

CAPITAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY, ISLAMABAD



Conceptual Metaphors in English Language Teaching: Challenges and Strategies at the Secondary Level

by

Momina Gul Abbasi

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the
degree of Master of Science

in the

Faculty of Management & Social Sciences

Department of English

2026

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Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. M.S. Zaigham for his invaluable guidance, continuous encouragement, and constructive feedback throughout this research. His expertise and support have been instrumental in the successful completion of this thesis.

I am grateful to my HOD, Dr. Muhammad Umar Farooq and staff of the Department of English, CUST for providing the resources and academic environment necessary for this study.

I am also thankful to my family, colleagues and friends for their assistance, insightful discussions, and encouragement during the course of this research.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this work to my beloved brothers, Dr. Fahad Munir Abbasi and Dr. Farhan Munir Abbasi for their unconditional love, and unwavering support throughout my academic journey. Their belief in me has been a constant source of motivation.

I sincerely thank everyone who contributed, directly or indirectly, to the completion of this thesis.

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Abstract

This study explores the significant role of metaphor teaching in Pakistani English language classrooms and examines teachers' and students' perceptions regarding the challenges, practices and prospects related to metaphor teaching and learning. The study is based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which claims that metaphor comprehension depends on conceptual mapping and experiential comprehension. There are researches which talk about conceptual metaphors but they lack in studying metaphors on secondary level. This study particularly explores the challenges and strategies in teaching and learning metaphors. For the purpose of data collection, 7 teachers and 30 students of a private school were selected to explore their perspective regarding metaphors instruction. A mixed-method research design was employed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from secondary class-room teachers and the students studying in those classrooms. Teachers' Interviews were taken using semi-structured questions and then questionnaires were given to the students and teachers as well to match the statements with interviews of the teachers.

The quantitative findings revealed that teachers held highly positive perceptions regarding metaphor instruction, with an overall mean score of 4.23 (84.56%), while students also demonstrated positive attitudes with an overall mean score of 3.84 (76.72%). However, the study also identifies several challenges affecting metaphor comprehension in ESL classrooms. Both teachers and students claimed that the learners often interpret metaphors literally rather than conceptually. Finite English vocabulary, low proficiency in English language, and lack of conceptual understanding were found to negatively influence students' ability to interpret figurative meanings.

The qualitative findings further reveal that culturally familiar examples, interactive teaching methods, and contextualized instruction significantly improve students' engagement and comprehension. It is reported that critical thinking, classroom discussions, and student-generated examples encourage conceptual learning. Visual learning strategies, and real-life examples are also effective.

Overall, the study concludes that metaphor instruction in Pakistani ESL classrooms requires culturally responsive teaching practices, interactive strategies, and reduced reliance on rote memorization. The findings strongly support Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) by demonstrating that learners understand metaphors more effectively when metaphorical concepts are connected with familiar cultural and experiential knowledge.

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Abbreviations

CMT	Conceptual Metaphor Theory
ESL	English As Second Language

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) is a body of research that has been developed by Lakoff and Johnson, (1980). The authors present the idea that we structure our understanding of metaphorical concepts via mappings made between things which we have a direct experience thereof. They argue that metaphors are not just ornamental but form a structure via which we can understand one idea by using another. They furthermore suggest that metaphors act as cognitive tools which produce our comprehension of how to learn through the use of inference. The authors assert that the use of metaphorical understanding helps us reinforce how we learn through our past experiences. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggested that metaphors are pervasive not only in genres that strive to create artistic effects, such as literature, but also in the most neutral, non-deliberate forms of language (Kövecses, 2017). Conceptual Metaphor Theory theorizes that we construct our understanding of conceptual metaphors via our experience of both physical and social environments. Metaphors have historically been viewed as interpretive literary devices, but they actually are integral to our cognitive development they help us shape how we categorize, attribute meaning to, and behave in the world.

As such, we regularly employ metaphorical frameworks to understand more complex/abstract ideas via the application of those ideas onto more tangible, familiar experiences. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another ([Hoang, 2014](#)). This phenomenon is central to the understanding of learning and the development of meaning, especially within the educational context where learners experience difficulty in understanding new and unfamiliar concepts. Within the context of second language instruction, particularly in relation to English language instruction in a Pakistani classroom, metaphors are employed as tools for comprehension, and as a means to create understanding across cultural and linguistic systems.

Turunen (2003) stated that teaching metaphor is an important phenomenon that can be used to determine teachers' perceptions of their job and workplace ([Liaquat and Naz, 2016](#)). Teachers' perception is very important in metaphors learning metaphors as students seek knowledge from the teachers. One can always relate them to daily life whether it is about to give examples or if it is about learning different concepts. Metaphors play a crucial role in students' as well as in teachers' life. There are different ways to learn metaphors and there are some strategies to understand them. While teaching metaphors in English where English is a second language, it is worth noticing that sometimes the students as well as teachers get stuck in conveying the concepts. Conceptual Metaphor Theory is the answer to many unanswered questions as it provides a platform to clear the concepts regarding metaphors. Metaphors are not only a stylistic element of language, but they are fundamental cognitive processes through which humans conceptualize abstract ideas.

Martin J. claimed that metaphors and their close relative similes and analogies, have been used as teaching devices since the earliest writings of the civilized man ([Kövecses, 2010](#)). It means that metaphors are not the new concept, it is studied since the beginning of the English language. Metaphors play crucial role in reading, writing and writing, no matter if it is poetry or a novel, metaphors are always used in every piece of writing. Metaphors shape our perception, thought,

and communication. Also, in English classrooms, metaphors are integral to learn vocabulary, comprehension, and critical thinking. As Lakoff claims, metaphors enhance our learning capability, increase knowledge and provide additional ways to learn vocabulary other than which is written in dictionaries.

Howard and his colleagues found that the average English speaker creates around 3000 new metaphors per week (Boussaid, 2024). This demonstrates the significance of conceptual metaphor in communication and suggests that relying solely on literal thinking limits our ability to effectively communicate (Danesi, 1995). Therefore, it is important for students not only to create grammatically correct sentences but also to be able to produce sentences that are rich in metaphorical language. To achieve this, it is recommended not to disregard incorporating conceptual metaphor into language syllabi in order to develop students' awareness of metaphors. Li (2009) suggests that direct intervention is absolutely necessary to enhance the metaphorical competence of language learners, allowing them to express themselves in a conceptual manner (Boussaid, 2024).

Boussaid researched about the difficulties most faced by teachers when using metaphor-based teaching include the unsuitability of the topic, the difficulty of the topic, the unavailability of materials, time constraints, extra workload, and metaphor-based teaching not fitting students' expectations and needs (Boussaid, 2024). In Pakistan, secondary school students encounter metaphors in literature, poetry, and daily English use. However, the teachers often struggle to apply CMT principles effectively, due to factors such as limited training, cultural mismatches, and exam-oriented curricula. This research seeks to explore these challenges systematically and propose practical pedagogical strategies.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Conceptual Metaphor Theory work as a pathway to teach metaphors for the students learning English as a second language. Yet, there are some challenges which are encountered on secondary level in Pakistan to learn metaphors and the attempt

to connect metaphorical expressions with the underlying conceptual structures remain unsolved. The students face issues which are the major challenges in learning metaphors and that is the reason they show lack of interest in learning metaphors. It is the main concern of students in secondary classroom of Pakistan that their issues need to overcome through practical strategies and good communication skills of the teachers.

Likewise, the teachers face significant issues in the application of Conceptual Metaphors in secondary classrooms. In Pakistan, where English is always taught as second language, there are some areas like *Conceptual Metaphors*, which are underexplored by the researchers. Although there are significant researches done before but there are certain missing aspects for the secondary classroom as the students belong to different backgrounds with having limited command on English language. So, this needs a significant research on the topic. The following research is going to examine the difficulties in teaching Metaphors and learning them, and it will provide possible strategies to overcome them and to make metaphors more effective in learning process.

1.3 Research Objectives

- i. To examine secondary school English language teachers' perceptions regarding the teaching of conceptual metaphors, with particular focus on the challenges they encounter in metaphor instruction.
- ii. To explore secondary school students' responses to metaphor learning.
- iii. To suggest practical strategies for addressing the challenges associated with metaphor teaching and learning.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. How do secondary school English language teachers perceive and teach conceptual metaphors, and what barriers do they encounter in the process of metaphor instruction?

- ii. How do secondary school students respond to metaphor learning?
- iii. What pedagogical strategies can be employed to overcome the challenges of metaphor teaching and make metaphor learning more effective and meaningful?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is useful to many stakeholders including educators, curriculum developers, educational policymakers, and future scholars. Specifically, teachers will have access to several types of CMT-based pedagogical intervention that assist in improving their teaching capabilities.

In addition, it will identify for curriculum developers the necessity of incorporating culturally embedded metaphors as well as developing instructional materials based on local culture. The research findings will also create new opportunities for researchers to conduct empirical research related to metaphor comprehension and cognitive linguistics within the ESL environment.

Ultimately, by linking the gap that separates metaphor theory from practical application in the classroom, the dissertation seeks to improve the teaching-learning process and enhance our understanding of metaphor instruction in Pakistan's high schools.

This study is expected to play a significant and transformative role in both the learning and teaching of metaphors. It aims to serve as a guiding framework for educators across Pakistan, providing them with effective strategies for teaching metaphors within the context of English as a Second Language (ESL).

Since English in Pakistan is learned within a multilingual and multicultural environment, the teaching of metaphors presents unique challenges due to variations in cultural perceptions, conceptual mappings, and contextual meanings. Consequently, understanding and teaching metaphors require not only linguistic competence but also cultural sensitivity and cognitive awareness.

This research seeks to bridge the gap between linguistic theory and classroom practice, enabling teachers to present metaphorical concepts in ways that are cognitively accessible and culturally relatable to learners. Moreover, it will act as a pedagogical pathway for future educators, equipping them with innovative, simplified, and learner-centered approaches to teaching metaphors effectively. Ultimately, this study aspires to contribute to the enhancement of metaphor pedagogy in Pakistan, fostering deeper comprehension, critical thinking, and conceptual development among English language learners. This research will play a significant role in teaching and learning metaphors by the application of the give strategies in the field of metaphors.

The *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* serves as an effective conceptual filter for designing metaphor education in order to facilitate greater understanding of content. As elaborated by Lakoff and Johnson, our metaphors are derived from our physical interaction with the world and the resulting perceptual properties associated with them, such as how we see space, move through space, the force and direction of movement, and experience physical interaction with the surrounding environment. The identification of source domains (i.e., concrete experiential domains) and target domains (i.e., abstract conceptual domains) allow for instructional techniques that can assist instructors in identifying the underlying conceptual structures of metaphorical expressions, thereby supporting students' understanding of figurative language, as well as their analytical and inferential reasoning skills and ability to interpret text. For English learners within the context of Pakistan, the use of CMT-based instruction provides a strong method by which to identify cultural variances through explicit delineation of implicit conceptual mappings.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study emphasizes on the teaching and learning of metaphors in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms at the high school level in Pakistan. It specifically focuses on the challenges faced by teachers and learners in understanding and teaching metaphors and explores the instructional strategies employed to overcome

these challenges. The study is grounded in *Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)* as its theoretical framework and investigates how CMT-based instructional practices can enhance learners' understanding of metaphorical concepts.

The research is limited to English language teachers and high school students and investigates their perceptions, beliefs, and classroom practices related to metaphor instruction method. It investigates factors affecting learners' metaphor comprehension, including literal interpretation, limited vocabulary, conceptual knowledge, and classroom interaction, as well as teachers' challenges such as time constraints, large class sizes, syllabus demands, and limited teaching resources.

Furthermore, the study explores the perceived impact of *CMT* based metaphor instruction on learners' language proficiency, critical thinking, writing ability, communication skills, and the transfer of learning to academic and real-life contexts. It also identifies pedagogical strategies for teachers, curriculum developers, policy-makers, and future researchers by highlighting the importance of locally relevant metaphor instruction in Pakistan's multilingual and multicultural educational context.

However, the study is confined to the *ESL* context of secondary school in Pakistan and does not investigate metaphor instruction at primary, higher secondary, or university levels, nor does it compare findings with other countries or educational systems. The research emphasizes instructional practices and prospects rather than experimentally measuring learners' achievement or long-term language development. Consequently, the findings reveal insights that are most applicable to similar ESL secondary classroom settings within Pakistan.

1.7 Delimitations

This study will be delimited to only in secondary classroom for the collection of data. For the purpose of it, only private *English* medium school students will be selected to conduct the research where both teachers and students will be selected for questionnaires and only teachers for interviews to analyze the results.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The current chapter is focused on reviewing the literature related to current study focusing on the theoretical framework of the research. In other words, Conceptual Metaphor Theory and related aspects are discussed in order to solve the research problem. First of all, the chapter starts with presenting the theoretical framework of Lakoff and Johnson for analysis in the current study. After that, the research gap is revealed, showing further research needs to do in the existing literature and highlighting the areas that have a limited attention in previous studies. Finally, the chapter reviews the relevant studies in order to focus on the *Conceptual Metaphor Theory*.

2.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual Metaphor Theory was developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson and was introduced in their influential book. *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) [Lakoff and Johnson \(2003\)](#). CMT proposes that metaphor is not a merely feature of language but a fundamental mechanism of thought. A metaphor consists of two domains. One is source domain and the other is target domain. The source domain is a concrete one and the target domain represents the abstract concept that is understood through source domain. For example, *Argument is War*, here the

abstract concept (target domain) is argument which is understood through war (source domain). *CMT* also argues that metaphors shape our thoughts and perceptions, they are the foundational material for the concept building. Conceptual metaphors arise from everyday bodily and cultural experiences.

2.2 Metaphors as Abstract Reasoning

[Lakoff and Johnson \(2003\)](#), proposed that metaphors are not merely linguistic ornaments but fundamental to human cognition and communication. They argued that metaphors shape thought by mapping experiences from a concrete source domain onto an abstract target domain. Building on this perspective, [Gibbs \(1994\)](#) highlighted the embodied nature of metaphors, linking them to physical interaction and sensory perception ([Gibbs, 2008](#)). This embodiment explains how expressions like “grasping a concept” render abstract ideas more tangible, thereby influencing both cognition and pedagogy. Likewise, [Sfard \(1998\)](#) demonstrated “how metaphors structure abstract reasoning in educational contexts, particularly in mathematics, where metaphors such as “learning is a journey” guide cognitive strategies for problem-solving” ([Sfard, 1998](#)).

[Lakoff and Johnson \(2003, p. 15\)](#), claim “the metaphors are not just concepts to learn but they are the frameworks that enhance our understanding of perceiving knowledge”. Similarly, [Kovecses \(2007\)](#) claim that metaphor vary from culture to culture while maintaining universal cognitive patterns. For instance, while English often associates anger with heat (“He exploded with rage”), other languages might conceptualize anger differently based on cultural schemas ([Kövecses, 2007](#)). Such variations illustrate the interplay between embodied experience and socio-cultural factors in shaping metaphorical cognition. As Pakistan has different culture than west then its metaphors also carry different understanding containing same pattern as west.

Metaphor contains different mental processes such as perception, imagination and understanding and Conceptual Metaphor Theory fits interestingly and helps the

learners make the connection between new concepts with previous experiences. Piaget's (1952) schema theory supports this point that one assimilates the new concepts with the past learned experiences ([Piaget, 1952](#)).

In educational settings, the use of metaphors has demonstrated significant potential in transforming teaching practices. Research by Sfard (1998) highlights that how metaphors like "learning as acquisition" or "learning as participation" influence educational discourse and pedagogy. When teachers view learning as "acquisition," their methods often emphasize knowledge transfer. Conversely, "learning as participation" fosters collaborative and experiential approaches. Metaphors are particularly effective in STEM education, where abstract theories are abundant. For instance, educators often use the metaphor "electricity is water flowing through pipes" to simplify the concept of electrical circuits. Similarly, in literature, the metaphor "characters are mirrors of society" aids students in understanding the societal underpinnings of fictional narratives. Such applications illustrate how metaphors enhance comprehension by grounding abstract concepts in tangible analogies.

2.2.1 Vygotsky and Metaphors

Several linguists and researchers have further explored the educational implications of metaphors. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory complements CMT by emphasizing the role of language and cultural tools in cognitive development ([McLeod, nd](#)). According to Vygotsky, "metaphors act as mediational tools that scaffold learning, particularly when students encounter complex, unfamiliar content".

2.2.2 Views of Gentner and Gentner

Additionally, [Gentner \(1983, p. 10\)](#) demonstrated " how analogical reasoning, closely related to metaphorical thinking ,improves students' understanding of scientific principles" ([Gentner, 1983](#)). Their studies revealed that metaphors not only

simplify complex ideas but also encourage learners to draw connections between seemingly unrelated domains, fostering creativity and critical thinking.

2.3 Metaphor as a Stylistic Device

The concept of metaphor has always been viewed as a rhetorical or stylistic device used primarily in literary discourse. However, with the advent of cognitive linguistics, metaphor has been reconceptualized as a fundamental mechanism of human thought and understanding. This shift has been largely influenced by the development of *Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)*, which asserts that metaphor is not confined to language alone but is deeply embedded in cognition, shaping how individuals perceive, conceptualize, and learn abstract concepts. Learning conceptual metaphors, therefore, is not merely a linguistic exercise but a cognitive process that enables learners to structure knowledge, organize experience, and construct meaning. Conceptual Metaphor Theory was first systematically articulated by Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), where they challenged the classical view of metaphor as a decorative feature of language. Instead, they argued that metaphor is a fundamental cognitive mechanism through which abstract concepts are understood in terms of more concrete, embodied experiences. For example, conceptual metaphors such as *TIME IS MONEY* reveal how everyday reasoning is structured metaphorically.

2.4 Domains of Metaphors

According to CMT, conceptual metaphors consist of two domains: the source domain, which is concrete and familiar, and the target domain, which is abstract and less directly experienced. Meaning arises through systematic mappings between these domains. These mappings are not random but grounded in recurring patterns of human experience, making metaphors a powerful tool for learning and conceptualization.

2.5 Metaphor as a Dynamic Process

(Kövecses, 2002) elaborates on this framework by emphasizing that conceptual metaphors are influenced by cultural, social, and contextual factors. He argues that while some metaphors may be near-universal due to shared bodily experiences, others exhibit cultural variation.

This insight is particularly relevant for language learning contexts, where learners' cultural backgrounds influence their metaphor comprehension and production. He also introduces the idea of metaphor as a dynamic process, shaped by discourse context and communicative intent, thereby addressing earlier critiques that CMT was overly static.

A central assumption of CMT is that human cognition is embodied, meaning that abstract thought is grounded in bodily and sensory experience. Conceptual metaphors rely on image schemas recurring cognitive patterns such as CONTAINER, PATH, BALANCE, and FORCE that emerge from physical interaction with the world. These schemas serve as cognitive templates for structuring abstract reasoning.

Research reviewed in the Cambridge CMT excerpt emphasizes that learning conceptual metaphors involves activating these embodied schemas, enabling learners to relate new abstract information to prior experiential knowledge. This process is particularly important in educational settings, where abstract academic concepts often pose difficulties for learners. By mapping such concepts onto familiar experiences, conceptual metaphors facilitate comprehension and retention.

Metaphorical entailments play a significant role in cognitive development. Once a metaphorical mapping is established, it generates a network of inferences that extend understanding beyond literal meaning. For instance, the metaphor LEARNING IS A JOURNEY entails progress, obstacles, guidance, and destinations, all of which influence how learners conceptualize the learning process itself. Such metaphors shape not only understanding but also learners' attitudes and motivation.

2.5.1 Argument of Hu

A substantial body of research highlights the pedagogical value of conceptual metaphors in language learning, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Hu (2024) argues, “metaphor-based instruction enhances learners’ conceptual awareness, enabling them to understand polysemous words, idiomatic expressions, and abstract vocabulary more effectively than traditional teaching methods” (Hu, 2024, p. 10). Rather than memorizing isolated word meanings, learners exposed to conceptual metaphors develop a deeper understanding of semantic networks. For example, recognizing the metaphor EMOTION IS HEAT allows learners to comprehend expressions such as boiling with anger or warm feelings as part of a coherent conceptual system. This approach promotes meaningful learning and long-term retention. Empirical findings reviewed by Hu indicate that learners who receive explicit instruction in conceptual metaphors demonstrate improved vocabulary acquisition, better inferencing skills, and enhanced reading comprehension. These outcomes suggest that learning conceptual metaphors supports higher-order cognitive processes such as analysis, synthesis, and abstraction.

Additionally, metaphor-based learning has been shown to foster learner autonomy. When students understand how metaphorical meaning is structured, they become better equipped to interpret unfamiliar expressions independently. This is particularly beneficial in academic contexts, where metaphorical language is pervasive. Additionally, Culture plays a crucial role in shaping conceptual metaphors, and this has significant implications for learning. While some metaphors are grounded in universal bodily experience, others are culturally specific, reflecting shared beliefs, values, and social practices. .

