

## A discourse analysis of figurative language used in English storytelling on BBC Learning English

Dhila Nurul Azmi<sup>1</sup>, \*Didin Nuruddin Hidayat<sup>2</sup>, Nida Husna<sup>3</sup>, Alek<sup>4</sup>, Sri Lestari<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, <sup>5</sup>Universitas Islam Syekh Yusuf Tangerang

### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to discover the kinds of figurative languages and to describe their meaning in English Storytelling on BBC learning English. This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive analysis approach. For the data, the primary source of this study is Storytelling from BBC Learning English. Secondary sources include books, publications, journal articles, English encyclopedias, observations, and documentation relevant to the research. Based on the analysis, the study found 15 sentences that involve figurative language in the English storytelling. There are four kinds of figurative language: personification, metaphor, hyperbole, and simile. The most frequently used figurative language is personification, found in 5 sentences. Others are lesser: metaphor (4), hyperbole (4), and simile (2). The personification is used frequently, because it is easier to describe the behavior of objects that resemble human activities. Further researchers should consider the differences between each type of figurative language used as a context for evaluating the topic, find figurative language on other English education websites such as VOA (Voice of America), and have background knowledge of literature, such as songs and their features.*

**Keywords:** *figurative, language, meaning, storytelling*

**Article History:** Received , Final revision , Published

### Introduction

Figurative words are commonly used in literary works to emphasize and beautify an expression. According to Loveana et al. (2021), figurative language is also important to learn so that students are expected to use the right choice of figurative language in expressing their meaning in English. Concerning learning English, one of the literary works taught in junior high schools is storytelling. According to Nee and Santana (2022), the figure of speech, an element used in storytelling, is one of the materials in learning English. Figurative learning is among the essential lessons to be mastered by students.

According to Rahim (2019), figurative language has words often presented to be equated, compared, or connected with unrelated meanings. It can be concluded that figurative words are the use of words in a way that deviates from meaning to explain or convey complex meanings so that they are easy to imagine. Often, this figure of speech uses

comparisons so that the meaning or description of something can be adequately conveyed.

Based on the research of Perrine (1969), the several types of figurative language are metaphor, simile, metonymy, irony, personification, paradox, hyperbole, and synecdoche. Metaphor is a figure of speech that uses analogies or parables on two different things (Glucksberg, 2001). For example, if people say a person has a "heart of gold." Simile is used to make comparisons between two things. For instance, "She is as kind as an angel". Metonymy is a figurative language in which an object is represented with another thing generally considered with the concept to be stated. For example, "The pen is mightier than the sword." Next, irony illustrates the difference or inappropriateness between how things appear and how they are in truth. It is a word to convey a contradiction to what is genuinely supposed (Ampa & Quraisy, 2018). For example, a driver whose license was

\*Corresponding author: **Didin Nuruddin Hidayat**, Gedung FITK Lt. 4., Jl. Ir. H. Juanda No. 95, Cemp. Putih, Ciputat Timur, Kota Tangerang Selatan, Banten, 15412. Email address: [didin.nuruddin@uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:didin.nuruddin@uinjkt.ac.id) Doi <https://dx.doi.org/10.30595/lks.v17i1.16249>, ©2023 Leksika. All rights reserved.

confiscated by a traffic officer may say, *"Thank you, Officer, now that you have my license, I can't drive"*. Personification, According to Fitria (2018), gives social features to inanimate objects, animals, or thoughts. It can affect the way the reader envisions things. For example, Betts (2019) says, *"The sun smiled at her this morning"*. Paradox is a figurative language states something opposite or contradictory. For example, *"Even though Grandmother is old, her spirit is burning like she is still young"*. Hyperbole is an exaggeration to highlight a point. It tends to be silly or hilarious. For example. One day, I spent a couple of weeks there." *"I had to walk 20 miles to school, uphill, in bare feet, in the snow."* Last, synecdoche is when a part of something is used to mean the whole thing. According to the designated characteristics, synecdoche is divided into two: Pars Pro Toto and Totem to Partee.

Storytelling is one of the learning methods, especially in English lessons. A teacher can instruct students to do storytelling activities in front of the class, and their friends will listen to the story being told. It is also a means that can raise the ability to speak and listen in English (Tabieh et al., 2020). Not a few also teach students to do storytelling through dialogue that has been made. According to Suzuki et al. (2019), storytelling is a mutually beneficial and fascinating topic from a gathering of perspectives to experts. It is helpful in learning methods and promoting a product. It has several other benefits, namely a growing interest in reading, increasing intelligence, increasing creativity, improving language skills, and making it easier for someone to make presentations. Besides, according to Davis et al. (2021), storytelling has several functions, such as increasing student pleasure, increasing vocabulary and phrases, composing pleasant sentences to hear and read, and increasing concentration. The readers or listeners will focus on the story being conveyed orally or in writing and acquire moral values that can be applied in everyday life.

