Nonliteral Language and Adult Learners

What was the goal of the study?

The researchers wanted to explore the nonliteral language performance of adult learners. Nonliteral language requires the listener to look beyond the literal meaning of a word or sentence in order to understand its meaning.

Why was the study conducted?

To explore the nonliteral language performance of adult learners.

What did the study find?

In their assessment, researchers examined adult learners' performance on items that involved figurative language, sarcasm, and indirect requests. Out of these three categories, participants were most successful on items involving indirect requests, followed by sarcasm, and then figurative language. The researchers found that nonliteral language performance tapped into an underlying oral language ability that also influences performance on vocabulary and listening comprehension tests. Furthermore, this underlying oral language ability was highly predictive of reading comprehension, explaining about 43% of the variance in performance on a reading comprehension test.

Who participated in the study?

The participants in this study were 389 adult learners who were native speakers of English.

How was the study conducted?

The researchers used structural equation modeling, which is a statistical analysis used to explore structural relationships.

How can people use the results?

Practitioners may consider incorporating nonliteral language activities into their instructional practices.