2.5.2 Conceptual Metaphors and Visual Aids

Senqi Yang (2024) argues that metaphors are not just linguistic phenomenon but an important tool for human cognition. Multimodal metaphors, which combine images and texts provide a more effective way to express and understand

metaphors (Du et al., 2024). From a learning perspective, engaging with conceptual metaphors in literary texts and images, enhance critical thinking and interpretive skills. Learners develop the ability to identify underlying conceptual structures, evaluate ideological implications, and construct nuanced interpretations. Such skills are essential at the postgraduate level, where analytical depth is emphasized.

Recent research extends CMT into multimodal and computational domains, offering new perspectives on how conceptual metaphors are learned and processed. Zhang et al. propose a multimodal framework for metaphor understanding that integrates textual and visual information, demonstrating that metaphor comprehension often involves cross-modal mapping. Their study suggests that metaphor learning follows a stepwise cognitive process involving identification of source and target domains, mapping of shared attributes, and inferential reasoning. This aligns with educational theories that view learning as an active, constructive process.

The emergence of computational models inspired by CMT also highlights the relevance of metaphor learning beyond linguistics. These models attempt to simulate human metaphor comprehension, reinforcing the idea that conceptual metaphors are central to cognition and reasoning. Such interdisciplinary approaches open new avenues for educational research, particularly in digital and technology-enhanced learning environments.

2.5.3 Cognitive Theory and Conceptual Metaphors in Learning

In One Article which has talked about Conceptual Metaphors a cognitive theory, Sherazi, 2025, p. 8) says, “Cognitive theory emphasizes the role of internal mental processes, such as perception, memory, and reasoning, in understanding the world” (Sherazi et al., 2025a). The writer also talks about the application of conceptual metaphors in educational settings. He claims, “in educational settings, the use of conceptual metaphors has demonstrated significant potential in transforming

teaching practices”. The research also highlights Sfard’s (1998) concept that how metaphors like ”learning as acquisition” or ”learning as participation” influence educational discourse and pedagogy. When teachers view learning as ”acquisition,” their methods often emphasize knowledge transfer. Conversely, ”learning as participation” fosters collaborative and experiential approaches. Metaphors are particularly effective in STEM education, where abstract theories are abundant. For instance, educators often use the metaphor ”electricity is water flowing through pipes” to simplify the concept of electrical circuits. Similarly, in literature, the metaphor ”characters are mirrors of society” aids students in understanding the societal underpinnings of fictional narratives. Such applications illustrate how metaphors enhance comprehension by grounding abstract concepts in tangible analogies. The writer also talks about cultural metaphors and their way of understanding. The collected data in the article showed 72% students claimed that culturally relevant metaphors are better to understand.

2.5.4 Difficulties in Metaphor Comprehension Faced by International Students whose First Language is not English

Jeannette Littlemore (2011) investigated the difficulties international students whose first language is not English experience in understanding metaphors while attending undergraduate lectures at a British university ([Littlemore et al., 2011](#)). In the study, participants were asked to identify words or multiword expressions that they found difficult in extracts taken from four academic lectures and to interpret the metaphors present in those extracts. The researcher examined the proportion of metaphorical items among the expressions reported as difficult, as well as the proportion of items that consisted only of words already familiar to the students. In addition, a measure was developed to determine the extent to which students were aware of their own difficulties in interpreting metaphors, and a categorization scheme was designed to identify common types of metaphor misinterpretations.

Through the findings, it is revealed that among the items perceived as difficult despite being composed of familiar vocabulary, approximately 40 percent involved metaphorical meaning. Moreover, when students misinterpreted metaphors, they were aware of their difficulty in only about 4 percent of the cases, indicating that many misunderstandings occurred without conscious recognition. Since university lecturers frequently use metaphors to explain complex concepts and to evaluate ideas, these comprehension problems may prevent international students from fully benefiting from academic instruction.

2.5.5 Instructional Intervention and Teaching Metaphorical Competence

Several researchers have examined the development of metaphorical competence through instructional intervention, including a meta-analysis conducted on both Chinese and international students. The findings indicate that instructional approaches combining sustained exposure to metaphorical concepts with regular opportunities for practice can significantly enhance second language learners' metaphorical competence. The meta-analysis demonstrated that explicit teaching methods were effective in raising learners' metaphorical awareness and improving overall competence in a second language. Subgroup analyses further explored moderating factors and revealed that direct instructional interventions contributed positively to different aspects of metaphorical competence, including metaphorical comprehension, production, and general metaphorical competence. However, the least improvement was observed in learners' metaphorical interpretation skills, suggesting that this area may require more focused instructional strategies.

The analysis also compared different methods used to measure metaphorical production and found that the metaphor density task produced a stronger impact than sentence-level tasks. Although experimental design did not show statistically significant differences in outcomes, both types of experimental designs demonstrated relatively large overall effects. Regional differences were identified as a significant moderating factor, with instructional interventions showing greater impact

in international contexts than in China. The literature also highlighted that while learners may acquire the ability to use metaphors, the emo-sensory dimension of language was not considered in this study, indicating a need for further research in this area.

2.5.6 Pedagogical Potential of Online Dictionaries in Metaphor and Idiom Language Instruction

Mari Carmen (2022) in the research article has explored the potential of digital tools to support metaphor teaching and learning ([Kou and Zhang, 2022](#)). Online dictionaries, in particular, offer multimodal features such as images, audio, usage examples, and semantic networks that can help learners understand figurative meanings more effectively. These tools also promote the development of dictionary skills, enabling learners to independently explore metaphorical language and idiomatic expressions. By integrating metaphor-related tasks with dictionary use, teachers can enhance both language proficiency and learner autonomy.

Furthermore, multimodal representations available in online dictionaries help learners visualize metaphorical meanings and make connections between literal and figurative interpretations. Such resources reduce the cognitive load associated with interpreting complex figurative language and facilitate deeper comprehension. The use of technology also supports innovative pedagogical approaches that move beyond traditional memorization. Digital tools allow learners to engage interactively with language, encouraging exploration, analysis, and application of metaphorical expressions in authentic contexts.

The literature suggests that effective metaphor instruction requires a combination of theoretical understanding, pedagogical strategies, and appropriate teaching resources. Teachers need training in cognitive linguistic approaches and access to materials that support metaphor-based teaching. Incorporating digital tools such as online dictionaries and multimedia resources can enhance metaphor instruction by providing visual and contextual support. These tools can also foster learner autonomy and promote active engagement with figurative language. Additionally,

teaching should consider cultural differences in metaphor usage and encourage learners to compare metaphorical expressions across languages. Such practices help learners develop conceptual awareness and improve their ability to interpret and produce metaphorical language.

To conclude, the article demonstrates that metaphor plays a central role in language learning and communication. Conceptual Metaphor Theory provides a strong theoretical framework for understanding the cognitive and linguistic functions of metaphor. Empirical studies highlight the effectiveness of metaphor-based instruction in improving vocabulary acquisition, conceptual fluency, and communicative competence. However, challenges such as limited teacher training, lack of materials, and cultural differences continue to hinder the widespread adoption of metaphor-based teaching. The integration of digital tools, particularly online dictionaries with multimodal features, offers promising opportunities to address these challenges and enhance metaphor instruction in English language classrooms. This area is overlooked in the application of CMT.

2.5.7 An Extended View of Conceptual Metaphor Theory

[Kövecses \(2020\)](#) says that a major insight of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) is that it added a strong, empirically testable cognitive dimension to the study of metaphor that is capable of changing the way we think about metaphor not only in language, but also thought and action, and, ultimately, the way we do philosophy. In the paper, He argued that CMT itself needs to be changed in several ways. In particular, He suggests that it has to be given a much more elaborate contextual component than is currently available, and that even its cognitive dimension needs to be refined, also it requires a component that can explain the actual usages of metaphors in natural discourse.

2.5.8 Previous Studies

[Sherazi et al. \(2025b\)](#) examines how conceptual metaphors improves cognitive

processes, foster creativity, and make learning more engaging. Results from the research indicate significant improvements in comprehension, retention, and emotional engagement when metaphors are integrated into pedagogy. However, challenges such as cultural variance and oversimplification must be addressed. This paper also identifies a research gap in exploring metaphor-based pedagogy in cross-cultural and multilingual settings.

This article explored metaphor's role in cognitive process but the CMT related issues in secondary classrooms remained overlooked.

[Khan and Ahmad \(2023\)](#) compared English and Urdu languages in terms of Metaphorical Conceptualization. She claimed that Metaphorical Concepts can vary across and within languages and cultures. Metaphors also vary along social and subcultural dimensions. The article focuses on the variation of idiomatic expression of "eye" metaphor in English and Urdu, to see how the metaphorical concept of 'eye' varies in the idioms of both languages.

This article holds deep research on the comparison of English and Urdu but did not study on how metaphors work in terms of teaching and learning.

[Hurbik et al. \(2025\)](#) explores the stylistic use of metaphors in modern Pakistani English poetry through a combined linguistic and literary lens. It examines how metaphors function not only as aesthetic devices but also as tools for expressing identity, cultural hybridity, and socio-political commentary. Drawing on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and literary stylistics, the research analyzes selected poems by contemporary Pakistani poets writing in English.

This article is focused on the study of stylistic use of metaphors only and left the affective factors of metaphors if used in secondary classrooms.

[Anwar et al. \(2018\)](#) researched on role of cultural metaphors in teaching. He explored the mental images of secondary school students through metaphors. which they use while expressing feelings in Second language .The researcher asks each participant student to fill in the sentence "..... (any feeling) is something like (metaphor) because ..." and to express his ideas by using this sentence

and focusing on a single metaphor. Data were analyzed by qualitative (content analysis) as well as quantitative techniques. In the light of the data collected the researcher finds that the participants produced 63 valid metaphors for expressing feeling. This situation put forward that metaphors can be used as a research tool for understanding, revealing and explaining the mental images of the students regarding the feeling expressions.

This survey indicates that metaphors act as a tool for defining mental images of the students. This research article doesn't focus on difficulties in metaphors learning.

[Rahim and Hussain \(2022\)](#) talked about Conceptualization of Ideas Through Novel Metaphors in Hayley Long's Sophie Someone. In her study, it was aimed to analyze the metaphors and unpack the significance of the selected conceptual metaphors.

This study particularly focused on the importance of metaphors in the written texts. The gap revealed that difficulties in understanding metaphors still exist.

[Miao \(2023\)](#) focused on metaphor in vocabulary learning. According to him, the mastery and application of vocabulary is a big problem for most language learners in their learning process, but it is an extremely important part of foreign language learning which cannot be ignored or under evaluated. Traditional vocabulary teaching methods such as affixing method, example sentence method, repeated memory method, method of combining sound and shape meaning etc. although have some positive effects on the memory of words, they cannot penetrate into the vocabulary, as a result of which learners feel words and meaning are completely two-dimensional, arbitrary and isolated. This problem in the long term is harmful for the students to fully understand the words and to develop the ability to use them in a proper way, which is also a big barrier for the foreign language learners to achieve their goal of communicating with their communicative intents conveyed accurately like a native.

This article focused on English as a Foreign language and left the implications of it who teach and learn English as a second language.

[Chen and Wang \(2024\)](#) focused on Conceptual metaphors in political discourse. He emphasizes that conceptual metaphor has been widely acknowledged as a critical rhetorical device for achieving persuasive effects in political discourse. This study proposes a new and comprehensive perspective that directly analyzes the possible reasons for the occurrence of conceptual metaphors and their impacts from three interconnected dimensions of discourse: “textual”, “discursive practice”, and “social practice”. Furthermore, to assess the feasibility of this framework, the study conducts a comparative analysis of two political speeches delivered by the Australian prime minister Antony Albanese, which serve as a typical form of political discourse, aiming to investigate the similarities and differences in the conceptual metaphors employed, as well as the underlying causes and roles. The analysis reveals that both speeches frequently utilize structural and ontological metaphors, while orientational metaphors are rarely employed. Additionally, the two speeches exhibit significant overlap in their use of specific metaphors, such as the JOURNEY metaphor. This similarity can be analyzed from multiple perspectives within this framework since there are resemblances between the two speeches such as genre, general topic, the process of discourse production and distribution. The variance across three dimensions in the two speeches also results in variations in metaphor selection. This research contributes to Conceptual Metaphor Analysis (CMA) by developing an integrative approach that bridges textual semantics with cognitive processes and social contexts. The proposed framework not only elucidates the socio-cognitive motivations underlying metaphorical choices but also demonstrates how such linguistic devices mediate between political ideology and public perception.

This research focused on political discourse based on conceptual metaphors but the significance of challenges in understanding metaphors remained unsolved.

[Nguyen and Tran \(2024\)](#) emphasized on common approach in linguistics and cognition regarding conceptual metaphors, reflecting how humans use language and imagery to convey meaning in various fields. According to Pham, T.G, metaphor is widely employed in commercial news discourse as a powerful strategy to create impressions, vividly convey information, and enhance persuasiveness. This study

utilizes the metaphor identification method of the Pragglejaz Group, descriptive method, and two-way comparative method to identify five sub-metaphors, number and frequency of metaphorical expressions of conceptual metaphor "COMMERCE IS SPORT" in Vietnamese and English commercial news discourse. This aims to reveal similarities and differences in the two languages based on three criteria: quantity, frequency of metaphorical expressions, mapping mechanism, and cultural cognitive patterns. The novelty of this research compared to previous studies lies in its in-depth analysis of sub-metaphors and, to some extent, identification of differences in cultural thinking between Vietnamese and American communities in the use of metaphors. Although this study highlights the importance of conceptual metaphors but in the light of commercial news discourse. So, the gap of conceptual metaphors in secondary classroom still exists.

[Ali and Farooq \(2026\)](#) investigate the use of metaphor and figurative language as instruments of moral instruction in religious sermons. For this purpose, this study utilizes the texts of khutab authored by Sheikh Mohamed Ewas that are analyzed by employing conceptual metaphor theory, and critical metaphor analysis to identify, categorize, and interpret the dominant cross-domain conceptualization through which Islamic moral concepts are constructed and communicated to the Muslim audience. The analysis reveals five recurrent conceptual metaphors: (1) the community is a body, (2) sin is a physical substance or mark, (3) moral corruption is disease, (4) virtuous deeds are currency, and (5) the spiritual journey is a path. These source-domain structures serve interrelated rhetorical functions (i.e., physical representation of abstract doctrine, emotional mobilization, and identity construction. Thus, this study contributes to the growing literature on religious discourse analysis and argues that metaphor in the khutbah is not a stylistic device but constitutes a primary cognitive mechanism through which Islamic moral theology is made practical to the lay person in linguistically and culturally hybrid contexts. This study seeks to explore metaphors in moral instruction and the gap of conceptual metaphors in Pakistani ESL classrooms is not bridged.

[Iqbal and Shah \(2023\)](#) aimed at identifying Covid-19 conceptual metaphors in media discourse. To evaluate the metaphorical use of language, a corpus of three

Pakistani English newspaper articles published in March 2020 was created. The data is extracted and analyzed using the corpus tool AntConc and the theoretical framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory given by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The results of the study demonstrate that the conceptual metaphor Covid-19 as war is excessively utilized in the Covid-19 editorial text. Whereas, other conceptual metaphors are also observed in the corpus, like Covid-19 as a killer, Covid-19 as a possession, and Covid-19 as an earthquake. The findings also reveal that the newspaper articles reflect persuasive ideology. Therefore, while stating the facts and figures, the use of metaphoric expressions is possibly used to instill seriousness among Pakistani public about Covid-19.

This study explores conceptual metaphors based on Covid-19. the gap is still existing that how metaphors in pakistani classrooms affect the students and the teachers. Previous studies provide insights into CMT with the focus on explaining the theory rather than its application in secondary classrooms. There is very little empirical research examining the implementation and effectiveness of CMT in actual secondary school classrooms in Pakistan. Many studies reveal that metaphors are significant, but they left to put some light on the difficulties and practices for teaching and learning metaphors. Existing studies have largely overlooked secondary school students, despite this being a crucial stage for language and cognitive development. Many studies rely on small, convenience samples, limiting the generalizability of their findings to the wider Pakistani educational context. Existing research does not adequately examine how local languages, culture, and bilingual learning environments influence metaphor comprehension and the application of CMT.

2.6 Research Gap

Although Conceptual Metaphor Theory has been studied by many researchers in Pakistan, but they all grabbed the theoretical impacts of it. The past research lacked the practical impacts on students in the classrooms, especially the secondary classrooms. There is scarce empirical research that studied CMT in

secondary classrooms. In Pakistan, where classroom studies do exist, they are commonly: rely on little, convenient samples; report only teacher attitudes rather than measurable student learning outcomes; use short-term observations instead of sustained instructional trials; and fail to account for local linguistic and cultural factors. The published research is also thin on concrete, scalable strategies such as instructional materials, teacher training modules, and assessment instruments specifically designed to implement CMT in Pakistani secondary classrooms are absent.

The gap exists between secondary school students in Pakistan being exposed to metaphors throughout all their subjects, as well as the difficulty they face when trying to understand those metaphors in a meaningful way. As a result of the lack of pedagogical resources developed using formalized usage of CMT, teachers do not know how to translate theory into actual practice in their classrooms. Since metaphor is so central to both cognition and communication, it is critical that more empirical research is conducted examining actual classroom practices and proposing interventions to improve metaphor instruction.

This study seeks to begin this process. The purpose of this study was to examine how CMT could be integrated into teaching metaphors at the secondary school level in Pakistan. Therefore, this research also examined current practices of teachers as well as responses from students so that a more complete understanding could be developed of the challenges faced regarding metaphor instruction. Finally, this research proposes contextualized and practical strategies that may help to improve student achievement and to narrow the cultural or linguistic divide between second language learners (L2s) and their native language (L1) peers.

This gap matters in this study because these gaps are the building block to focus on the points which the previous research lacks. By applying practical impacts of CMT in secondary classrooms of Pakistan, this study is going to fill all the gaps, and it will give the possible ways to teach and learn metaphors regardless of cultural and other barriers.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Conceptual Metaphors play crucial role in the teachings of English language whether it was about the writing of any novel or a prose, they stand as a building block in the field of literary devices. This research is particularly focused on the challenges and strategies in teaching and learning metaphors in the settings of secondary classrooms. Metaphors teaching and learning remained as a significant task throughout their history, disclosing how the educators connected one idea to another.

This research adopted a mixed research method, i.e qualitative and quantitative for the data analysis of interviews and questionnaires. The interviews were conducted to record teachers' responses about how they take metaphor teaching as a task and how do they apply CMT in their teaching respectively. In the case of quantitative data analysis, questionnaires were generated for the teachers and the students to record the challenges, practices and prospects in the teaching of metaphors.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was primarily grounded in the *Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)* developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their seminal book *Metaphors We Live By*. Conceptual Metaphor Theory argued that metaphor is not merely

a stylistic or literary device but a fundamental tool for human thought through which one can understand abstract concepts in terms of more concrete experiences. According to *CMT*, language reflects underlying conceptual mappings between a *source domain* i.e concrete experience and a target domain i.e abstract concept.

In the context of English language teaching, *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* provided a framework for understanding how learners acquire metaphorical meanings and how teachers can facilitate this learning process. Rather than teaching metaphors as isolated figures of speech, *CMT* encouraged educators to help students recognize the conceptual relationships that motivate metaphorical expressions. This approach promoted profound comprehension, vocabulary development, critical thinking, and improved interpretation of literary texts.

This research was focused on the application of CMT, challenges in metaphors teaching, instructional practices and prospects regarding that in English classrooms.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

This research focused on two tools i.e interviews and questionnaire to gain the results. This study adopted a mixed-method research design to gain the results of research questions. Qualitative analysis was done for the interviews taken from the teachers and quantitative analysis was observed for the questionnaires collected from teachers and students.

The rationale for selecting a mixed-methods approach is that the teaching and learning of metaphors involve both measurable outcomes (such as students' comprehension and engagement) and subjective factors (such as perceptions, experiences, and instructional practices).

Overall, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches provide a comprehensive understanding of how metaphors are taught and learned in secondary-level English classrooms.

3.3 Research Design

The research was designed in a way that both interviews and questionnaires were used as tools for qualitative and quantitative data analysis respectively.

The qualitative component of the study was exploratory in nature and aimed to investigate teachers' instructional practices, and the challenges faced in teaching metaphors. This component focused on gathering in-depth insights through interviews and questionnaires, enabling the researcher to understand how metaphor instruction is implemented and how cultural and conceptual understanding influences learning.

The quantitative component provided supportive evidence by systematically recording data and analyzing patterns related to classroom practices, student engagement, and instructional strategies. Quantitative analysis helped in organizing and interpreting questionnaire data and identifying trends that complemented the qualitative findings.

3.4 Target Population

The study was conducted by selecting specific number of teachers and students of Rawalpindi. The participants included both teachers and students to ensure a balanced perspective on metaphor teaching and learning.

