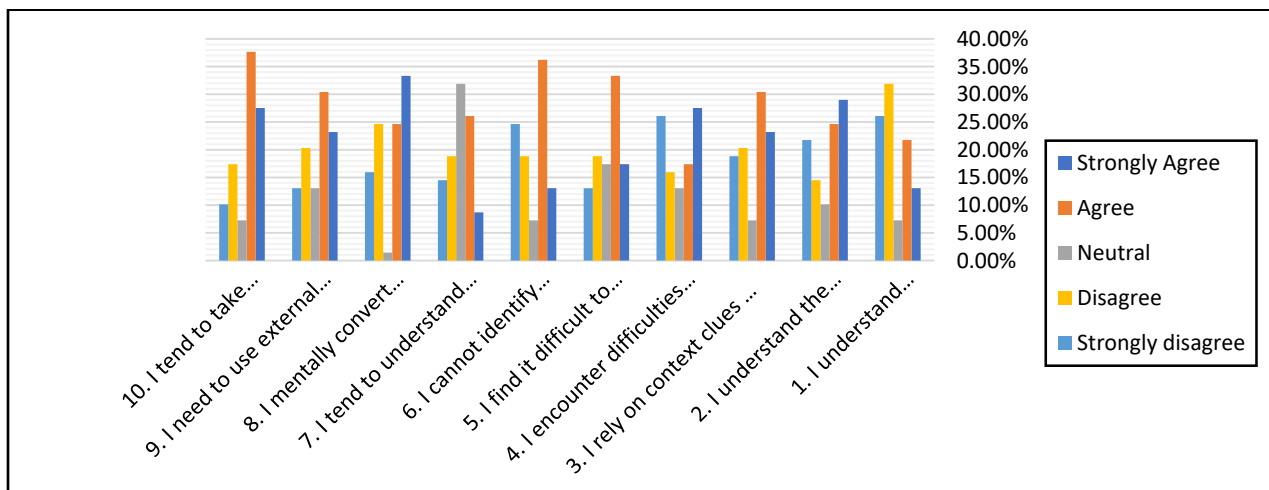


Figure 1. EFL Students' Opinions on the Synecdoche Comprehension Challenges in Written Discourses

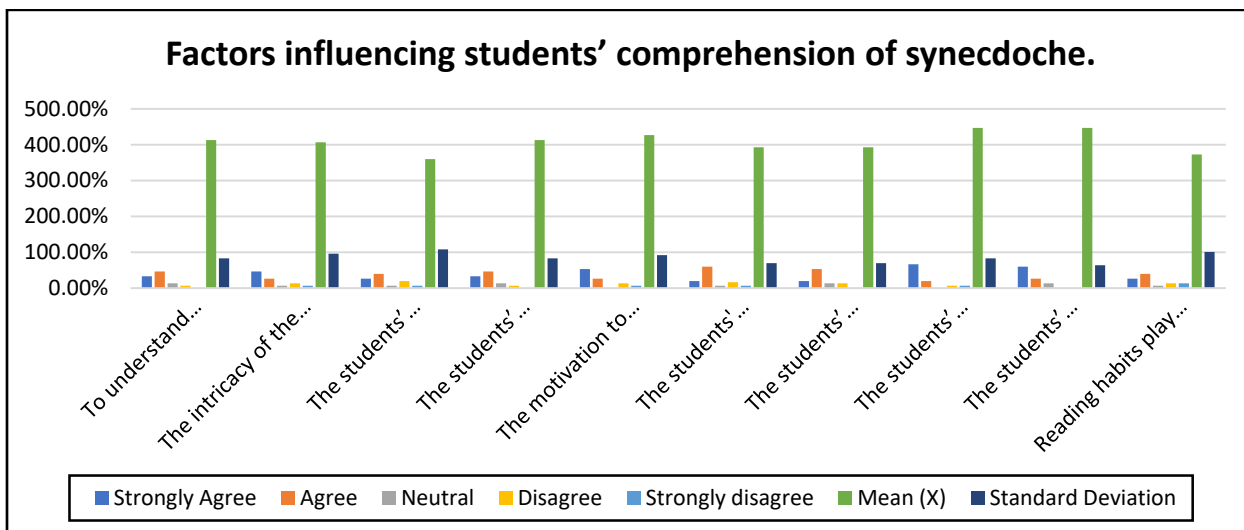


Figure 2. Teachers' Perspectives Regarding the Factors That Affect EFL Students' Understanding of Synecdochical Patterns in Authentic Texts

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