The sample consisted of:

- i. 7 English language teachers who teach English to Grade 9th students. These teachers participated in interviews and questionnaires to provide insights into their instructional methods, understanding of metaphor teaching, and the challenges they encounter.
- ii. 30 students of Grade 9th , who participated in questionnaires. Students' responses helped explore their level of understanding, difficulties in interpreting metaphors, and the role of cultural knowledge in comprehension.

3.5 Sampling and Sampling Technique

The data collected from questionnaires analyzed in a way that for mean, percentages were calculated using Likert scale. The presentation of findings was presented through pie charts and tables. For interviews, qualitative analysis was done using coding sheet, familiarization and interpretation. Convenience sampling technique was used to do the analysis of the data collected from the teachers and students.

In the end, this was done by careful selection of the participants' privacy and prerequisites of the study.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were carefully observed throughout the research process to ensure the protection, dignity, and rights of all participants. Since this study involved teachers and secondary school students, particular attention was given to informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the procedures involved, and how the data will be used.

Participants were clearly informed that their participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences. Second, confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained as shown in the appendix at the end. The participants were also informed that their names will never be disclosed in the thesis or any related publications. All collected data, including interview recordings, transcripts, and questionnaires, were stored securely and used only for academic purposes.

Finally, the researcher ensured that the study did not cause any psychological or academic discomfort to participants. Interview questions were designed to avoid sensitive or personal issues, and participants were treated with respect throughout the research process. The researcher also presented the findings honestly and objectively, without misrepresenting or manipulating the data.

These ethical practices helped to ensure the credibility, integrity, and trustworthiness of the research.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

To achieve the objectives of the study, two main data collection instruments were used:

- i. Data set 1: Semi-structured interview was conducted from teachers to gain the research objectives. Qualitative research method was done the interview.
- ii. Data set 2: Questionnaires were given to both teachers and students for the achievement of objectives. Quantitative research methods were observed for data analysis.

3.7.1 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews conducted separately with teachers and students. Different interview protocols were designed for each group to address their specific roles and experiences. The teacher interviews focused on the teachers' understanding of metaphors and metaphor teaching, instructional strategies used in teaching metaphors, difficulties encountered in explaining metaphorical concepts, cultural barriers affecting students' comprehension and strategies used to make metaphor teaching more relevant and effective. The semi-structured format allowed flexibility for probing and follow-up questions, enabling participants to elaborate on their experiences and opinions in detail.

3.7.2 Questionnaire

Questionnaire observed to examine how metaphors are taught in real classroom settings. Total 8 statements were used for each section i.e problems, practices and

prospects to record teaching practices, student engagement, and the use of examples or activities related to metaphors. The questionnaire particularly focused on how teachers explain metaphors and conceptual mappings and how the students understand metaphors. How the teachers use cultural or contextual examples, how students participate in metaphors practices, what are the instructional strategies that align with Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), and what are the techniques to clarify abstract meanings.

Questionnaire provide direct evidence of instructional practices and help verify whether classroom practices align with teachers' reported methods in interviews.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, and their consent was obtained prior to data collection. Each interview was recorded (with permission) and later transcribed for analysis.

Interviews were conducted first, then the questionnaire was given to verify teachers' answers.

3.9 Validity and Reliability or Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study:

- i. Triangulation was achieved through multiple data sources (interviews and questionnaires).
- ii. Member checking was used by sharing summaries of responses with participants for confirmation.

These measures helped to ensure that the findings are credible, consistent, and dependable.

3.10 Data Analysis Procedure

The data collected in this study analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative procedures, in line with the mixed-methods research design.

3.10.1 Analysis of Interview Data

The interviews conducted with teachers was transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis followed these steps:

- i. Transcription: All recorded interviews were transcribed (proof is attached in appendix).
- ii. Familiarization: The researcher read the transcripts multiple times to gain an overall understanding of participants' responses.
- iii. Coding: Relevant statements and meaningful units of text were identified and coded according to recurring ideas or issues.
- iv. Themes: After the selection of codes, themes were set up to talk about the same statements of the teachers under one shade.

This process helped in identifying patterns in perceptions, teaching practices, and learning challenges.

3.10.2 Analysis of Questionnaires

Questionnaires were analyzed using tables and pie charts, and for the mean and percentages, likert scale was used.

- i. Tables

Tables were drawn to show the scale strongly agreed, agreed, neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed.

ii. Use of Likert Scale in Data Analysis

The Likert scale responses obtained from questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. The procedure included:

a. Mean Score Calculation

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where: X= score assigned to each questionnaire

N= total number of questionnaires

The mean score helped to determine the level at which each teaching practice is implemented in the classroom.

b. Percentage Analysis

Percentages were also calculated to show the proportion of responses in each category. This helped in presenting the findings clearly in tables and pie charts.

3.11 Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Data

After analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data separately, the findings were integrated. The questionnaire results were compared with interview responses to determine whether teachers' reported practices match actual classroom practices. This triangulation strengthened the validity of the findings and provided a more comprehensive understanding of metaphor teaching.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

In this chapter, the data is collected through interviews and questionnaires. The interviews were conducted with 7 private school teachers who teach grade 9th students in Rawalpindi. The data from interviews is analyzed using coding, familiarization and interpretation. After the interviews, questionnaires were sent to those 7 teachers to gain the reflection of their interview answers in the questionnaires. Following that, questionnaires were sent to 30 students of same teachers to know the problems, practices and prospects in metaphor learning. The questionnaires were analyzed using tables, and Likert scale to count mean and percentages.

4.1 Coding

Relevant statements from the interview were highlighted and assigned initial codes.

TABLE 4.1: Interview statements and their initial coding

Interview Statement	Initial Code
Students often try to understand metaphors literally instead of conceptually.	Literal interpretation
Some textbook examples are culturally distant from students' experiences.	Cultural unfamiliarity
Students react more positively when metaphors are explained through local examples.	Use of local context

Table 4.1 continued from previous page

Interview Statement	Initial Code
Visual images and storytelling make metaphors more understandable.	Visual learning strategies
Students remember metaphors better through daily-life examples.	Real-life connection
Time pressure and syllabus demand affect metaphor teaching.	Curriculum pressure
Teachers need practical training for culturally responsive teaching.	Need for teacher training
Urdu expressions help students bridge cultural gaps.	Bilingual support
Students should create their own examples instead of memorizing.	Student-centered learning
Assessment systems encourage memorization.	Exam-oriented learning

4.2 Question wise Analysis

Semi structured interviews were conducted for the qualitative data collection methods in which the researcher used predetermined questions but with a flexibility to ask follow up questions. The interviewers were given proper time to think and respond accordingly.

The interview questions are as follow with the question wise analysis:

1. How do you usually define and explain metaphors in the classroom to your students?

Teacher 1: “hmm..I usually. . .define metaphor by combining two things”.

Teacher 2: “well, metaphors are defined. . .through one real thing to gain the idea of another abstract thing.”

Teacher 3: “ I define that metaphors are same as idioms but. . . (pause). . . without as or like”.

Teacher 4: “I tell student that we compare two things like we say “Time is a thief,” it does not mean time is literally stealing, but it means time passes quickly and takes moments away from us”.

Teacher 5: “ Metaphors are tricky...you know...I told students to use simple daily-life examples so they can connect with the concept easily”.

Teacher 6: “ I.. being English teacher...combine two ideas to teach metaphors...”

Teacher 7: “ I make real life examples to teach metaphor to my students..like...I connect one thing to another for example, he was lion in war...lion is used for metaphor for being strong and sharp...these things help students to learn metaphors”.

Through the answers of the teachers, it is clear that they make Real Life Connections to teach metaphors. They convey on idea (source) to teach another (target).

2. What are some of the biggest struggles you face in packing down metaphors to high school students?

Teacher 1: “hmm.. one of the biggest struggles is that students often try to understand..hmmm.. metaphors literally instead of conceptually”.

Teacher 2: “many students have limited vocabulary, so...umm... they become confuse when the metaphor contains unfamiliar words”.

Teacher 3: “major challenge is that some textbook examples are culturally distant from students’ experiences...(pause)... which makes interpretation difficult”.

Teacher 4: “ the students take metaphors literally”.

Teacher 5: “ I think..students donot understand metaphors conceptually”.

Teacher 6: “ I believe... students donot understand some things that is not in their vocabulary command for example, the poem Daffodils by William Wordsworth ...some metaphors are not understandable from this poem”.

Teacher 7: “ students concepts are weak so it is difficult for every teacher to go for conceptual metaphor teaching because students take metaphors literally”.

By the answers from all 7 teachers, Literal Interpretation and Cultural Unfamiliarity are the challenges the teachers face in teaching metaphors to secondary class students. This question points towards the research objective 1 which explores the challenges for the teachers in teaching metaphors.

3. Do you think that we could attribute this to the cultural backgrounds of students, how do you apply CMT, and how important do you believe is one's own culture for understanding English metaphors?

Teacher 1: "I...hmm...know... that cultural background definitely affects the understanding of metaphors".

Teacher 2: "culture plays an important role because... ummm... metaphors are often connected with traditions, social practices, and daily experiences".

Teacher 3: "I apply CMT...(pause)... by discussing conceptual beliefs of students". Teacher 3: "I use urdu expressions to apply CMT,...like I define metaphors using urdu expression because it bridges the cultural gap".

Teacher 4: "when...(pause)... I give cultural relevant examples to students, then they understand metaphors better".

Teacher 5: culture relevant examples and urdu ideas are better to teach metaphors

Teacher 6: "culture plays crucial role in learning metaphors...(pause)...when students are given culture related examples then they understand it better".

Teacher 7: "I teach metaphors by combining two relevant ideas to each other and I use urdu examples as well".

From the statements of the teachers, Bilingual Support is taken as a tool to teach metaphors. This question points towards research objective 3 which examines the strategies to make metaphors easy to learn for the students.

4. Are there textbook metaphors that contradict the local or cultural experiences of students? Please give examples.

Teacher 1: “some textbook metaphors does...(pause)...do not match students’ local experiences. For example, references to snow, autumn leaves, or...hmmm.. western holiday traditions can be confusing for Pakistani students because these experiences are not common in their daily lives. However, I explain such metaphors by connecting them with familiar local examples”.

Teacher 2: “Yes,...(sighs)... students sometimes face difficulty understanding metaphors related to unfamiliar experiences. A metaphor such as “life is a melting snowflake” may not create a strong image for students who have never closely experienced snowfall”.

Teacher 3: “Yes, (pause).... there are certain metaphors in textbooks that are culturally unfamiliar to Pakistani students. For instance, references to snow or Western festivals may not immediately make sense to them”.

Teacher 4: “ofcourse, some metaphors are difficult because they are based on experiences that students do not commonly encounter. The line “They flash upon that inward eye” may be difficult for some students to interpret clearly”.

Teacher 5: “Yes, students may struggle with metaphors...(pause)... when the images used in the textbook are far removed from their everyday lives. References to autumn leaves or snowfall may not produce the same mental images for Pakistani students”.

Teacher 6: “ Cultural differences can sometime create difficulties in understanding textbook metaphors. Student may understand the literal words but fail to grasp the deeper meaning because they are unfamiliar with the experience behind the metaphor”.

Teacher 7: “Yes, some metaphors do not directly get to students’ local experiences, but this does not mean they cannot understand them. For example, unfamiliar references to snow, seasons, or Western traditions may confuse students”.

Thus, these statements highlight that Cultural Unfamiliarity is a big challenge for the students. In short, research objective 1 and 2 are achieved here that there

are challenges like cultural unfamiliarity, which is a gap for the teachers to teach metaphors to such students who are not familiar with some western concepts.

5. What challenges are often faced by students when the metaphor examples come from a culture they are not familiar with (e.g. Western based traditions, lifestyles or context)?

Teacher 1: “Yes, students often become confused when metaphors are not explained clearly. They may understand the individual words but fail to understand the hidden or deeper meaning. This makes it difficult... (pause)... for them to participate confidently in classroom discussions”.

Teacher 2: “I observed that students sometimes lose interest... ummm... when they cannot relate a metaphor to their own experiences. When the cultural context is unfamiliar, they may feel disconnected from the lesson and hesitate to share their interpretations”.

Teacher 3: “Students can understand the literal meaning of the words... (pause)... but still struggle with the metaphorical meaning. In many cases, they do not have the background knowledge needed to understand the cultural reference behind the metaphor, which creates confusion”.

Teacher 4: “Some or many students hesitate to participate when a metaphor comes from an unfamiliar culture. They are often unsure whether their interpretation is correct, so they remain quiet during discussions. This is a challenge for teachers because it reduces classroom interaction”.

Teacher 5: “Yes, unfamiliar cultural metaphors can... ummm... make students feel disconnected from the text. If the teacher does not provide enough explanation or context, students may lose interest because they cannot visualize or understand what the metaphor is trying to communicate”.

Teacher 6: “One major challenge is that students sometime focus only on the literal meaning of a metaphor... (pause)... they may know the meaning of each word but cannot connect those words to the intended idea. Without sufficient cultural or contextual knowledge, interpretation becomes difficult”.

Teacher 7: “Students often become confuse or uninterested when metaphors are presented without adequate explanation. They may hesitate to participate because the metaphor refer to experience or cultural background that are unfamiliar to them. Therefore, teachers need to provide the necessary context to help students understand the intended meaning”.

These statements highlight the importance of Use of local context to make the metaphors learning effective. Hence, research objective 3 is achieved here.

6. How do students react when metaphors are explained by local or culturally recognized examples rather than textbook examples?

Teacher 1: “yeah...students respond much more positively when metaphors are explained through examples that they already know. Whe...hmmm... I use familiar Pakistani experiences, students understand the metaphor more quickly and become more willing to participate in classroom discussions”.

Teacher 2: I noticed that students become more engaged when...umm... metaphors are connected with cricket or other activities that are common in their daily lives. They can easily relate the metaphor to something familiar, which helps them understand and remember its meaning.

Teacher 3: “Local examples make a significant difference in students’ understanding. (pause)..for example, when I explain a metaphor through local examples or cultural traditions, students can immediately connect the idea with their own experiences and are more confident in giving their interpretations”.

Teacher 4: “Students show good interest when metaphors are linked to family relationships and everyday situations. These examples are familiar to them, so they do not feel confused about the intended meaning. They also participate more actively in classroom discussions”.

Teacher 5: “In my experience, using Pakistani cultural examples helps students understand metaphors much faster. When students hear an example related to their own surroundings, they can create a clear mental image and are more likely to remember the metaphor later”.

Teacher 6: “Students become more confident when teachers use familiar examples instead of relying only on unfamiliar cultural references. For instance, explaining a metaphor through cricket or a common Pakistani social experience encourages students to share their ideas without hesitation”.

Teacher 7: “I believe local and familiar examples make metaphor teaching more effective. When metaphors are explained through cricket, festivals, family life, or everyday Pakistani experiences, students become more interested and engaged. They understand the intended meaning more easily and retain it for a longer time”.

Overall, all seven teachers reported that students react more positively when metaphors are connected with local and familiar experiences and Use of Local Context is easy to comprehend. Such examples increase students’ engagement, confidence, participation, understanding, and ability to remember metaphorical meanings.

7. How do you compensate for the culture gap when using metaphors in English texts?

Teacher 1: “I...(pause).... usually start by explaining the original cultural context of the metaphor so that students understand where the expression come from. After, I connect it with a similar example from Pakistani culture. This makes the metaphor easier for students to understand. If also students do not understand then I go for videos and pictures”.

Teacher 2: “To overcome the cultural gap, I...I explain the background of the metaphor first and then provide a local example that students can relate to. I also encourage them to think of similar expressions in Urdu. This helps them connect the English metaphor with something familiar”.

Teacher 3: “I...(pause)..... try to make students aware of the cultural context behind a metaphor before discussing its meaning. Then, I compare it with an Urdu idiom or expression that conveys a similar idea. This comparison helps students understand both the language and the cultural meaning”.

Teacher 4: “When a metaphor is culturally unfamiliar, I explain its original meaning and context instead of expecting students to understand it immediately. I then give them a Pakistani example or an Urdu expression with a similar meaning. Students usually understand the metaphor much better through this approach”.

Teacher 5: “I use visual aid as a strategy to bridge the cultural difference. I show or use some techniques to make them learn. Let me tell an incident, . . . ummm.. I took some 10 rupee notes and asked the students to take them one by one, after that I relate it to the metaphor; time is money”.

Teacher 6: “Students understand difficult metaphors better when we move from the unfamiliar to the familiar. I show pictures for it”.

Teacher 7: “I think explaining both cultures is important. I first discuss the context in which the English metaphor can be used and then connect it with a similar Pakistani experience or Urdu expression. In this way, students can see the similarities between the two cultures and understand the metaphor more effectively”.

Overall, all seven teachers indicated that they try to bridge the cultural gap by explaining the original context of metaphors and relating them to familiar Pakistani experiences or Urdu expressions; they also use Visual Aids to make metaphors more interesting. So, these statements point towards the strategies that the teachers apply in their classrooms for metaphors teaching.

8. How do you bring in a normal life for the students, or expressions from the language and culture that one uses when describing what metaphors mean?

Teacher 1: “I often use examples from students’ daily lives, such as their school routines, family gatherings, and activities at home, to explain metaphors. When students can connect a metaphor with something familiar, they understand the concept more easily.”

Teacher 2: “I usually relate metaphors to situations that students experience every day. For example, . . . hmmm. . . I use examples from school life, friendships, and family events. This helps students feel comfortable and encourages them to participate in discussions.”

Teacher 3: “I bring examples from familiar contexts,...hmm.. like weather, sports, and common activities in our community. Students can easily understand metaphorical meanings when they are connected to things they already know.”

Teacher 4: “I frequently use Urdu expressions and familiar sayings when teaching metaphors. These expressions are part of students’ everyday language, so they help....(pause)... students understand abstract or metaphorical ideas in a more meaningful way.”

Teacher 5: “I connect metaphorical concepts with local traditions...ummm... and family gatherings because these are familiar experiences for students. When they recognize the situation being discussed, they become more confident in sharing their own ideas.”

Teacher 6: “I use examples from sports, classroom routines, and everyday conversations to make metaphors easier to understand. Students respond positively because the examples are related to their own experiences rather than being completely unfamiliar.”

Teacher 7: “Connecting metaphors with students’ daily lives makes learning more engaging. I use examples from weather, family life, school activities, local traditions, and Urdu sayings. These familiar examples help students understand metaphors and actively participate in learning activities.”

Overall, Real-life connections play significant role in teaching metaphors. Teachers use daily life examples to teach metaphors and they try to make them relevant for the learning.

9. How does the use of visual images, stories or ‘real life’ help to make metaphors more understandable for your students?

Teacher 1: “Visual images....(pause)... are very helpful when teaching metaphors because they make abstract ideas easier for students to understand. When students see a picture...umm.. related to a metaphor, they can visualize its meaning more clearly.”

Teacher 2: “I often use pictures to explain metaphorical concepts. These visual materials get students’ attention and help them to understand ideas that may seem difficult or abstract.”

Teacher 3: “Stories are particularly useful for teaching metaphors....(pause).... when I present a metaphor through a short story, students can imagine the situation and understand the intended meaning more easily.”

Teacher 4: “I use real-life examples because students can connect them with their own experiences. When a metaphor is linked to something they have experienced, they understand and remember its meaning better.”

Teacher 5: “Pictures, storytelling, and real-life situations work together very effectively. Visual examples help students imagine the metaphor, while stories provide context and make the meaning more memorable.”

Teacher 6: “I find that student understand metaphors better when they can relate them to emotions and everyday experiences. Real-life examples allow them to connect their feelings and personal experience with metaphorical meanings.”

Teacher 7: “Visual materials, stories, and practical examples make metaphor learning more engaging and meaningful. When students sees a picture, watch a short video, or hear a familiar story, they can understand the metaphor more clearly and retain it for a longer time.”

Through the statements of all teachers, it is clear that Visual Learning Strategies make metaphors more understandable. Hence, these answers clearly found the answer of research question 3 that there are certain strategies that are useful in ESL classroom to make metaphors learning relevant and easy for the students.

10. What strategies might you use to encourage students to understand the meaning of metaphors instead of memorizing them?

Teacher 1: “I encourage student....ummm.. to explain metaphors in their own words instead of memorizing definitions from the textbook. When they express the meaning their selves, I can see whether they have understand the concept.”

Teacher 2: “I ask students to create their own examples of . . . of metaphors. This activity helps them move beyond memorization and think about how metaphors can be used in different situations.”

Teacher 3: “Group discussions are very useful for developing students’ understanding of metaphors. Students has their interpretations with one another and learn that the same metaphor can sometimes have different meanings depending on the context.”

Teacher 4: “I use role plays . . . umm . . . help students understand metaphorical meanings. By acting out different situations, students can explore the meaning of a metaphor in a practical and enjoyable way.”

Teacher 5: “Drawing activities can help students represent metaphors visually. When students draw what they think a metaphor means, they use their brain to think carefully about the relationship between the literal and figurative meanings.”

Teacher 6: “I use like sentence-making exercises to encourage students to apply metaphors. Rather than simply reminding a definition, students create sentences and demonstrate how the metaphor works in context.”

Teacher 7: “I combine discussions, role plays, drawing, and creative examples to develop deeper understanding. These activities encourage students to think critically about metaphorical meanings instead of simply learning definitions by heart.”

By the above statements, Student Centered Learning plays great role in memorization of metaphors. These statements give the answer of research question 3.

11. How do you think you are affected in teaching metaphors by the pressures of time and syllabus, or forms of assessment?

Teacher 1: “Time pressure is one of the main challenges in teaching metaphor. The syllabus is big . . . ummm, so I or any other teacher have limited time to explain metaphorical concepts in depth and provide enough practice.”

Teacher 2: “The demands of completing the syllabus affect how much time I can spend on...hmmm... metaphors. Although I would like to explore different interpretations with students, I sometimes have to move quickly to cover the required content.”

Teacher 3: “Assessment requirements also influence metaphor teaching.(pause)... student are usually more concerned with giving the correct answer than explaining their own interpretations, so they often prefer memorizing meanings rather than understanding them deeply.”

Teacher 4: “I find it difficult to give metaphors enough classroom time because... because there are many topics that need to be covered. As a result, activities such as discussion and creative interpretation may be shortened.”

Teacher 5: “The examination system encourages students to focus on fixed and correct answers. Because of this, many students rely...(pause)... on memorization, and it becomes challenging to encourage them to explore metaphors creatively.”

Teacher 6: “Limited classroom time and syllabus demand make detailed metaphor teaching difficult. Sometimes I have to explain the meaning briefly and move on to the next topic instead of allowing students to discuss the metaphor from different perspectives.”

Teacher 7: “I 100% agree that time and syllabus pressure can affect metaphor teaching, but I try to create opportunities for deeper understanding whenever possible. Even so, completing the syllabus and preparing students for assessments sometimes leaves little time for detailed exploration of metaphors.”

In a nutshell, Curriculum Pressure affects teaching and learning metaphors. So, the teachers face syllabus commitments or the pressure of time which affect students' learning badly. These statements are giving the answer of research question 1 here.

12. What do you think would be most helpful in professional development or training for teachers to enhance their teaching of metaphors in a culturally diverse ESL setting?

Teacher 1: “Professional development programs should provide practical strategies for teaching metaphors in ESL classrooms. Teacher need approaches that can be directly applied in their everyday classroom practice.”

Teacher 2: “Training should focus on culturally responsive teaching methods. As students you know, come from different cultural backgrounds... (pause)... teachers need to understand how to use examples that are meaningful and familiar to them.”

Teacher 3: “I would benefit from professional development that demonstrates how to use visual and interactive materials when teaching metaphors. Practical demonstration would help teachers make abstract concepts more engaging for students.”

Teacher 4: “Teacher training should show us how to connect English metaphors with students’ local experiences. Using familiar cultural practices, traditions, and everyday situations can make metaphorical meanings easier for ESL learners to understand.”

Teacher 5: “Workshops should include classroom activities rather than only information. Teachers need opportunities to practice different metaphor-teaching techniques and learn how to adapt them to their own students.”

Teacher 6: “Professional development would be most useful if it included real classroom examples and practical teaching resources. Seeing how other teachers handle metaphor instruction can give us ideas that we apply in our own classrooms.”

Teacher 7: “Well, training programs should combine cultural included methods, visual materials, interactive activities, and real-life examples. Workshops based on practical classroom situations would help teachers teach metaphors more effectively in multicultural ESL settings.” By the above answers of the teachers, it is

indicated that there is a Need for Teacher Training so that the teachers can themselves first learn to apply useful strategies in their classrooms to teach metaphors. Thus, research objective 1 is achieved here.

13. What approaches do you think could be used to make the teaching of metaphor more contextually relevant, meaningful, and appropriate in Pakistani classrooms?

Teacher 1: “Teaching metaphors can become more meaningful in Pakistani classrooms...hmm... when teachers use local cultural references. Students understand metaphorical meanings more easily when examples are connected to familiar traditions, customs, and everyday experiences.”

Teacher 2: “I find bilingual explanations very helpful...umm... when teaching metaphors. Explaining difficult English metaphors in both English and Urdu can help students understand the intended meaning without losing the connection to their local language.”

Teacher 3: “Storytelling is an important way to teach metaphors in Pakistani classrooms. Stories from Pakistani culture and everyday life provide students with familiar contexts and make metaphorical concepts easier to understand and remember.”

Teacher 4: “Teachers can use examples...ummm... from Pakistani literature, television, films, and other forms of media to explain metaphors. These culturally familiar examples can make lessons more interesting and help students relate English metaphors to their own experiences.”

Teacher 5: “Sports and everyday communication provide useful sources for teaching metaphors. Examples related to cricket, school life, family interactions, and common expressions can make metaphorical meanings more relevant to Pakistani students.”

Teacher 6: “Collaborative activities can help students explore metaphors more actively. Group discussions, pair work, and creative tasks allow students to share their own experiences and understand how metaphors are used in different contexts.”

Teacher 7: “Metaphor teaching should be student-centered and connected to Pakistani culture. When students create their own examples, tell stories, discuss local expressions, or relate metaphors to their daily lives, they develop a deeper understanding of metaphorical meanings.”

Thus, Bilingual Support, Visual Aids, Real Life Connection are good strategies to teach metaphors. So, research question 2 is answered here.

14. What else might need to change in textbooks or the curriculum to reduce these cultural barriers to teaching metaphors?

Teacher 1: “Textbooks....(pause).... should include more culturally balanced examples of metaphors. Alongside international examples, there should be examples that reflect Pakistani culture and the everyday experiences of local students.”

Teacher 2: “The curriculum should provide metaphor examples from both local and international contexts. This can help students understand that metaphors can be shaped by different cultures while still developing their English language skills.”

Teacher 3: “I think textbooks need more visual aids when teaching metaphors. Pictures, illustrations, and other visual materials can...can make abstract metaphorical meanings easier for Pakistani ESL learners to understand.”

Teacher 4: “Metaphor lessons should include more interactive exercises rather than depending mainly on textbook definitions. Activities such as discussions,... umm... group work, and creative tasks would encourage students to interpret metaphors more actively.”

Teacher 5: “Students should be given more opportunities to explain and interpret metaphors in their own words. The curriculum should move away from rote learning and encourage learners to think critically about metaphorical meanings.”

Teacher 6: “Curriculum designers should consider students’ cultural backgrounds when selecting metaphor examples. Using familiar Pakistani contexts alongside

international examples would make metaphor teaching more relatable and meaningful.”

Teacher 7: “Textbooks and the curriculum should combine culturally relevant examples, visual materials, and interactive activities. A balanced approach would help students connect metaphorical meanings with their own experiences and develop a deeper understanding rather than simply memorizing answers.”

As a result, textbooks should include Cultural or Local Context for the students’ better understanding.

4.2.1 Qualitative Data Analysis of Interviews

The interview responses of Grade 9 English teachers from a private school give valuable insights into the teaching and understanding of metaphors in Pakistani ESL classrooms. The teachers’ experiences reveal that metaphor instruction is affected by several interconnected factors, including students’ tendency to interpret metaphors literally, cultural unfamiliarity, limited vocabulary, curriculum and time pressures, and differences in students’ experiential backgrounds. At the same time, the teachers identified several classroom practices that are useful in metaphor comprehension, particularly the use of local examples, visual learning strategies, bilingual support, real-life connections, storytelling, and interactive activities.

The analysis of the interview data generated nine major themes: Literal Interpretation, Cultural Unfamiliarity, Use of Local Context, Visual Learning Strategies, Real-Life Connection, Curriculum Pressure, Need for Teacher Training, Bilingual Support, and Student-Centered Learning. These themes demonstrate that metaphor comprehension is not simply a matter of learning definitions or identifying figurative language. Rather, it involves students’ ability to connect abstract meanings with familiar cultural experiences, personal knowledge, language resources, and contextual information.

The findings can also be understood in relation to Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which proposes that people understand abstract and complex concepts

through mappings from more concrete and familiar experiences. From this perspective, metaphor comprehension is strongly influenced by students' cultural and experiential knowledge. The teachers' responses particularly support the idea that students are more likely to understand a metaphor when its source domain is familiar to them.

4.2.1.1 Literal Interpretation

One of the most prominent themes emerging from the teachers' responses is literal interpretation. The teachers reported that many Grade 9 students initially understand metaphors according to their direct or dictionary meanings rather than their intended figurative meanings. This creates a significant challenge because metaphors require learners to move beyond the surface meaning of words and recognize an underlying comparison or conceptual relationship.

For example, when students encounter a metaphor such as "He is a lion," they may initially understand the statement as referring to an actual animal rather than interpreting lion as representing qualities such as courage, strength, or bravery. This difficulty indicates that students may focus heavily on the denotative meaning of vocabulary while failing to identify its connotative meaning.

The teachers also highlighted students' confusion between denotative and connotative meanings. Denotative meaning refers to the literal or dictionary definition of a word, whereas connotative meaning involves the associated ideas, emotions, qualities, or cultural meanings connected to that word. Metaphorical language frequently depends on connotation. Therefore, students who have a limited understanding of connotative meaning may find metaphorical expressions particularly difficult. This problem may also be connected to the way English is taught in examination-oriented ESL contexts. If students are accustomed to memorizing definitions and reproducing textbook answers, they may have fewer opportunities to explore multiple meanings or interpret language independently. As a result, they may approach metaphors as vocabulary items that have one fixed meaning rather than as expressions whose meanings depend on context.

The teachers' responses therefore suggest that metaphor instruction should explicitly distinguish between literal and figurative meanings. Teachers can present a metaphor and first ask students what it means literally, followed by questions about what it could mean in a particular situation. This process can help students recognize the difference between the surface meaning of an expression and the conceptual meaning intended by the speaker or writer. The finding is important in relation to Conceptual Metaphor Theory because metaphor comprehension involves establishing a conceptual mapping between two domains. Students must recognize that one concept is being used to understand another. If they remain at the literal level, this mapping does not occur successfully.

Thus, literal interpretation represents one of the major barriers to metaphor comprehension among Grade 9 ESL learners. The findings indicate a need for instructional practices that move students from literal decoding toward contextual, conceptual, and figurative interpretation.

4.2.1.2 Cultural Unfamiliarity

The second major theme is cultural unfamiliarity. The teachers explained that students sometimes struggle with metaphors that originate from cultural practices, environments, traditions, and lifestyles that are unfamiliar to Pakistani learners. This is particularly relevant in ESL classrooms where much of the instructional material may contain references to Western contexts.

The teachers specifically identified metaphors associated with snow, autumn, Western customs, weather conditions, and unfamiliar lifestyles as potentially problematic. For students who have little or no personal experience of snow, for example, an expression involving snow may not generate the same mental image or emotional association that it generates for a student living in a region where snowfall is common.

This demonstrates that metaphor comprehension is closely connected with cultural knowledge. A metaphor does not operate in isolation from the culture in which it is produced. Learners draw upon their knowledge of the physical environment,

social practices, traditions, beliefs, and everyday experiences when interpreting figurative language.

The teachers' observations strongly support the relationship between culture and metaphor proposed by Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Conceptual mappings are not necessarily universal in their specific manifestations. Human beings may share certain bodily experiences, but the particular metaphors used to conceptualize abstract ideas are often shaped by cultural and environmental experience.

Human beings may share certain bodily experiences, but the particular metaphors used to conceptualize abstract ideas are often shaped by cultural and environmental experience.

For Pakistani Grade 9 learners, a metaphor based on local food, family relationships, school life, festivals, weather, markets, or common social practices may therefore be easier to understand than one based on an unfamiliar Western cultural practice.

Cultural unfamiliarity can also create an unequal learning experience. Students who have greater exposure to English-speaking cultures through television, films, social media, books, or travel may understand culturally specific metaphors more easily than students whose exposure is primarily limited to their local environment.

Therefore, metaphor comprehension may vary considerably even among students studying in the same classroom. The teachers consequently recommended the inclusion of culturally balanced examples in textbooks. This does not mean that international content should be removed. Rather, international examples can be presented alongside culturally familiar Pakistani examples. Such an approach can develop students' global awareness while simultaneously providing an accessible conceptual foundation.

Therefore, cultural unfamiliarity is not simply a language problem; it is also an experiential and conceptual problem. Students may know the individual English words in a metaphor but still fail to understand the metaphor because they lack the cultural knowledge required to construct its intended meaning.

4.2.1.3 Use of Local Context

A particularly positive theme emerging from the interviews is the use of local context. The teachers emphasized that students understand metaphors more successfully when examples are connected to their immediate cultural and social environment.

The teachers reported that local examples improve students' understanding because learners can connect the metaphor with something they already know. For instance, teachers can use examples related to Pakistani family life, food, school routines, local weather, friendships, markets, sports, or common Urdu expressions. These examples provide students with familiar conceptual domains from which they can construct metaphorical meanings.

This finding is significant because it shows that the teachers are not simply simplifying metaphors; they are providing learners with an appropriate conceptual bridge. A metaphor becomes easier to understand when the source domain is already meaningful to the learner.

For example, a teacher could introduce a metaphor by using a familiar expression such as "He is as brave as a lion" and then ask students to identify what qualities they associate with a lion. The teacher can subsequently move toward more complex metaphorical expressions. In this way, students' existing knowledge becomes a resource for English-language learning.

The teachers also mentioned student-generated examples as an effective strategy. When students create their own metaphors, they are required to draw upon their personal experiences and vocabulary. This transforms metaphor learning from passive recognition into active meaning construction.

The use of local context can also help reduce students' anxiety. When the cultural reference is familiar, students can participate in classroom discussions without first having to learn unfamiliar cultural information. This allows them to concentrate on the metaphorical relationship itself.

The finding therefore indicates that culturally responsive metaphor teaching should not be viewed as replacing English culture with Pakistani culture. Instead, teachers can use local contexts as scaffolding. Once students understand a metaphorical concept through familiar examples, teachers can gradually introduce culturally unfamiliar metaphors and explain the cultural knowledge necessary to interpret them.

Thus, the use of local context emerges as one of the strongest pedagogical strategies identified by the teachers. It supports comprehension by connecting new metaphorical concepts to learners' existing knowledge and experiences.

4.2.1.4 Visual Learning Strategies

The fourth theme is visual learning strategies. The teachers reported that visual aids help students understand metaphors effectively. This suggests that metaphor teaching can benefit from moving beyond verbal explanations and incorporating images, illustrations, diagrams, videos, and other forms of visual representation.

Metaphors are often abstract, and this abstraction can be challenging for secondary-level ESL learners. A visual representation can make the relationship between the literal and figurative meanings more concrete. For example, when teaching the metaphor "The classroom was a zoo," a teacher could first display an image of a zoo and then connect the image to a noisy or disorderly classroom. Students can therefore see how the characteristics of one domain are transferred to another.

Visual learning may be particularly useful when students are unfamiliar with the source domain. If a metaphor refers to snow, for example, the teacher can show students photographs or videos of snowfall. This provides learners with the experiential information they lack and can help them develop an appropriate mental image.

The teachers also identified storytelling as an effective technique. Stories provide a meaningful context in which metaphors can be encountered rather than presented

as isolated sentences. When a metaphor occurs within a narrative, students can use the surrounding events, characters, emotions, and situations to infer its meaning.

Visual aids and storytelling can therefore work together. A teacher may tell a short story, display relevant images, and ask students to identify metaphorical expressions within the story. Students can then explain what each metaphor means and why the writer chose that particular comparison.

These strategies are especially useful for learners who struggle with abstract verbal explanations. Rather than simply telling students that a metaphor means something other than its literal meaning, teachers can allow students to see, discuss, interpret, and contextualize the metaphor.

The findings therefore indicate that visual learning can serve as an important bridge between concrete experience and abstract conceptual understanding. This is consistent with the broader principles underlying Conceptual Metaphor Theory because learners are encouraged to establish relationships between concrete source domains and more abstract target concepts.

4.2.1.5 Real-Life Connection

The fifth theme, real-life connection, is closely related to the use of local context but represents a broader pedagogical principle. The teachers strongly emphasized that students understand metaphors better when teachers connect them to situations from everyday life.

Students do not enter the classroom without prior knowledge. They bring experiences from their families, schools, friendships, communities, media exposure, and daily activities. These experiences influence how they interpret language. Therefore, metaphor instruction becomes more meaningful when it draws upon these existing experiences. For example, a teacher teaching the metaphor “Time is money” could ask students how they feel when they waste time before an examination or when they have limited time to complete an assignment. This allows

students to connect an abstract conceptual relationship with an experience they understand.

Similarly, teachers can ask learners to identify metaphors they encounter in everyday conversations, advertisements, songs, social media, or Urdu expressions. Such activities demonstrate that metaphor is not restricted to literary texts or textbook exercises. It is part of ordinary communication. The teachers' emphasis on real-life connection is particularly important because it shifts metaphor learning from memorization to meaningful interpretation. Students are more likely to remember a metaphor when they understand how and why it is used.

Real-life connection also provides opportunities for classroom discussion. Teachers can ask questions such as: "Where have you heard this expression before?" "What does this word make you think about?" or "Can you give an example from your own life?" Such questions encourage students to draw upon their own conceptual knowledge. The teachers' responses therefore indicate that students' personal experiences are important resources for metaphor comprehension. This again corresponds with Conceptual Metaphor Theory because conceptual understanding is influenced by embodied, cultural, and experiential knowledge.

4.2.1.6 Curriculum Pressure

Another important theme identified in the interviews is curriculum pressure. Although teachers recognized the value of discussion, interaction, storytelling, and contextualized metaphor instruction, they also explained that classroom realities often limit the time available for such activities.

Time pressure is particularly significant in examination-oriented educational settings. Teachers have to complete prescribed syllabi, prepare students for assessments, and cover required language structures and literary content. As a result, metaphor instruction may sometimes be reduced to identifying metaphors, memorizing definitions, or preparing students for examination questions.

This creates a tension between effective learning and curriculum completion. Meaningful metaphor comprehension often requires time. Students need opportunities to discuss possible interpretations, compare literal and figurative meanings, generate examples, ask questions, and receive feedback. Such activities are difficult to implement when teachers are under pressure to complete a large amount of content.

Curriculum pressure may also encourage rote learning. If examination questions reward students for identifying or defining metaphors rather than interpreting them deeply, teachers may have limited incentive to spend substantial classroom time on creative metaphor activities.

The teachers' comments therefore suggest that improving metaphor teaching requires more than simply telling teachers to use innovative strategies. Institutional and curricular conditions also need consideration. Teachers need sufficient instructional time and flexibility to use interactive approaches.

The issue also highlights the importance of curriculum design. If textbooks contain culturally unfamiliar metaphors without adequate contextual explanation, teachers have to spend additional classroom time explaining the cultural background. A more carefully designed curriculum could reduce this burden by incorporating culturally accessible examples and appropriate scaffolding.

Thus, curriculum pressure represents a structural barrier to effective metaphor instruction. Even when teachers understand appropriate pedagogical approaches, limited time and examination demands can prevent their consistent implementation.

4.2.1.7 Need for Teacher Training

The seventh theme is the need for teacher training. The teachers' responses indicate that effective metaphor instruction requires teachers to have practical knowledge of how metaphors function and how they can be taught to ESL learners.

Teachers need to understand that metaphor comprehension involves more than identifying a comparison. Students may encounter difficulties because of vocabulary limitations, cultural unfamiliarity, literal interpretation, or lack of experiential knowledge. Consequently, teachers need strategies for addressing these different sources of difficulty.

The teachers recommended that teacher training programs should focus on culturally responsive teaching methods and practical classroom strategies. This recommendation is significant because teachers require concrete techniques that can be applied within real classroom conditions.

Training could include methods such as:

- i. using culturally familiar metaphors as introductory examples;
- ii. contrasting literal and figurative meanings;
- iii. using pictures, videos, and storytelling;
- iv. encouraging student-generated metaphors;
- v. incorporating Urdu strategically;
- vi. using role plays and group discussions;
- vii. connecting metaphors to everyday experiences; and
- viii. gradually introducing culturally unfamiliar metaphors with appropriate explanation.

Teacher training should also address the balance between local and international content. Teachers should be able to explain unfamiliar cultural references without presenting them as inherently difficult or excluding them entirely.

Furthermore, professional development can help teachers move away from purely definition-based instruction. Instead of simply explaining that “a metaphor is a comparison without using like or as,” teachers can help students investigate how metaphors create meaning in real communication.

The findings therefore show that teacher competence is an important factor in successful metaphor instruction. Effective teaching requires teachers to understand both the linguistic and cultural dimensions of metaphor as well as practical methods for engaging learners.

4.2.1.8 Bilingual Support

The theme of bilingual support emerges from the teachers' recommendation to use Urdu expressions and familiar linguistic resources when explaining metaphors. In a Pakistani ESL classroom, Urdu can serve as an important pedagogical resource rather than being treated exclusively as an interference in English learning.

Students may already understand metaphorical concepts in Urdu even when they struggle to understand equivalent expressions in English. Teachers can use this existing knowledge as a bridge to English metaphor comprehension.

For example, a teacher may present a familiar Urdu metaphorical expression and ask students what it means and in what situations it is used. The teacher can then compare this with an English metaphor that communicates a similar idea. This encourages students to recognize that figurative language exists in both languages, although particular expressions and cultural associations may differ.

Bilingual comparison can also make the distinction between literal and figurative meanings clearer. Students can examine how an expression that appears strange when translated literally may have an established figurative meaning in another language.

Importantly, bilingual support does not necessarily mean translating every metaphor into Urdu. Excessive dependence on translation could reduce students' opportunities to develop independent English interpretation skills. Instead, Urdu can be used strategically as scaffolding when students encounter conceptual or cultural difficulty.

This approach recognizes the linguistic resources students already possess. Rather than requiring learners to abandon their first language when learning English,

teachers can use their existing language knowledge to support deeper understanding.

Therefore, bilingual support can help students develop metalinguistic awareness and understanding that languages use different words and expressions to communicate similar conceptual meanings. It can also increase students' confidence because they can initially approach difficult concepts through a language they understand well.

4.2.1.9 Student-Centered Learning

The final theme is student-centered learning. The teachers recommended interactive activities such as role plays, group discussions, storytelling, and student-generated examples. These approaches indicate a movement away from teacher-dominated explanation toward active student participation.

In traditional metaphor instruction, the teacher may provide the definition, identify the metaphor, and explain its meaning while students listen and memorize. Although this may help students recognize basic definitions, it provides limited opportunities for students to develop independent interpretive skills.

Student-centered learning changes this process. Students can be asked to interpret a metaphor, explain their reasoning, compare interpretations with classmates, create their own metaphors, and identify metaphors in authentic contexts.

Role play is particularly useful because it allows students to act out situations in which metaphorical expressions can be used. Group discussion gives students opportunities to hear different interpretations and recognize that metaphorical meaning may depend on context. Storytelling provides an extended context for interpreting figurative expressions. Student-generated examples require learners to actively apply metaphorical concepts.

These activities also address the teachers' concern about rote learning. When students create and interpret metaphors independently, they move beyond memorizing textbook definitions and begin to develop higher-order language skills.

Student-centered learning also gives teachers an opportunity to identify misconceptions. If students explain why they interpret a metaphor in a particular way, teachers can determine whether the problem is vocabulary, cultural knowledge, literal interpretation, or conceptual misunderstanding.

The teachers' recommendations therefore suggest that metaphor teaching should become more interactive, exploratory, and learner-oriented. Students should not merely receive metaphorical meanings from teachers; they should participate in constructing and negotiating those meanings.

4.2.1.10 Interrelationship Among the Themes

The nine themes are strongly interconnected rather than existing as separate categories. Literal interpretation, for example, may be intensified by limited vocabulary, while cultural unfamiliarity can make literal interpretation more likely. When students do not understand the cultural or experiential background of a metaphor, they may rely on the literal meanings of individual words.

Similarly, the use of local context and real-life connection provide solutions to these problems. When teachers use familiar situations, students have an experiential foundation from which to understand abstract meanings.

Visual learning strategies further support this process by making unfamiliar or abstract concepts more concrete.

Bilingual support can reinforce local contextualization by allowing teachers to use familiar Urdu expressions to explain difficult English metaphors. Meanwhile, student-centered learning provides opportunities for students to apply these strategies actively through discussion, storytelling, role play, and metaphor creation.

However, the implementation of these approaches is affected by curriculum pressure. Teachers may recognize the value of interactive and culturally responsive approaches but lack sufficient time to use them consistently. This creates a strong

connection between curriculum pressure and the need for teacher training. Training needs to provide teachers with strategies that are not only theoretically appropriate but also practical and manageable within actual classroom constraints. The themes can therefore be viewed as a cycle:

Cultural and experiential unfamiliarity → literal interpretation and comprehension difficulties → need for local context, real-life connections, visual support, and bilingual scaffolding → student-centered interaction → deeper metaphor comprehension. At the institutional level, however, curriculum pressure and insufficient teacher training may restrict the implementation of these strategies.

At the institutional level, however, curriculum pressure and insufficient teacher training may restrict the implementation of these strategies.

4.2.1.11 Relationship with Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The findings provide substantial support for the principles of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The teachers repeatedly emphasized that students understand metaphors more effectively when they can relate them to familiar experiences, cultural knowledge, and everyday situations.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposes that people frequently understand abstract concepts through more concrete and familiar domains. In metaphor comprehension, learners establish a conceptual mapping between a source domain and a target domain. Successful comprehension therefore depends partly on whether the learner possesses sufficient knowledge of the source domain.

The teachers' comments about snow, autumn, Western customs, and unfamiliar lifestyles illustrate this principle. Students may know the vocabulary used in a metaphor but still struggle to understand it because the conceptual source domain is unfamiliar. In contrast, metaphors connected to family, school, local food, daily activities, or familiar Urdu expressions are more accessible because students already possess relevant experiential knowledge.

The findings also demonstrate the cultural dimension of metaphor. Students from different family and social backgrounds may interpret the same metaphor differently because their previous experiences are not identical. This suggests that metaphor comprehension is influenced not only by linguistic competence but also by the learner's conceptual and cultural repertoire.

Consequently, metaphor teaching should provide opportunities for students to activate prior knowledge, establish conceptual relationships, and explore how meanings change across contexts and cultures.

4.2.1.12 Overall Interpretation of the Findings

Overall, the interview findings demonstrate that metaphor teaching in Grade 9 Pakistani ESL classrooms is affected by both learner-related and classroom-related factors. At the learner level, students experience difficulties with literal interpretation, connotative meaning, limited vocabulary, and culturally unfamiliar references. Their previous experiences and backgrounds also influence how they interpret metaphors.

At the pedagogical level, teachers identified several effective strategies. The most important include the use of local examples, real-life situations, visual aids, storytelling, Urdu expressions, group discussion, role play, and student-generated metaphors. These strategies create meaningful connections between abstract metaphorical concepts and students' existing knowledge.

At the institutional level, however, curriculum pressure and limited classroom time can restrict the implementation of these approaches. Teachers may understand the importance of meaningful metaphor instruction but still feel compelled to prioritize syllabus completion and examination preparation.

The findings consequently suggest that effective metaphor teaching requires a multidimensional approach. Simply teaching students the definition of metaphor is insufficient. Teachers need to help learners understand how metaphorical meaning is constructed through context, culture, experience, and conceptual relationships.

Overall the thematic analysis of the Grade 9 English teachers' interview responses reveals nine major themes: literal interpretation, cultural unfamiliarity, use of local context, visual learning strategies, real-life connection, curriculum pressure, need for teacher training, bilingual support, and student-centered learning.

The most significant challenge is students' tendency to interpret metaphors literally. This difficulty is intensified when students encounter culturally unfamiliar concepts or lack the vocabulary and experiential knowledge needed to construct figurative meaning. The teachers' experiences demonstrate that metaphor comprehension is therefore closely connected to culture and lived experience.

At the same time, the findings identify several effective solutions. Local examples, real-life situations, visual aids, storytelling, Urdu expressions, and interactive classroom activities can make metaphorical concepts more accessible. These approaches enable students to connect unfamiliar abstract meanings with concrete experiences that are already part of their conceptual knowledge.

The findings further indicate that students should be given an active role in metaphor learning. Rather than simply memorizing definitions, they should be encouraged to interpret, discuss, compare, and create metaphors. Such student-centered practices can promote deeper understanding and reduce dependence on rote learning.

However, meaningful implementation requires institutional support. Curriculum pressure can restrict the time available for discussion and interactive activities, while teachers may require additional professional development to implement culturally responsive metaphor instruction effectively. Therefore, teacher training programs should provide practical strategies for teaching figurative language in multilingual and multicultural ESL classrooms.

In conclusion, the interview findings suggest that metaphor teaching in Pakistani secondary ESL classrooms can become more effective when instruction moves from decontextualized explanation toward culturally responsive, experiential, visual, bilingual, and student-centered learning. This approach is consistent with

the principles of Conceptual Metaphor Theory because it recognizes that learners understand abstract meanings through familiar experiences and conceptual mappings.

The findings therefore support the development of metaphor instruction that begins with students' existing cultural and experiential knowledge and gradually expands their ability to interpret unfamiliar metaphorical expressions in English.

4.3 Likert scale

A Likert scale is a rating scale used in surveys and questionnaires to measure a person's perceptions, opinions, attitude, or level of agreement with a statement.

A standard Likert scale is used for each statement of questionnaire and asked respondents to choose from a range of ordered response options, such as:

- i. Strongly Agree
- ii. Agree
- iii. Neutral
- iv. Disagree
- v. Strongly Disagree

4.3.1 Questionnaires

Online questionnaires were distributed among teachers and students to find out about the problems, practices and prospects in metaphors teaching and learning respectively.

4.3.1.1 Teachers' Questionnaire

A total number of 7 teachers were selected for questionnaires who teach grade 9th students.

4.3.1.2 Students' Questionnaire

A total number of 30 people were selected for questionnaires who are grade 9th students.

Part 1: Demographic Information

Demographic information of teachers and students was taken for the data record.

Part 2: Problem In Teaching and Learning Metaphors

Part 2 was about how teachers and students response about the problems in teaching and learning metaphors respectively.

TABLE 4.2: Teachers' Responses For Problems in Teaching Metaphors

Statements	Strongly Agreed %	Agreed %	Neutral %	Disagreed %	Strongly Disagreed %
1	57.1	14.3	0	28.6	0
2	42.9	57.1	0	0	0
3	57.1	42.9	0	0	0
4	28.6	42.9	14.3	14.3	0
5	57.1	42.9	0	0	0
6	42.9	57.1	0	0	0
7	28.6	71.4	0	0	0
8	28.6	71.4	0	0	0

TABLE 4.3: Students' Responses For Problems in Learning Metaphors

Statements	Strongly Agreed %	Agreed %	Neutral %	Disagreed %	Strongly Disagreed %
1	20	56.7	6.6	16.7	0
2	26.7	56.7	10	6.6	0

Table 4.3 – Continued from previous page

Statements	Strongly Agreed %	Agreed %	Neutral %	Disagreed %	Strongly Disagreed %
3	23.3	70	3.3	3.4	0
4	17.2	31	3.4	44.8	3.6
5	23.3	70	0	6.7	0
6	16.7	76.7	3.3	3.3	0
7	13.3	63.3	13.3	10	0
8	16.7	14.3	13.3	26.7	0

4.3.1.3 Analysis

The findings indicate that teachers generally perceived the teaching of metaphors as a challenging factor. Most questionnaire items reveal high levels of agreement, suggesting a strong consensus that several factors hinder effective metaphor instruction in secondary school classrooms such as syllabus commitments, over crowded classrooms and cultural unfamiliarity.

Statements 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 received positive responses, with all teachers either agreeing or strongly agreeing that these represented significant challenges such as cultural unfamiliarity, students' background knowledge and overcrowded classrooms. Statements 3 and 5 recorded the highest proportion of strong agreement (57.1%) which talk about limited command in English and limited content knowledge of metaphors, while the remaining 42.9% agreed. Also, Statements 2 I.e studnets' take metaphors literally and 6 I.e classroom limitation received 42.9% strongly agree and 57.1% agree, indicating widespread recognition of these teaching difficulties.

Statement 1 also received considerable support, with 71.4% of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that the learners are not always clear about metaphors. However, 28.6% disagreed, suggesting some variation in teachers' perceptions. Statement 4 (students show less interest in learning metaphors) displayed the greatest diversity of responses, with 28.6% strongly agreeing, 42.9% agreeing, 14.3% remaining neutral, and 14.3% disagreeing. Although opinions differed slightly on this statement,

the overall findings indicate that teachers consistently recognized the existence of multiple hurdles to effective metaphor teaching.

Students likewise claimed several difficulties in learning metaphors. The highest levels of agreement were observed for Statements 3, 5, and 6, (limited command in English, limited content knowledge, classroom limitations) where approximately 93% of students either agreed or strongly agreed. Statement 6 highlights the strongest endorsement, with 76.7% agreeing and 16.7% strongly agreeing, claiming that this issue was widely perceived as a basic learning challenge.

Statements 1, 2, and 7 (learners are not clear about metaphors, they interpret metaphors literally, overcrowded students) also received substantial support, with more than three-quarters of the students in favor that these factors negatively affected their understanding of metaphors.

However, Statement 4 (lack of interest in students) generated mixed opinions. While 48.2% agreed or strongly agreed, 44.8% disagreed and 3.6% strongly disagreed, suggesting considerable variation in students' experiences regarding this aspect of metaphor learning.

Statement 8 (absence of visual aids) received the lowest level of agreement among students, with only 31% agreeing or strongly agreeing that it represented a learning difficulty. In contrast, 26.7% disagreed and 13.3% remained neutral, indicating that this issue was not viewed as a major obstacle by a substantial proportion of respondents.

A comparison of teachers' and students' responses reveals that both groups recognised the presence of challenges in metaphor teaching and learning. However, the teachers demonstrated much stronger consensus across almost all statements, whereas students' responses reflected slight variation. The most noticeable differences occurred in Statements 4 and 8, where students expressed more diverse opinions than teachers. These discrepancies suggest that some teaching challenges identified by teachers may not be experienced equally by all students, while certain learner difficulties may depend on individual differences in language proficiency, classroom interactions, or exposure to metaphor instruction.

Overall, the findings indicate that metaphor teaching and learning remain challenging in secondary classrooms. Teachers clearly recognised barriers that may limit the effectiveness of metaphor instruction, while students acknowledged learning difficulties, although the extent of these challenges varied across different aspects of metaphor learning. These findings highlight the need for more systematic, learner-centred, and contextually meaningful approaches to teaching metaphors.

In relation to the research objectives and questions, the findings directly address Research Objective 1 and Research objective 1 by identifying the major challenges faced by teachers in teaching metaphors and by examining students' responses regarding the challenges they experience in learning metaphors. As the Research objective 2 is concerned, the results reveal that both teachers and students perceive metaphor instruction as demanding, although their perceptions differ for certain aspects of the learning process.

The findings also contribute to and Research Question 2 by indicating the need for practical strategies to overcome these challenges. The widespread recognition of instructional and learning challenges suggests that teachers require greater support through professional development, explicit instruction based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), the use of authentic and contextualized examples, visual representations of metaphorical concepts, and interactive classroom activities that promote deeper conceptual understanding.

Furthermore, these results answer Research Question 1, which examines the perception of the teachers about metaphors teaching and the challenges they encounter while teaching metaphors. The consistently high levels of agreement among teachers confirm that they experience several challenges that may restrict the effective implementation of metaphor instruction. The findings also support Research Question 3 by demonstrating the necessity of strengthening teaching practices through learner-centred and CMT-informed instructional strategies to make metaphor learning more effective, meaningful, and relevant for secondary school students.

This section shows the practices going on in the classroom regarding metaphor instruction.

TABLE 4.4: Teachers' Responses For Instructional Practices in Teaching Metaphors

Statements	Strongly Agreed %	Agreed %	Neutral %	Disagreed %	Strongly Disagreed %
1	28.6	71.4	0	0	0
2	0	85.7	14.3	0	0
3	57.1	42.9	0	0	0
4	28.6	71.4	0	0	0
5	28.6	42.9	14.3	14.3	0
6	0	42.9	42.9	14.3	0
7	42.9	57.1	0	0	0
8	28.6	71.4	0	0	0

TABLE 4.5: Students' Responses for Instructional Practices in Teaching Metaphors

Statements	Strongly Agreed %	Agreed %	Neutral %	Disagreed %	Strongly Disagreed %
1	13.3	80	0	6.7	0
2	16.7	66.7	10	6.6	0
3	13.8	72.4	3.8	10	0
4	16.7	53.3	20	10	0
5	3.3	60	16.7	20	0
6	10	53.3	26.7	10	0
7	6.7	23.3	16.7	53.3	0
8	10	53.3	26.7	10	0

4.3.1.4 Analysis

The findings reveal that the teachers generally held positive perceptions of the instructional practices used in teaching metaphors. Most questionnaire items received high levels of agreement, suggesting that teachers believe they regularly apply effective strategies to facilitate students' understanding of metaphoric language.

Statements 1, 4, and 8 (metaphors are defined through mapping, cultural relevant examples are given, practice activities are given) each received unanimous positive responses, with 28.6% of teachers strongly agreeing and 71.4% agreeing. Statement 3 received the strongest endorsement, with 57.1% strongly agreeing and 42.9% agreeing, reflecting teachers' strong confidence in this instructional practice. Likewise, Statement 7 (participation is encouraged) received 42.9% strongly agree and 57.1% agree, indicating complete agreement among the respondents.

Statement 2 (clear definitions are provided) also reflected a positive perception, with 85.7% agreeing and 14.3% remaining neutral. However, Statements 5 and 6 demonstrated comparatively greater variation. For Statement 5 (difference between literal and conceptual meaning is taught), 71.5% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed, while 14.3% remained neutral and 14.3% disagreed. Statement 6 (use of visual aids) recorded the lowest level of positive responses, with only 42.9% agreeing, 42.9% remaining neutral, and 14.3% disagreeing. These findings suggest that although teachers generally see their teaching practices positively, some uncertainty existed regarding the implementation or effectiveness of particular teaching strategies.

Students also expressed generally positive views of their teachers' instructional practices. Statement 1 received the highest level of agreement, with 93.3% of students either agreeing or strongly agreeing and only 6.7% disagreeing. Statements 2 and 3 were also positively rated, with 83.4% and 86.2% of students, respectively, acknowledging that these instructional practices were applied in their classrooms.

Statements 4, 5, 6, and 8 received moderate levels of agreement. Approximately 70% of students agreed or strongly agreed with Statement 4, while Statements 5, 6, and 8 received positive responses from approximately 63–64% of students. These items also recorded comparatively higher percentage of neutral and disagreeing responses, indicating that some students did not consistently experience these instructional practices.

Statement 7 received the least favourable student response. Only 30% of students agreed or strongly agreed, whereas 53.3% disagreed and 16.7% remained neutral.

This finding suggests that the instructional practice represented by Statement 7 was either implemented inconsistently or was not perceived as effective by many students.

In comparison of teachers' and students' responses, it is revealed that teachers consistently rated their instructional practices more positively than students. Teachers expressed unanimous agreement on most statements, indicating confidence in their approaches to teaching metaphors. In contrast, although students generally recognised the use of effective instructional practices, their responses displayed variability.

The greatest discrepancy emerged in Statement 7. While all teachers agreed that they implemented the instructional practice represented by this statement, more than half of the students (53.3%) disagreed. This difference suggests a gap between teachers' perceptions of their classroom practices and students' actual learning experiences. Such discrepancies indicate that instructional strategies may not always be implemented in ways that are sufficiently explicit, engaging, or meaningful from the learners' perspective.

In relation to the research objectives and questions, these findings address Research Objective 2 and 3 by examining the aspects of instructional practices that teachers apply and by highlighting students' perceptions of metaphor learning. The results also contribute to Research Objective 3 by indicating the need for practical strategies, such as CMT-based instruction and learner-centred teaching approaches, to improve metaphor learning. Furthermore, the findings answer Research Question 3 by illustrating teachers' current instructional practices and disclosing discrepancies that suggest barriers to effective implementation. Finally, they address Research Question 3 by demonstrating the pedagogical areas that require strengthening to make metaphor instruction more effective and relevant in secondary school classrooms.

Part 4: Prospects of Metaphor Instruction

This section shows the responses of teachers and students regarding strategies for making metaphors learning effective for the students.

TABLE 4.6: Teachers' Responses For Prospects of Metaphor Instruction

Statements	Strongly Agreed %	Agreed %	Neutral %	Disagreed %	Strongly Disagreed %
1	14.3	85.7	0	0	0
2	28.6	71.4	0	0	0
3	42.9	57.1	0	0	0
4	14.3	57.1	28.6	0	0
5	42.9	57.1	0	0	0
6	57.1	42.9	0	0	0
7	42.9	42.9	14.3	0	0
8	57.1	42.9	0	0	0

TABLE 4.7: Students' Responses For Prospects of Metaphor Instruction

Statements	Strongly Agreed %	Agreed %	Neutral %	Disagreed %	Strongly Disagreed %
1	10	73.3	3.4	13.3	0
2	17.2	72.4	7	3.4	0
3	20.7	62.1	17.2	0	0
4	20	63.3	13.3	0	0
5	17.2	65.5	11	6.3	0
6	26.7	56.7	13.3	0	0
7	16.7	70	13.3	0	0
8	20	63.3	13.3	0	0

4.3.1.5 Analysis

Based on the questionnaire results, the data for the Prospects of Metaphor Instruction directly addresses Research Question 3 and Research Objective 3, while also providing supporting evidence for Research Question 2 and Research Objective 2.

The findings indicate that teachers hold overwhelmingly positive perceptions regarding the future implementation of metaphor instruction in secondary school classrooms. Across all eight statements, none of the teachers selected either Disagree or Strongly Disagree, demonstrating unanimous acceptance of the proposed instructional approaches.

For Statement 1 (literal and conceptual meaning is understandable), 85.7% agreed and 14.3% strongly agreed, indicating complete support for the value of metaphor instruction. Similarly, Statement 2 (learners relate metaphors to their previous experiences) received 71.4% agreement and 28.6% strong agreement, suggesting that teachers recognize the importance of systematic metaphor teaching.

Statements 3, 5, 6, and 8 (active participation, metaphors enhance critical thinking, metaphors improve writing skills, keen interest is shown) reveal even stronger positive responses.

For example, Statement 6 obtained the highest level of endorsement, with 57.1% strongly agreeing and 42.9% agreeing, indicating that teachers consider the suggested instructional practices highly beneficial. Statements 5 and 8 also received 100% positive responses, with a considerable proportion of teachers expressing strong agreement.

Students also demonstrated highly positive attitudes towards improved metaphor instruction.

For Statement 1, 83.3% of students either agreed or strongly agreed, while 13.3% disagreed. This indicates that although the majority appreciate enhanced metaphor instruction, a small proportion may still experience difficulties in understanding metaphors or may not yet recognize their value.

Statement 2 received one of the strongest responses, with 89.6% positive agreement and only 3.4% disagreement, suggesting that students generally believe metaphor instruction contributes positively to their learning.

Statements 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 consistently recorded more than 80% positive responses, demonstrating widespread student support for instructional practices that facilitate metaphor comprehension. However, neutral responses ranged from 11% to 17.2%, indicating that some students remain uncertain, possibly because they have had limited exposure to explicit metaphor instruction.

A comparison of teachers' and students' responses demonstrates strong agreement between both groups regarding the importance of improving metaphor instruction.

Teachers expressed unanimous positive attitudes across all statements, whereas students also reported predominantly positive responses, although with slightly lower percentages and a few instances of disagreement. The greater consistency among teachers may reflect their professional understanding of the instructional benefits of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, whereas students' responses are influenced by their individual classroom experiences and varying language proficiency.

4.3.2 Discussion

By comparing and critically analyzing the findings obtained through the two research tools, namely interviews and questionnaires, it becomes evident that the teaching and learning of metaphors in secondary-level ESL classrooms involves several challenges that have not been sufficiently addressed in previous researches. Although metaphors have been extensively investigated by scholars from different linguistic, cognitive, literary, and pedagogical perspectives, the existing body of literature has largely focused on defining metaphors, examining their conceptual and linguistic characteristics, exploring their role in language and cognition, and investigating how learners interpret metaphorical expressions. However, comparatively less attention has been given to the practical dimension of metaphor instruction, particularly within secondary ESL classrooms. This creates an important gap in the existing literature because secondary-level learners are at a stage where they are expected not only to understand literal meanings but also to interpret figurative and abstract expressions that frequently occur in academic texts, literature, classroom interaction, and everyday communication. Therefore, investigating how metaphors are actually taught and learned in secondary classrooms is essential for developing a more comprehensive understanding of metaphor pedagogy.

The present study attempts to address this underexplored area by examining the problems, practices, and prospects associated with metaphor teaching and learning in secondary ESL classrooms. The findings generated through the questionnaires and interviews demonstrate that metaphor instruction is not always straightforward and may present difficulties for both teachers and students. Students may

encounter problems when they are required to move beyond the literal meaning of an expression and identify the intended figurative or conceptual meaning. Such difficulties can become more prominent when learners have limited vocabulary, insufficient cultural knowledge, inadequate exposure to figurative language, or difficulty connecting metaphorical expressions with their contextual meanings. Similarly, teachers may experience challenges in deciding which metaphors should be taught, how metaphorical concepts should be introduced, what instructional techniques should be adopted, and how students' understanding of metaphors can be assessed effectively. These challenges indicate that metaphor instruction requires deliberate pedagogical attention rather than being treated as a minor or incidental component of English language teaching.

The comparison of questionnaire and interview findings provides a broader and more reliable understanding of these challenges. The questionnaire results provide general patterns regarding participants' perceptions, experiences, difficulties, and attitudes toward metaphor teaching and learning. They help identify the extent to which particular problems and practices are commonly experienced in the classroom. On the other hand, the interview findings provide more detailed and contextualized insights into the experiences of the participants. Through interviews, it becomes possible to explore the reasons behind particular classroom practices, the difficulties teachers face while explaining metaphorical meanings, and the ways in which students respond to metaphor-related activities. Thus, the two research tools complement each other and allow the study to examine the research problem from different perspectives. The comparison of these findings also makes it possible to identify areas of agreement and difference between the responses obtained through questionnaires and those emerging from interviews. This triangulation strengthens the interpretation of the findings and provides a more comprehensive picture of metaphor instruction in secondary ESL classrooms.

One of the important contributions of the study is that it shifts the discussion of metaphors from a predominantly theoretical perspective toward a more practical and pedagogical perspective. Previous researchers have established the importance of metaphors in language, thought, communication, and meaning construction;

however, understanding the theoretical significance of metaphors alone does not necessarily provide teachers with sufficient guidance regarding how metaphors can be effectively taught to secondary-level learners. The present research therefore extends the existing discussion by focusing specifically on classroom realities. It considers not only what metaphors are and why they are important but also how teachers approach them, what obstacles they encounter, how students respond to metaphorical language, and what instructional practices may contribute to more successful learning outcomes. In this respect, the study provides an important link between theoretical research on metaphors and their actual pedagogical application in ESL contexts.

The findings further suggest that metaphor instruction should be made more systematic, contextualized, and learner-oriented. Rather than presenting metaphors as isolated expressions that students are expected to memorize, teachers can introduce them through meaningful contexts in which learners can infer meaning from surrounding linguistic and situational clues. Contextualized instruction may help students recognize the distinction between literal and figurative meanings and understand why a particular metaphor is used in a specific situation. Teachers can also make use of examples from textbooks, stories, poems, advertisements, conversations, media, and everyday communication to demonstrate how metaphorical language functions in authentic contexts. Such practices can make metaphor learning more meaningful and reduce the difficulty students may experience when dealing with abstract or unfamiliar expressions. Furthermore, encouraging students to identify, interpret, discuss, and create metaphors may promote active participation and develop their metaphorical awareness.

Another important implication of the findings is the need to adopt a variety of instructional strategies instead of relying on a single method of teaching metaphors. Teachers may use comparison activities, contextual analysis, visual representations, conceptual mapping, group discussions, examples from learners' everyday experiences, and guided interpretation tasks to make metaphorical concepts more accessible. For secondary ESL learners in particular, visual and contextual support can help bridge the gap between abstract metaphorical concepts and concrete

experiences. Teachers can gradually move from familiar and simple metaphors to more complex and culturally embedded expressions. This gradual progression can enable students to develop their ability to interpret metaphorical language without becoming overwhelmed by its complexity. Similarly, classroom activities that encourage students to explain metaphors in their own words can provide teachers with opportunities to identify misconceptions and provide immediate clarification.

The study also highlights the importance of considering students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds in metaphor instruction. Metaphors are often influenced by cultural experiences, social practices, and shared knowledge, meaning that a metaphor familiar to native speakers may not necessarily be transparent to ESL learners. Consequently, teachers need to consider the cultural and linguistic knowledge that students bring to the classroom when selecting and explaining metaphorical expressions. Where necessary, teachers can provide additional cultural information.

4.4 Teachers' Data Analysis using Likert Scale

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected through the teachers' questionnaire on teaching metaphors. The responses were analyzed using the Likert Scale method. Mean scores and percentages were calculated for each statement in order to determine teachers' perceptions regarding problems, practices, and prospects of metaphor instruction.

4.4.1 Questionnaire Analysis

TABLE 4.8: Mean, Percentage and interpretation

Q#	Question	Mean	%	Interpretation
1	The learners are not always clear about metaphors and the way to use them.	4.0	80.0%	Agree
2	It is common to interpret a metaphor literally instead of metaphorically.	4.43	88.6%	Agree

Table 4.8 – Continued from previous page

Q#	Question	Mean	%	Interpretation
3	Limited command in English affects learners' understanding of metaphors.	4.57	91.4%	Strongly Agree
4	Lack of interest is seen in learning metaphors.	3.86	77.2%	Agree
5	Limited content knowledge of metaphors affects the teacher's capability to teach them effectively.	4.57	91.4%	Strongly Agree
6	Classroom limitations due to syllabus commitments negatively impact active metaphor teaching.	4.0	80.0%	Agree
7	The large number of students in class makes it challenging to teach metaphors interactively.	4.29	85.8%	Agree
8	The absence of visual teaching aids affects the ability to teach metaphors effectively.	4.29	85.8%	Agree
9	Metaphors are defined through mapping from target to source domains.	4.29	85.8%	Agree
10	Clear definitions of metaphors are provided and explained with their meanings.	3.86	77.2%	Agree
11	Learners' prior knowledge about metaphors is checked through questioning or brainstorming.	4.57	91.4%	Strongly Agree
12	Culturally relevant examples are given from learners' everyday life.	4.29	85.8%	Agree
13	The difference between literal and metaphorical meaning is always taught.	3.86	77.2%	Agree
14	There is a proper use of visual aids to support metaphor learning.	3.29	65.8%	Neutral
15	Participation and discussion are encouraged in classroom.	4.43	88.6%	Agree
16	Practice activities for identifying and creating metaphors are given.	4.29	85.8%	Agree
17	The learners appropriately identify literal and metaphorical meanings after instruction.	4.14	82.8%	Agree
18	The learners relate metaphors to their previous experiences.	4.29	85.8%	Agree
19	There are active participation and discussion during metaphor instruction.	4.43	88.6%	Agree

Table 4.8 – Continued from previous page

Q#	Question	Mean	%	Interpretation
20	It is preferred to demonstrate comprehension after metaphor instruction.	3.86	77.2%	Agree
21	Metaphor instruction enhances learners' critical thinking abilities.	4.43	88.6%	Agree
22	Teaching metaphor improves learners' writing and expression skills.	4.57	91.4%	Strongly Agree
23	Students apply metaphors in other subjects or contexts.	4.29	85.8%	Agree
24	Keen interest is shown by the learners in discussing metaphors with peers after classroom activities.	4.57	91.4%	Strongly Agree

4.4.2 Analysis

The teachers' questionnaire responses provide significant insights into teachers' perceptions, experiences, and instructional practices concerning metaphor teaching in secondary ESL classrooms. The overall mean score of 4.23, with an average percentage of 84.56%, indicates a highly positive level of agreement among the participating teachers regarding the importance of metaphor instruction. Compared with the responses of students, the relatively higher mean score among teachers suggests that teachers have a particularly strong awareness of the pedagogical value of metaphors in English language learning.

The findings indicate that teachers generally recognize metaphor not merely as a literary or stylistic feature of language but as an important resource for developing learners' understanding, critical thinking, interpretation, communication, and broader language skills. However, the high level of agreement should not be interpreted as evidence that metaphor instruction is free from difficulties. Rather, the findings reveal an important contradiction: teachers strongly acknowledge the value of metaphor instruction while simultaneously experiencing considerable challenges in implementing it effectively in real classroom contexts.

The mean score of 4.23 suggests that teachers have a strong positive perception of the role of metaphors in language learning. This positive perception is pedagogically important because teachers' beliefs can influence the extent to which particular aspects of language are emphasized in classroom instruction. When teachers recognize metaphors as meaningful components of language, they are more likely to provide learners with opportunities to encounter, interpret, discuss, and produce metaphorical expressions. The high percentage of 84.56% further demonstrates substantial agreement across the questionnaire items and suggests that the perceived importance of metaphor instruction is not limited to a single aspect of language learning. Teachers appear to associate metaphor comprehension with multiple areas of learner development, including language skills, interpretation, critical thinking, and creative expression. This indicates that teachers perceive metaphor as having a broader educational function than simply helping students understand figurative expressions.

One of the most important implications of the findings is the relationship identified between metaphor instruction and critical thinking. Teachers' recognition of metaphor as a tool for developing critical thinking suggests that interpreting metaphors requires learners to move beyond surface-level language processing. Students must consider context, identify relationships between concepts, infer intended meanings, and sometimes evaluate more than one possible interpretation. Such processes can encourage higher-order thinking because learners are required to analyze how meaning is constructed rather than simply recall vocabulary definitions. Nevertheless, this potential can only be realized when classroom instruction encourages students to reason about metaphors rather than simply memorize their meanings. If metaphor teaching is limited to providing students with fixed definitions or lists of metaphorical expressions, its contribution to critical thinking may remain limited. The findings therefore point toward the need for instructional practices that encourage interpretation, justification, comparison, and discussion.

Despite their positive perceptions, teachers identified limited English proficiency among learners as one of the major challenges in metaphor instruction. This finding is significant because metaphor comprehension often requires learners to

possess sufficient vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, contextual awareness, and reading ability. Students with limited English proficiency may first struggle with the literal meaning of the words used in a metaphor before they can progress toward understanding its figurative meaning. For example, an unfamiliar metaphor may contain vocabulary that is difficult for learners even at the literal level, making the intended figurative meaning considerably more challenging to infer. This suggests that metaphor comprehension cannot always be treated as an isolated skill. It is closely connected with learners' overall linguistic resources. Consequently, teachers may need to provide vocabulary support, contextual information, and appropriate scaffolding before expecting learners to independently interpret complex metaphors.

The findings concerning classroom limitations also require critical consideration. Teachers may recognize the importance of metaphor instruction but face practical constraints such as limited instructional time, large classes, curriculum demands, examination-oriented teaching, insufficient teaching materials, or differences in students' proficiency levels. These factors can create a gap between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their actual classroom practices. A teacher may believe that metaphor instruction should involve discussion, exploration, and active participation, but classroom conditions may encourage more teacher-centered and time-efficient approaches. Thus, the findings suggest that improving metaphor instruction cannot depend exclusively on teachers' willingness or awareness. Institutional and curricular support may also be necessary to create classroom conditions in which teachers can devote adequate time to figurative language instruction.

Another significant challenge reported by teachers is students' difficulty in interpreting metaphors conceptually. This finding suggests that learners may be able to identify a metaphorical expression without necessarily understanding the conceptual relationship underlying it. Conceptual interpretation requires learners to move from a concrete or familiar source domain toward a more abstract target concept. This process may be particularly challenging for secondary ESL learners because it involves both linguistic and cognitive processing. Teachers therefore need to move beyond asking students simply to identify whether an expression is

metaphorical. Instruction should also encourage learners to examine why a particular metaphor is used, what concepts are being connected, and how the metaphor contributes to the intended meaning of a sentence or text. Such an approach can transform metaphor instruction from recognition-based learning into deeper conceptual learning.

The teachers' responses further reveal that they frequently employ several instructional strategies, including brainstorming, culturally relevant examples, classroom discussion, and practice activities. These strategies indicate that teachers are not relying exclusively on direct explanation or memorization. The use of brainstorming, for instance, can activate learners' prior knowledge and encourage them to generate associations related to a metaphorical concept. This can be particularly useful when introducing a new metaphor because students may already possess relevant experiences or conceptual knowledge that can be connected to the target expression. However, brainstorming needs to be carefully structured. If students have insufficient background knowledge, the activity may produce limited or unrelated responses. Teachers therefore need to provide appropriate prompts and contextual support to ensure that brainstorming contributes meaningfully to metaphor comprehension.

The use of culturally relevant examples is another particularly important finding. Teachers' reliance on cultural examples suggests an awareness that metaphorical meaning is often influenced by cultural knowledge. When metaphors are connected to students' familiar cultural experiences, learners may find it easier to establish meaningful relationships between the expression and its intended meaning. This approach can reduce the cultural distance that sometimes makes English metaphors difficult for ESL learners. At the same time, teachers must recognize that culturally relevant instruction should not imply that learners share identical cultural experiences. Classrooms may contain students with different backgrounds, and a metaphor considered familiar by one group may be unfamiliar to another. Consequently, culturally responsive metaphor instruction should provide opportunities for comparison and explanation rather than assuming that all learners possess the same cultural knowledge.

Classroom discussion was also identified as an important instructional strategy. Discussion can provide learners with opportunities to negotiate meaning, compare interpretations, explain their reasoning, and learn from their peers. This is particularly relevant to metaphor comprehension because metaphorical expressions can sometimes involve ambiguity or multiple layers of meaning. Through discussion, students can become aware that interpretation depends on context and that understanding a metaphor may require consideration of the surrounding text or communicative situation. However, effective discussion requires careful teacher facilitation. Without appropriate guidance, students may develop inaccurate interpretations or focus primarily on literal meanings. Therefore, teachers should use guiding questions and corrective feedback to ensure that classroom discussion remains focused on developing accurate and meaningful interpretations.

The reported use of practice activities further suggests that teachers recognize the importance of repeated exposure and application. Metaphorical competence is unlikely to develop through one-time explanation because learners need opportunities to encounter metaphors in different contexts and gradually develop strategies for interpreting them. Practice activities can allow students to identify metaphors, interpret their meanings, distinguish literal from figurative uses, complete metaphor-related exercises, and eventually create their own expressions. However, the effectiveness of practice depends on the nature of the activities. Repetitive exercises that require learners merely to match metaphors with predetermined meanings may develop recognition but may not necessarily develop deeper metaphorical competence. More communicative and analytical activities may be required if the goal is to enable students to apply metaphorical language independently.

The findings also suggest that teachers perceive metaphor instruction as having a positive influence on learners' writing and expression. This is an important observation because metaphorical competence may provide learners with additional resources for expressing complex or abstract ideas. In writing, appropriate use of metaphor can make language more vivid, persuasive, descriptive, and engaging. It may also enable students to communicate ideas that are difficult to express through

literal language alone. Nevertheless, teachers should distinguish between understanding metaphors and producing effective metaphors. A learner may successfully interpret a metaphor without necessarily being able to construct an appropriate metaphor independently. Therefore, instructional progression should move from recognition and comprehension toward controlled production and eventually more independent creative use.

The teachers' responses also indicate that metaphor instruction can help learners apply metaphorical expressions across different contexts. This finding highlights the importance of transfer in language learning. Students need to understand that metaphorical competence is not restricted to textbook exercises but is relevant to real communication, literature, academic discourse, media, and everyday language. However, successful transfer cannot be assumed simply because students perform well in classroom exercises. Learners need repeated exposure to metaphors in varied contexts and opportunities to apply their knowledge independently. Teachers should therefore consider incorporating authentic texts and communicative situations into metaphor instruction to help learners recognize how metaphorical language operates beyond controlled classroom activities.

A critical interpretation of the overall findings also reveals a potential difference between teachers' perceptions and measurable learner outcomes. The high mean score of 4.23 indicates that teachers strongly believe in the value of metaphor instruction, but the questionnaire does not itself demonstrate the extent to which their instructional strategies actually improve students' metaphor comprehension. Teachers may observe improvements in students' participation, writing, or expression, but such observations are not equivalent to objective measurement of learning gains. This distinction is important because positive teacher perceptions can provide evidence of perceived effectiveness but cannot independently establish causal relationships. Pre- and post-instruction assessments, classroom observations, and longitudinal studies would provide stronger evidence concerning the actual effectiveness of particular metaphor-teaching strategies.

The findings should also be interpreted in relation to the self-reported nature of

the questionnaire data. Teachers may report practices that they consider pedagogically desirable, such as discussion, brainstorming, and culturally relevant instruction, but the frequency and quality of these practices cannot be fully established through self-report alone. Direct classroom observations could provide additional evidence regarding how frequently these strategies are used, how students respond to them, and whether they are implemented as described. Therefore, while the questionnaire provides valuable information about teachers' perceptions and reported practices, it should ideally be complemented by observational and performance-based data when evaluating actual classroom implementation.

When considered alongside the students' questionnaire findings, the teachers' responses provide an especially meaningful perspective. Both groups appear to recognize the importance of metaphor learning, while also acknowledging difficulties related to conceptual understanding and the need for contextual and teacher support. This convergence strengthens the interpretation that metaphor instruction represents both an important opportunity and a significant challenge within secondary ESL classrooms. The fact that teachers report using discussion, examples, and practice activities while students also value these forms of support suggests a degree of alignment between instructional practices and learner preferences.

However, any differences between what teachers report doing and what students perceive or experience would also be important because they may indicate areas where classroom practices could be further improved.

Overall, the teachers' questionnaire results, reflected in the mean score of 4.23 and average percentage of 84.56%, demonstrate a strong and positive perception of metaphor instruction. Teachers recognize its contribution to learners' language development, critical thinking, communication, writing, creativity, and interpretive abilities. At the same time, the findings demonstrate that positive teacher attitudes exist alongside significant classroom challenges, particularly learners' limited English proficiency, conceptual difficulties, and practical classroom constraints. This combination of positive perceptions and implementation challenges suggests that the issue is not whether metaphor instruction is valuable, but rather how it can be implemented more effectively within the realities of secondary ESL

classrooms. In conclusion, the findings emphasize that effective metaphor instruction requires a combination of appropriate pedagogical strategies, contextualized learning, teacher guidance, and active learner participation. Brainstorming can activate prior knowledge, culturally relevant examples can address cultural barriers, classroom discussion can facilitate meaning negotiation, and practice activities can provide opportunities for reinforcement and application. However, these strategies are most likely to be effective when they are systematically integrated and adapted to learners' proficiency levels and classroom circumstances. The findings therefore support a shift from incidental or purely definitional metaphor teaching toward a more explicit, contextualized, interactive, and learner-centered approach. Most importantly, the results suggest that teachers possess strong awareness of the educational value of metaphors, but greater institutional support, appropriate teaching materials, sufficient instructional time, and evidence-based pedagogical practices may be necessary to translate this awareness into consistently effective classroom instruction.

4.5 Students' Data Analysis

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected through the students' questionnaire on learning metaphors. The data were analyzed through the Likert Scale method. Mean scores and percentages were calculated to examine students' perceptions regarding problems, practices, and prospects of metaphor learning.

4.5.1 Statistical Analysis of Questionnaire

TABLE 4.9: Mean, Percentage and interpretation

Q#	Question	Mean	%	Interpretation
1	Have you studied metaphors before?			Strongly Disagree
2	How would you rate your English proficiency?			Strongly Disagree

Table 4.9 – Continued from previous page

Q#	Question	Mean	%	Interpretation
3	It is not always understandable what metaphors are and how to use them.	3.8	76.0%	Agree
4	It is sometimes difficult to interpret metaphors conceptually rather than literally.	4.03	80.6%	Agree
5	Limited English vocabulary makes it hard to understand metaphors.	4.13	82.6%	Agree
6	Learning metaphors is boring.	3.14	62.8%	Neutral
7	There is always a confusion when metaphors are not taught clearly.	4.1	82.0%	Agree
8	Due to limited class time, gaining sufficient knowledge of metaphors is difficult.	4.07	81.4%	Agree
9	A large number of students make it difficult to participate in discussions about metaphors.	3.8	76.0%	Agree
10	The lack of pictures, videos, and diagrams makes learning metaphors harder.	3.5	70.0%	Agree
11	The teacher explains metaphors by showing how one idea is connected to another.	4.0	80.0%	Agree
12	Metaphors are explained with their meanings clearly.	3.93	78.6%	Agree
13	It is always checked what the learners already know about metaphors.	3.9	78.0%	Agree
14	Examples are always given from daily life or culture to explain metaphors.	3.77	75.4%	Agree
15	The difference between literal and metaphorical meanings are always explained.	3.47	69.4%	Neutral
16	Metaphors are taught through the pictures, charts, and videos.	2.83	56.6%	Neutral
17	It is encouraged that the learners participate and discuss metaphors in class.	3.63	72.6%	Agree
18	A meaningful practice is given in recognizing and creating metaphors.	4.07	81.4%	Agree
19	The difference between literal and conceptual meanings is easy to identify.	3.8	76.0%	Agree
20	Relating metaphors to personal experiences is understandable.	4.03	80.6%	Agree

Table 4.9 – Continued from previous page

Q#	Question	Mean	%	Interpretation
21	The students actively participate in discussions about metaphors.	4.03	80.6%	Agree
22	The understanding of metaphors improves after classroom instruction.	4.0	80.0%	Agree
23	Learning metaphors improves critical thinking skills.	3.93	78.6%	Agree
24	Learning metaphors improves writing and expression.	4.07	81.4%	Agree
25	Applying metaphors in other subjects or real-life situations becomes easier.	4.03	80.6%	Agree
26	It is enjoyable to discuss metaphors with classmates after classroom activities.	4.0	80.0%	Agree

4.5.2 Analysis

Questionnaire responses provide important insights into secondary-level students' perceptions, experiences, and challenges regarding metaphor learning in the ESL classroom. The overall mean score of 3.84, corresponding to an overall percentage of 76.72%, indicates a generally positive level of agreement among the respondents. This result suggests that students recognize the relevance and usefulness of metaphors in the process of English language learning. However, the relatively high overall mean should not be interpreted as evidence that students have complete mastery of metaphorical language. Rather, it indicates a positive disposition toward metaphor learning while simultaneously highlighting the presence of conceptual, linguistic, and cultural difficulties. Thus, the findings reveal an important distinction between students' positive attitudes toward metaphors and their actual ability to comprehend and interpret metaphorical expressions.

The relatively high mean score demonstrates that students generally perceive metaphors as an important component of English language learning. Their responses suggest that learners are aware that metaphorical expressions occur frequently in English and that understanding them is necessary for comprehending

language beyond its literal meaning. This is particularly significant in an ESL context, where learners may encounter metaphorical expressions in textbooks, literary texts, classroom discussions, media, and everyday communication. Students' positive responses indicate that they do not regard metaphors merely as decorative or literary devices; instead, they recognize their broader contribution to meaning construction and communication. This positive perception provides a useful foundation for metaphor instruction because learners who understand the relevance of metaphors may be more willing to participate in activities designed to develop metaphorical competence.

At the same time, the findings concerning students' difficulties in interpreting metaphors conceptually require critical consideration. Although students acknowledge the importance of metaphors, understanding a metaphor involves more than identifying its literal meaning. Learners must establish a relationship between the literal expression and the intended abstract meaning, often by drawing upon contextual knowledge and previous experience.

For secondary ESL learners, this process can be cognitively demanding, particularly when the metaphor is unfamiliar or when its meaning cannot be inferred directly from the individual words. The findings therefore suggest that students' positive attitudes do not necessarily correspond to a high level of metaphor comprehension. This gap between awareness and competence is pedagogically significant. It indicates that simply exposing learners to metaphorical expressions may not be sufficient; students require explicit guidance and opportunities to develop strategies for interpreting figurative meaning.

The reported difficulty with culturally based metaphors is another significant finding. Metaphors are not always universally understood because their meanings can be closely connected to cultural knowledge, social practices, historical experiences, and shared beliefs. An expression that appears transparent to native or culturally familiar speakers may be confusing to ESL learners who do not possess the background knowledge necessary to interpret it. Therefore, students' difficulties with culturally based metaphors suggest that metaphor instruction should not be

restricted to vocabulary or linguistic explanation alone. Teachers need to provide cultural and contextual information when introducing metaphors that depend heavily on shared cultural knowledge. This finding also demonstrates that metaphor comprehension is influenced by factors beyond language proficiency. Even learners with adequate grammatical and vocabulary knowledge may struggle with a metaphor if they lack the cultural knowledge associated with it.

The questionnaire findings further indicate that students consider classroom discussion to be helpful in improving metaphor comprehension. This is an important pedagogical observation because discussion provides learners with opportunities to negotiate meaning rather than simply receive definitions from the teacher. When students discuss possible interpretations of a metaphor, they can compare their understanding with that of their peers and receive clarification from the teacher. Such interaction may encourage learners to recognize that metaphorical meaning is often dependent on context and that more than one interpretation may sometimes be possible. Classroom discussion can therefore contribute to the development of interpretive and critical-thinking skills. However, discussion needs to be structured carefully. If students are left without adequate guidance, incorrect interpretations may be reinforced. The teacher therefore has an important role in facilitating discussion, asking guiding questions, providing contextual clues, and helping students evaluate different interpretations.

The students' positive responses toward examples from daily life also have important implications for metaphor pedagogy. Learners are more likely to understand abstract concepts when they can relate them to familiar experiences. Using examples from everyday communication can reduce the cognitive distance between the metaphorical expression and its intended meaning. For secondary ESL learners, familiar situations can provide a meaningful starting point from which more complex metaphors can gradually be introduced. This finding supports the importance of contextualized instruction, in which metaphors are presented within meaningful situations rather than as isolated expressions. Nevertheless, teachers should avoid relying exclusively on simple everyday examples. Once students develop basic confidence, instruction should gradually expose them to more complex

metaphors found in academic, literary, and authentic communicative contexts so that their metaphorical competence can develop progressively.

Teacher guidance was also identified by students as an important factor in improving metaphor comprehension. This finding suggests that learners may require explicit instructional support when dealing with figurative language. Students may not always be able to independently identify the intended meaning of an unfamiliar metaphor, particularly when the expression is conceptually or culturally complex. Teacher guidance can help learners understand the relationship between the source concept expressed by the metaphor and the target concept being described. However, effective guidance should not be reduced to simply providing the correct meaning. If teachers consistently give students the interpretation without allowing them to explore meaning independently, learners may become dependent on teacher explanations. A more effective approach would involve guided discovery, where teachers provide contextual clues and questions that encourage students to infer, discuss, and justify their interpretations before confirming or refining the meaning.

The generally positive attitudes toward metaphor learning are particularly noteworthy because they suggest that students are receptive to more systematic metaphor instruction. Students' recognition of the role of metaphors in communication, creativity, and interpretation indicates that they understand metaphor as a functional aspect of language rather than merely a difficult feature of English. Their perception that metaphors contribute to creativity is also important because metaphorical thinking enables learners to express abstract ideas in imaginative and meaningful ways. Similarly, recognizing the role of metaphors in interpretation suggests that students understand that effective comprehension sometimes requires moving beyond literal meanings. These perceptions can potentially be used by teachers to motivate learners and demonstrate the practical value of metaphorical competence.

However, the findings should also be interpreted critically in relation to the possibility of a difference between perceived usefulness and demonstrated ability. Because the questionnaire measures students' reported perceptions and experiences,

the mean score of 3.84 primarily reflects what students believe about metaphor learning rather than objectively measuring their metaphor comprehension. Students may strongly agree that metaphors are important without necessarily being able to interpret complex metaphorical expressions accurately. Therefore, the positive questionnaire results should not be taken as direct evidence of high metaphorical proficiency. This distinction is particularly important when evaluating the effectiveness of metaphor instruction. Objective assessments, classroom tasks, or pre-test and post-test measures would be necessary to determine whether positive attitudes are accompanied by measurable improvements in metaphor comprehension.

The overall percentage of 76.72% similarly demonstrates a relatively favorable response pattern but should be understood within the context of the questionnaire design and scale used in the study. The percentage indicates the degree of agreement reflected in the responses, but it does not independently explain why students hold these views or how their perceptions translate into classroom performance. For this reason, the questionnaire findings are more meaningful when considered alongside qualitative evidence from interviews or other research instruments. If interview findings similarly indicate that students struggle with conceptual and cultural aspects of metaphors while benefiting from teacher guidance, discussion, and contextual examples, the convergence of the two sources would strengthen the interpretation that these are genuine classroom concerns rather than isolated questionnaire responses.

The findings also point toward the importance of active student participation in metaphor instruction. Since students reported benefits from discussion and familiar examples, metaphor teaching appears to be more effective when learners are actively involved in the process of constructing meaning. Activities such as identifying metaphors in texts, explaining their possible meanings, discussing alternative interpretations, relating metaphors to personal experiences, comparing literal and figurative meanings, and creating their own metaphorical expressions can provide opportunities for meaningful engagement. Such activities may help transform metaphor learning from a memorization-based activity into an interpretive and

communicative process. Nevertheless, active participation should be supported by appropriate scaffolding because students may initially lack the confidence or linguistic resources required to analyze unfamiliar metaphors independently.

Overall, the questionnaire findings reveal a complex but encouraging picture of metaphor learning among secondary ESL students. The mean score of 3.84 and percentage of 76.72% indicate that students generally have favorable perceptions of metaphors and recognize their importance in English language learning.

At the same time, their reported difficulties with conceptual interpretation and culturally based metaphors demonstrate that positive attitudes do not eliminate the challenges associated with metaphor comprehension. The findings consequently suggest that metaphor instruction requires a balanced approach that combines explicit teacher guidance with opportunities for learner autonomy and active participation. Classroom discussion, contextualized examples, everyday experiences, and culturally relevant explanations can provide useful support, but these strategies should be integrated systematically rather than applied in isolation.

In conclusion, the students' responses indicate that there is a clear pedagogical need to strengthen metaphor instruction at the secondary level. The findings demonstrate that students are willing to engage with metaphorical language and recognize its importance for communication, creativity, and interpretation, but they require appropriate instructional support to translate this positive attitude into stronger metaphor comprehension. The critical implication of the findings is therefore that effective metaphor teaching should address both the affective and cognitive dimensions of learning. Teachers need to maintain students' positive attitudes while simultaneously developing their ability to analyze, interpret, and use metaphorical language. Contextualized instruction, culturally responsive examples, guided classroom discussion, explicit explanation, and active learner participation can collectively contribute to this process. Thus, the questionnaire findings not only describe students' perceptions but also provide a strong basis for recommending more systematic, learner-centered, and context-sensitive approaches to metaphor teaching in secondary ESL classrooms.

4.6 Summary of Discussion

By the above-mentioned findings, it is indicated that certain aspects of teaching metaphors are there. Teachers face issues in teaching metaphors whether it is about the class limitations, overcrowded classrooms, syllabus commitments or students' backgrounds. Moreover, there are some significant practices which are helpful for metaphors learning. When teacher gives relevant examples, it is easy for the learners to interpret true meaning of the metaphor. On the other side, students also showed some serious concerns about metaphors, following meaningful prospects for metaphors learning.

Overall, with the problems, certain strategies suggested by the teachers to overcome the issues which are helpful for the learners.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study explored the teaching and learning of metaphors at the secondary level by examining three major dimensions: (a) problems in teaching and learning metaphors, (b) instructional practices used in metaphor instruction, and (c) the prospects of metaphor instruction. The data collected from both teachers and students provides a deep understanding of the current status of metaphor instruction including both strengths and challenges in secondary classroom. The findings related to the problems of teaching and learning metaphors (table no 4.1 and 4.2) claim that metaphor understanding remains a notable challenge for the learners. Both the teachers and the students nodded in favor that the learners often interpret metaphors in the literal sense instead of conceptually. The teachers unanimously acknowledged that the literal interpretation is one of the major hurdles to enhanced metaphor learning, while the students also claimed difficulty in recognizing metaphors' meanings. This finding recommends that the students require comprehensive guidance in understanding the conceptual relationship between literal and metaphorical meanings. It also supports the principles of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which argues that metaphor comprehension depends upon recognizing conceptual mappings rather than simple vocabulary. Another important finding reveals the influence of language proficiency. Both the teachers and the students strongly agreed in table 4.1 and 4.2, that finite English proficiency, particularly inadequate vocabulary, impacts learners' understanding

of metaphors. Since metaphors often involve abstract meanings and figurative expressions, learners with restricted linguistic competence experience greater difficulty in interpreting them. This indicates that vocabulary and figurative language instruction should complement each other rather than be taught separately.

The study further identified several institutional challenges faced by teachers. Teachers reported in table no 4.1, statement no 5,6,7 and also in the interviews that the syllabus commitments, limited instructional time, large strength, and inadequate teaching resources reduce opportunities for interactive metaphor instruction. The students acknowledged that the insufficient classroom time and overcrowded classrooms limit their participation and understanding. These findings suggest that institutional and classroom-related barriers significantly influence the effectiveness of metaphor instruction.

As far as the learner motivation is concerned, the teachers generally believed in table no 4.1 statement no 4 that some students show less interest in learning metaphors. However, the students presented different opinions, with many disagreeing that learning metaphors is boring. This difference in perception may indicate that students' interest depends largely on the instructional approaches employed in the classroom. Interactive and contextualized teaching methodologies may therefore enhance learners' engagement.

Another explored area of the study focused on instructional practices employed during metaphor teaching. Both the teachers and the students reported in table no 4.3,4.4 statements no 1,2, 3,4 that conceptual explanations, clear definitions, activation of previous knowledge, and the use of culturally relevant examples are commonly practiced. The teachers claimed that they explain metaphors by connecting source and target domains and motivate students to relate metaphors to experiences. The students also confirmed that these practices are often employed.

The findings also reveal that the teachers generally encourage classroom discussion and give opportunities for practice in recognizing and creating metaphors. However, a notable difference emerged between teachers' and students' perceptions regarding classroom participation. While teachers believed that they encourage

active participation, a considerable proportion of students disagreed. This discrepancy suggests that although teachers intend to create interactive learning environments, students may not always experience good opportunities to participate actively. Such differences highlight the importance of considering learners' perspectives in ongoing classroom practices.

Another area requiring attention is the usage of visual teaching aids. The teachers reported relatively limited use of pictures, diagrams, charts, and videos, and students similarly expressed only moderate agreement regarding their availability. Since visual representations can be a facilitation in the conceptual understanding of abstract ideas, greater integration of multimedia resources may enhance metaphor instruction.

The another examined area is the prospects of metaphor instruction. Both teachers and students expressed highly positive attitude in table 4.5,4.6 statement no 1, 2, 3 regarding the outcomes of effective metaphor teaching. The teachers believed that metaphor instruction improves learners' ability to distinguish between literal and figurative meanings, enhances critical thinking, develops writing and communication skills, and encourages learners to apply metaphors across different subjects.

Students also agreed in table 5,6 statement no 6,7,8 that metaphor instruction improves their comprehension, writing ability, critical thinking, classroom active participation, and capability to relate metaphors to real-life experiences.

These findings demonstrate that despite existing instructional challenges, metaphor instruction holds considerable educational value. Effective teaching of metaphors extends beyond language learning by supporting higher-order thinking, creativity, interpretation, and knowledge. The findings therefore reinforce the educational importance of integrating systematic metaphor instruction into English language teaching.

Moreover, the interview of the teachers reveals that the teachers face utmost challenges in explaining metaphors, guiding the students in perceiving knowledge of

metaphors. However, the teachers suggest some strategies to overcome the challenges.

Overall, the results reveal a close relation between instructional practices and learning outcomes. Where the teachers provide explicit explanations, related examples, learner involvement, and the meaningful reinforcement activities, the students report improved understanding and greater confidence in using metaphors. At the same time, institutional limitations such as insufficient resources, limited instructional time, and large class strength continue to restrict the full realization of these instructional benefits.

5.1 Findings

In data set 1, it is revealed that the students as well as the teachers face some significant issues in learning and teaching metaphors respectively. Moreover, it is revealed that there are certain practices that are going on in secondary classrooms which are highly crucial for the purpose of knowledge building in metaphor learning. The teachers and the students also added important points related to the prospects in metaphors learning which are beneficial for English language teaching.

Data set 2 indicated that the time pressure and syllabus demand, large size classrooms and students' previous background knowledge affect metaphor teaching. There are strategies to overcome those issues and the teachers also apply Conceptual Metaphor Theory through asking questions from the students in order to relate one idea to another.

The questionnaires from students and teachers opened series of aspects in a way that they agreed to some major issues in metaphors learning. Major of those issues were limited command on English language, previous knowledge of students, overcrowded classrooms and syllabus commitment. Furthermore, they agreed on the same practices in secondary classrooms like the interest of the students, practice activities and explicit explanation of metaphors. They both have consensus on

the prospects in metaphors learning i.e relating metaphors to previous experiences, applying them in other subjects and class participation.

Overall, the questionnaires indicated that the issues can be reduced if metaphors are taught strategically rather than traditional methods.

In the interviews, the educators revealed that students mostly understand metaphors literally instead of conceptually. It is also claimed by them that they apply conceptual metaphor theory by discussing conceptual beliefs of students. They nodded in favor that the students react much more positively when metaphors are taught through familiar examples. All of 7 educators agreed that the textbooks and curriculum should include more culturally balanced metaphors, examples that reflect local context.

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that there are problems in teaching and learning metaphors but, the teachers use strategies to overcome the issues. The study concludes that the metaphor instruction secures an important position in English language teaching because it contributes not only to learners' knowledge of figurative language but also to their overall language proficiency and cognitive development.

The findings show that the learners face several difficulties in understanding metaphors, specially due to literal interpretation, limited English vocabulary, insufficient conceptual understanding, and limited opportunities for classroom interaction. The teachers also face multiple challenges such as limited instructional time, large class sizes, syllabus pressures, and limited teaching resources. This area was underexplored by the previous researches and gap was highlighted. Now, this study clearly explained the challenges and strategies in teaching and learning metaphors.

Beside the challenges, the instructional practices reported by the teachers in applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) demonstrate that metaphor teaching is commonly based on learner-centered approaches. Teachers generally explain

metaphors explicitly, check learners' prior knowledge, provide contextual examples, and encourage learners in different practice activities. However, greater focus is needed in classroom interaction and the frequent use of visual teaching aids.

The study also concludes that effective metaphor teaching produces positive educational outcomes. Both teachers and students claim that metaphor instruction enhances understanding, critical thinking, writing ability, communication skills, and the transfer of learning to other academic and real-life contexts. These findings reveal that systematic and well-planned metaphor instruction can profoundly improve learners' overall English language excellence.

The study concluded with the answers to the following research questions which described as:

- i. How do secondary school English language teachers perceive and teach conceptual metaphors, and what barriers do they encounter in the process of metaphor instruction? In respect of that, the answer is that the teachers hold positive response and they do understand the importance of conceptual metaphors in secondary classrooms. They clearly define metaphors by discussing different ideas connecting one to another and they try to define metaphors explicitly by giving culture related relevant examples to make metaphors learning more effective. Furthermore, they encounter certain barriers such as overcrowded classrooms, limited previous experiences and less cultural related phenomena in textbooks. Also, they face issues like syllabus commitments, limited time and unavailability of visual aids which directly affect the students.
- ii. How do secondary school students respond to metaphor learning? The answer for this question is that the students try their best to perceive metaphors conceptually. However, there are certain barriers they face while metaphors learning. But, by practical methods and strategies, they learn metaphors through better understanding.

- iii. What pedagogical strategies can be employed to overcome the challenges of metaphor teaching and make metaphor learning more effective and meaningful? The answer to this question is that the teachers define metaphors through connecting ideas, they explain metaphors with their meanings conceptually, they provide relevant examples, and they give practical activities to the students in order to make metaphors learning more effective.

In this study, the conclusion is drawn from questionnaires and interviews that the teachers and students agreed on one point that metaphors should be taught critically by giving proper time and significant strategies should be used to teach metaphors. It requires proper time management and good command on metaphors to teach metaphors.

The study reveals that while several instructional and contextual barriers continue to exist, the educational advantages of metaphor instruction substantially outweigh these limitations. Strengthening teaching practices and addressing classroom barriers can also improve learners' metaphorical competence and overall language development.

5.1.1 Recommendations

Based on the above-mentioned findings of the study, several recommendations are proposed for future researchers:

English language teachers should give explicit instruction on conceptual metaphors by explaining the relationship between literal and figurative meanings clearly. They should be informed about the learners' background knowledge of metaphors. Teachers should follow metaphor instruction into regular language lessons rather than only treating metaphors as isolated literary concepts.

Moreover, greater focus should be given on developing learners' vocabulary with the metaphor instruction to enhance figurative language comprehension. Furthermore, Teachers should activate learners' prior knowledge more oftenly through

questioning and discussion before introducing new metaphors. Classroom instruction should involve culturally relevant and real-life examples that make the learners relate metaphors to their own experiences. Schools should encourage the use of teaching aids, multimedia presentations, pictures, and technical resources to facilitate conceptual understanding. Classroom practice activities should promote greater learner participation through pair work, individual and group assessments and creative writing activities involving metaphors. In addition to that, educational authorities should provide professional teachers' training and workshops that strengthen teachers' knowledge of conceptual metaphor theory and innovative instructional strategies. Additionally, curriculum developers should give sufficient time for figurative language instruction and include more communicative activities in English textbooks. Also, schools should attempt to reduce number of students where it is possible to improve interaction and individualized learning opportunities.

5.1.2 Implications of the Study

The present study provides major directions for future research.

Future studies may explore metaphor instruction at the primary, higher secondary, undergraduate, and university levels to compare learners' metaphorical competence across educational stages. Experimental research can be examined focusing on the effectiveness of different instructional approaches, such as Conceptual Metaphor Theory, project-based teaching and learning, or task-based language teaching, in improving metaphor comprehension. Future researchers can conduct longitudinal studies to explore the long-term effects of metaphor instruction on language proficiency and academic excellence.

Additionally, comparative studies involving government and private schools or rural and urban educational schools may provide a brief understanding of contextual influences on metaphor instruction. Researchers may also investigate the relation between metaphor comprehension and other language skills, including reading, writing, speaking, creativity, and critical thinking. Qualitative studies including

classroom observations, interviews, and focus group discussions may further explore teachers' instructional decisions and learners' experiences during metaphor instruction.

Finally, future studies may examine the integration of technology-based learning, artificial intelligence AI, interactive digital resources, and multimedia applications for teaching metaphors in English language classrooms.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

Although this study provides valuable insights into the problems, practices, and prospects of metaphor teaching and learning in secondary ESL classrooms, certain limitations need to be acknowledged. These limitations are important because they provide a clearer understanding of the scope of the study and the extent to which its findings can be generalized to other educational contexts. The study was conducted within a limited geographical area and involved a relatively small number of teachers and students. Therefore, the results cannot be considered representative of all secondary English language classrooms or all ESL learners. Educational practices may vary considerably across different regions, schools, socioeconomic backgrounds, institutional settings, and educational systems. Factors such as availability of teaching resources, teachers' professional qualifications, students' language proficiency, curriculum requirements, and institutional policies may influence the way metaphors are taught and learned. Since the present research was confined to a specific geographical context, these variations could not be fully incorporated into the study. Consequently, caution should be exercised when attempting to generalize the findings to secondary ESL classrooms in other regions or educational contexts.

The relatively small sample size also represents another limitation of the study. Although the participants provided meaningful and relevant information regarding their experiences and perceptions of metaphor instruction, a larger sample

could have generated a broader range of perspectives and potentially revealed additional patterns or differences. A larger and more diverse group of participants might have provided greater variation in terms of teaching experience, academic qualifications, students' proficiency levels, and classroom backgrounds. Such diversity could have strengthened the findings and provided a more comprehensive picture of metaphor teaching and learning at the secondary level. However, due to the practical limitations associated with time, accessibility, resources, and the selected research setting, it was not possible to include participants from a wider range of schools and geographical locations. Thus, the findings should primarily be understood within the specific context in which the research was conducted rather than as universally applicable conclusions.

A further limitation concerns the use of participants' self-reported responses as the primary source of data. The study relied mainly on interviews and questionnaires to obtain information from teachers and students about their experiences, perceptions, challenges, and practices related to metaphor teaching and learning. While these research instruments are useful for collecting participants' perspectives and obtaining detailed information about their experiences, self-reported data may not always provide a completely accurate representation of actual classroom behavior.

Participants may consciously or unconsciously provide responses that they believe are appropriate, expected, or socially desirable. Teachers, for example, may report the strategies they believe should be used in metaphor instruction rather than describing the strategies they consistently employ in their actual classrooms. Similarly, students may describe their difficulties or learning experiences according to their perceptions, which may differ from their actual performance when interpreting metaphorical expressions.

The possibility of personal bias must therefore also be considered. Participants' responses may have been influenced by their individual experiences, attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and understanding of metaphor instruction. Teachers with greater experience or stronger interest in language teaching may perceive metaphor instruction differently from teachers who have had limited exposure to figurative language pedagogy. Likewise, students' responses may vary according to their

English proficiency, educational background, familiarity with metaphorical expressions, and individual learning experiences. These individual differences may have influenced the responses collected through the questionnaires and interviews. Although efforts were made to interpret the data objectively and identify common themes and patterns across participants, it is not possible to eliminate all forms of subjectivity from self-reported research data.

Another limitation is related to the reliance on interviews and questionnaires without extensive direct observation of classroom practices. Classroom observation could have provided additional evidence regarding how teachers actually introduce metaphors, explain figurative meanings, respond to students' difficulties, and evaluate learners' understanding. It could also have helped identify differences between what participants reported and what occurred during classroom instruction. For example, a teacher might report using contextualized examples, group discussions, or other learner-centered strategies, while classroom observation might reveal that these strategies are used less frequently than reported. Similarly, students may report experiencing difficulty with metaphors, but direct observation and classroom-based assessment could provide further evidence regarding the specific nature and extent of those difficulties. Therefore, the absence of extensive classroom observation limits the study's ability to make definitive claims about actual classroom practices.

The study is also limited in terms of its focus on the challenges and strategies associated with metaphor teaching and learning. While the research identifies difficulties encountered by teachers and students and examines the strategies used to address these difficulties, it does not quantitatively or experimentally measure learners' improvement in metaphor comprehension as a result of particular instructional strategies. In other words, the study identifies and discusses potentially effective approaches to metaphor instruction but does not establish the extent to which the implementation of these strategies leads to measurable improvement in learners' metaphorical competence. A longitudinal or experimental design could have provided a stronger basis for determining whether particular teaching strategies produce significant improvements in students' ability to recognize, interpret,

and use metaphors.

Furthermore, the present research does not directly measure the impact of metaphor instruction on learners' overall English language proficiency. Although metaphor comprehension is an important component of language competence and may contribute to reading, vocabulary development, communication, and interpretation, the study does not attempt to establish a direct relationship between metaphor instruction and broader improvements in English proficiency. Language proficiency is a multidimensional construct involving several skills, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and pragmatic competence. Measuring changes across all of these areas would require additional assessment instruments, a larger research design, and potentially a longer period of investigation. Therefore, the findings of the present study should not be interpreted as evidence that particular metaphor-teaching strategies necessarily improve students' overall English language proficiency.

The study is also restricted by the time frame within which the data were collected and analyzed. The findings represent the participants' experiences, perceptions, and classroom practices during the specific period of data collection. Educational practices, teaching approaches, curriculum requirements, and learners' needs may change over time. Similarly, teachers may adopt new instructional strategies, gain additional professional experience, or gain access to improved teaching resources after the completion of the study. Students' attitudes and learning experiences may also change according to changes in their educational environment. Therefore, the findings provide a contextualized account of metaphor teaching and learning at a particular point in time rather than a permanent representation of secondary ESL classrooms.

Another limitation concerns the complexity of metaphor itself. Metaphorical language is a broad area that encompasses different types of expressions, conceptual relationships, cultural meanings, and levels of complexity. It is not possible for a single study to examine every dimension of metaphor within the context of secondary ESL education. The present research primarily focuses on the classroom challenges, existing practices, and possible strategies related to metaphor

teaching and learning. Consequently, certain linguistic, cognitive, cultural, and psychological dimensions of metaphor may not have been examined in depth.

Future research could investigate these dimensions separately to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how secondary ESL learners process and acquire metaphorical language.

Despite these limitations, the study makes a meaningful contribution by drawing attention to an area of ESL pedagogy that has received comparatively limited empirical attention at the secondary classroom level. The limitations do not invalidate the findings; rather, they help define the boundaries within which the findings should be interpreted.

The use of both questionnaires and interviews allowed the study to obtain information from multiple perspectives and to compare participants' responses across different research instruments. This provided useful insights into the challenges associated with metaphor instruction and the strategies that may be employed to address them. Nevertheless, the findings should be viewed as context-specific and exploratory rather than as universally generalizable conclusions.

Future studies can address these limitations by involving a larger and more diverse sample of teachers and students from multiple geographical areas and educational institutions. Researchers could also combine questionnaires and interviews with direct classroom observations, classroom recordings, learner assessments, and experimental or quasi-experimental methods. Such methodological triangulation would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between reported practices and actual classroom behavior.

In addition, longitudinal research could examine learners' development in metaphor comprehension over an extended period and determine whether sustained metaphor instruction results in measurable improvements in students' metaphorical awareness and language abilities. Future researchers may also compare different teaching strategies through pre-tests and post-tests to determine which approaches are most effective for improving metaphor comprehension.

In conclusion, the present study is subject to limitations concerning its geographical scope, sample size, reliance on self-reported data, absence of extensive classroom observation, limited measurement of learning outcomes, and specific time frame of data collection. The study primarily investigates participants' perceptions, challenges, and reported strategies rather than measuring changes in metaphor comprehension or overall English language proficiency. Therefore, its findings should be interpreted within the context of the selected participants and research setting. Nevertheless, these limitations also indicate important directions for future research. By expanding the geographical and participant scope, incorporating multiple sources of classroom evidence, and employing longitudinal and experimental research designs, future studies can build upon the findings of the present research and provide stronger empirical evidence regarding effective metaphor instruction. Such research would further contribute to developing evidence-based approaches to metaphor teaching and enhancing the ability of secondary ESL learners to understand and use metaphorical language effectively.

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Appendix A

Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Teachers

- i. How do you usually define and explain metaphors in the classroom to your students?
- ii. What are some of the biggest struggles you face in packing down metaphors to high school students?
- iii. Do you think that we could attribute this to the cultural backgrounds of students, how do you apply CMT, and how important do you believe is one's own culture for understanding English metaphors?
- iv. Are there textbook metaphors that contradict with the local or cultural experiences of students? Please give examples.
- v. What challenges are often faced by students when the metaphor examples come from a culture they are not familiar with (e.g. Western based traditions, lifestyles or context)?
- vi. How do students react when metaphors are explained by local or culturally recognized examples rather than textbook examples?
- vii. How do you compensate for the culture gap when using metaphors in English texts?
- viii. How do you bring in a normal life for the students, or expressions from the language and culture that one uses when describing what metaphors mean?

-
- ix. How does the use of visual images, stories or 'real life' help to make metaphors more understandable for your students?
 - x. What strategies might you use to encourage students to understand the meaning of metaphors instead of memorizing them?
 - xi. How do you think you are affected in teaching metaphors by the pressures of time and syllabus, or forms of assessment?
 - xii. What do you think would be most helpful in professional development or training for teachers to enhance their teaching of metaphors in a culturally diverse ESL setting?
 - xiii. What approaches do you think could be used to make the teaching of metaphor more contextually relevant, meaningful, and appropriate in Pakistani classrooms?
 - xiv. What else might need to change in textbooks or the curriculum to reduce these cultural barriers to teaching metaphors?

Appendix B

Coding

Relevant statements from the interview were highlighted and assigned initial codes.

Interview Statement	Initial Code
“Students often try to understand metaphors literally instead of conceptually.”	Literal interpretation
“Some textbook examples are culturally distant from students’ experiences.”	Cultural unfamiliarity
“Students react more positively when metaphors are explained through local examples.”	Use of local context
“Visual images and storytelling make metaphors more understandable.”	Visual learning strategies
“Students remember metaphors better through daily-life examples.”	Real-life connection
“Time pressure and syllabus demands affect metaphor teaching.”	Curriculum pressure
“Teachers need practical training for culturally responsive teaching.”	Need for teacher training
“Urdu expressions help students bridge cultural gaps.”	Bilingual support
“Students should create their own examples instead of memorizing.”	Student-centered learning
“Assessment systems encourage memorization.”	Exam-oriented learning

Appendix C

Teachers Questionnaire

Purpose: This questionnaire aims to collect information about teachers' instructional practices, problems in teaching metaphors during metaphor instruction. The research will help to identify problems and suggest solutions to improve the situation. The information collected will be used for academic research purposes only.

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and select the option that best reflects your opinion.

Rating Scale

Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Neutral (N) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD)

(Please select one option for each statement.)

Part 1: Demographic Data Collection

Gender:

☐ M ☐ F ☐ Other

Age:

Highest Level of Educational Attainment:

☐ Bachelors ☐ Masters ☐ MPhil ☐ Other: _____

Types of Professional Credentials:

☐ B.Ed. ☐ M.Ed. ☐ Other: _____

Total Number of Years in Teaching:

☐ 1–3 ☐ 4–7 ☐ 8–12 ☐ 13+

Grade of Student(s) you are teaching:

☐ 9th ☐ 10th ☐ Both

Area of Specialization:

Type of School:

☐ Public ☐ Private ☐ Semi-Government

Part 2: Problems in Teaching Metaphors

1. The learners are clear about metaphors and the way to use them.
☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD
2. It is common to interpret a metaphor literally instead of metaphorically.
☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD
3. Limited command in English affects learners' understanding of metaphors.
☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD
4. Lack of interest is seen in learning metaphors.
☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD
5. Limited content knowledge of metaphors affects the teacher's capability to teach them effectively.
☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD

6. Classroom limitations due to syllabus commitments negatively impact active metaphor teaching.
☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD
7. The large number of students in class makes it challenging to teach metaphors interactively.
☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD
8. The absence of visual teaching aids affects the ability to teach metaphors effectively.
☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD

Part 3: Instructional Practices in Teaching Metaphors

1. Metaphors are defined through mapping from target to source domains.
☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD
2. Clear definitions of metaphors are provided and explained with their meanings.
☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD
3. Learners' prior knowledge about metaphors is checked through questioning or brainstorming.
☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD
4. Culturally relevant examples are given from learners' everyday life.
☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD
5. The difference between literal and metaphorical meaning is always taught.
☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD
6. There is a proper use of visual aids to support metaphor learning.
☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD

7. Participation and discussion are encouraged in classroom.

☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD

8. Practice activities for identifying and creating metaphors are given.

☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD

Part 4: Prospects of Metaphor Instruction

1. The learners appropriately identify literal and metaphorical meanings after instruction.

☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD

2. The learners relate metaphors to their previous experiences.

☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD

3. There are active participation and discussion during metaphor instruction.

☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD

4. It is preferred to demonstrate comprehension after metaphor instruction.

☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD

5. Metaphor instruction enhances learners' critical thinking abilities.

☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD

6. Teaching metaphor improves learners' writing and expression skills.

☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD

7. Students apply metaphors in other subjects or contexts.

☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD

8. Keen interest is shown by the learners in discussing metaphors with peers after classroom activities.

☐ SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD

Appendix D

Student Questionnaire on Learning Metaphors

Purpose: This questionnaire aims to collect information about students' point of view, problems and prospects in learning metaphors during metaphor instruction. The research will help to identify problems and suggest solutions to improve the situation. The information collected will be used for academic research purposes only.

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and select the option that best reflects your opinion.

Part 1: Demographic Information

Gender:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐

Age:

Grade:

☐ 9th ☐ 10th

Group/Stream:

Type of School:

☐ Public ☐ Private ☐ Semi-Government

Medium of Instruction:

☐ English ☐ Urdu ☐ Other: _____

Have you studied metaphors before?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How would you rate your English proficiency?

☐ Weak ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Very Good

Part 2: Problems in Learning Metaphors

Rating Scale

Strongly Disagree (SD) Disagree (D) Neutral (N) Agree (A) Strongly Agree (SA)

(Please select one option for each statement.)

1. It is understandable what metaphors are and how to use them.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

2. It is sometimes difficult to interpret metaphors conceptually rather than literally.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

3. Limited English vocabulary makes it hard to understand metaphors.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

4. Learning metaphors is boring.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

5. There is confusion when metaphors are not taught clearly.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

6. Due to limited class time, gaining sufficient knowledge of metaphors is difficult.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA
7. A large number of students make it difficult to participate in discussions about metaphors.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA
8. The lack of pictures, videos, and diagrams makes learning metaphors harder.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

Part 3: Instructional Practices in Teaching Metaphors

1. The teacher explains metaphors by showing how one idea is connected to another.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA
2. Metaphors are explained with their meanings clearly.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA
3. It is always checked what the learners already know about metaphors.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA
4. Examples are always given from daily life or culture to explain metaphors.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA
5. The difference between literal and metaphorical meanings are always explained.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA
6. Metaphors are taught through the pictures, charts, and videos.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA
7. It is encouraged that the learners participate and discuss metaphors in class.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

8. A meaningful practice is given in recognizing and creating metaphors.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

Part 4: Prospects of Metaphor Instruction

1. The difference between literal and conceptual meanings is easy to identify.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

2. Relating metaphors to personal experiences is understandable.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

3. The students actively participate in discussions about metaphors.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

4. The understanding of metaphors improves after classroom instruction.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

5. Learning metaphors improves critical thinking skills.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

6. Learning metaphors improves writing and expression.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

7. Applying metaphors in other subjects or real-life situations becomes easier.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

8. It is enjoyable to discuss metaphors with classmates after classroom activities.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ N ☐ A ☐ SA

Appendix E



Capital University of Science & Technology
Your Journey Awaits

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The Principal
American Lycetuff DNK School

Dated: 23-02-2026

Subject: Request for Permission to Conduct Research on Teaching Metaphors at Secondary Level

Respected Madam,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits. I am an MS student in Capital University of Science and Technology, currently conducting a research study as part of my degree requirements. I am writing to respectfully seek permission to conduct research at your esteemed institution (9th March-13th March) involving 9th grade students and the teachers who teach them.

The topic of my research focuses on the teaching and understanding of metaphors in English language classrooms. The purpose of this research is purely academic. Data will be collected through questionnaire and interviews, and all information gathered will be used solely for data analysis and research purposes. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and the institution will be strictly maintained, and no personal or identifying information will be disclosed in any publication or report. Participation will be voluntary, and all ethical research guidelines will be followed.

I assure you that the research process will not disrupt the normal teaching schedule, and all activities will be conducted with the full cooperation and approval of the school administration and teachers.

I would be grateful for your permission to conduct this study in your institution. Your support will contribute significantly to research aimed at improving teaching practices and enhancing students' learning experiences.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your positive response.

Yours sincerely,

Momina Gul Abbasi
MS Scholar,
CUST

Supervisor: Dr. M. S. Zaigham