Storytelling is also progressing; it does not only use speech but already uses tools or media so that someone can find out a story by reading. Several language programs can support it entirely to help provider features users better understand the material in English. One of these programs is BBC Learning English.

According to Luu et al. (2021), through excellent programs provided in the application and learning materials supported by exciting videos, the BBC Learning English application is beneficial for anyone who wants to develop English language skills (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and all four language comprehensions). With this application introduction video, it is hoped that all target communities will fully understand the benefits of the BBC Learning English application and download it on their respective smartphones to be a reference source for learning English. The best features of BBC Learning English are new daily lessons and a choice of study programs that students can take. As well as being the most popular provider of free English teaching materials in the world, with its teaching materials, BBC Learning English helps millions of people from various countries master English. The BBC Learning English application is designed to improve the English language skills of its users by providing learning topics, transcripts, and quizzes that are up-to-date and fun. With reasonable consideration by using the BBC, it is interesting to do research.

A research on figurative language in songs done by Aziza (2022) exploring the figurative language used in a song album. She found 23 figurative language, based on Gorys Keraf theory. Similarly, Mandarani and Ardiansyah (2020), there are some figurative languages in American short story, such as symbolism, hyperbole, personification, and metaphor. There are also unexpected word constructions, such as idiom, imagery, and onomatopoeia. Besides, Maulana and Mubasyira (2021) focused on comedy-central stand-up figurative languages such as antiphrasis (20%), eponym (20%), allusion (20%), personification (20%), and metonymy (20%). Moreover, the last from Nainggolan et al. (2021) showed hyperbole (5 sentences), personification (34 sentences), similes (2 sentences), metaphor (44 sentences), and litotes (1 sentence). The difference between this study and previous studies is the implementation of figurative language in literature works, namely BBC learning English, while previous studies applied figurative language to American short stories and comedy-central stand-up. The research questions related to the purpose of this

study are 1) What kinds of figurative language in English Story Telling on BBC Learning English? And 2) How is the meaning of figurative language found in English Story Telling on BBC Learning English?

**Research Method**

In this study, the researchers employed qualitative approach. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is a method of discovering and contemplating the significance of individuals or groups to a community or human problem. It is intended to identify approximately figurative language in English storytelling by considering the general meaning. This study’s procedures are as follows: listening to the storytelling to analyze the data, recognizing the figurative language used in English storytelling, classifying the data according to the type of figurative language, and concluding the meaning of figurative language in the context.

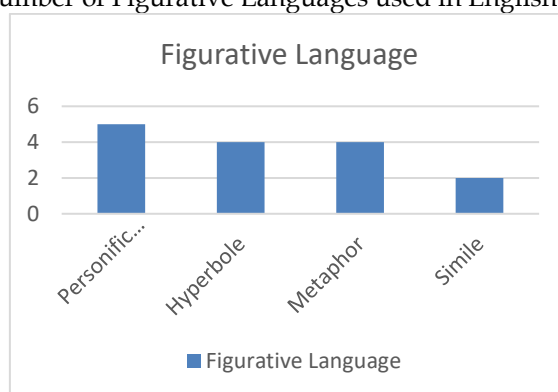
The instrument of this research is English Storytelling from BBC Learning English. At the same time, the object is the figurative language used in English Storytelling from BBC Learning English “Milly and the Rainbow”. The URL was <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtg7jD8dA04&t=302s> published on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The video duration was 00:06:11. Gathering the data

is necessary to determine significant and correct data from qualified sources. According to Leo (2013), There are primarily two types of sources: primary and secondary. The primary source for this study is Storytelling from BBC Learning English. Secondary sources include books, publications, journal articles, English encyclopedias, observations, and documentation relevant to the research. In this research, the data will be collected, namely observation. The researchers directly observed English storytelling. Then, a procedure for data analysis can be created as follows implementing theories related to problems and anything else required for the study’s purpose, providing the data following how figurative language is delivered in English storytelling, interpreting data based on figurative language types, and concluding.

**Results & Discussion**

The focus of this research is to classify the figurative language in the Video of BBC Learning English “Milly and the Rainbow “. The analysis will rely on Perrine (1969) perception. Metaphor, Simile, metonymy, irony, Personification, hyperbole, and synecdoche. The researchers defines a percentage of each kind, and represented the figurative language in Figure 1 below:

Table 1. Number of Figurative Languages used in English Storytelling



Based on the figure, there are 15 data of figurative language found on BBC Learning English storytelling “Milly and The Rainbows”. The figure showed four kinds of figurative language on BBC Learning English storytelling

from 8 kinds of figurative language. The four kinds of figurative language used in the Storytelling of “Milly and The Rainbows” are personification, hyperbole, metaphor, and simile. This study uses metaphor 4 data

(26.67%), simile 2 data (13.33%), personification 5 data (33.33%), and hyperbole 4 data (26.67%). Metaphors and hyperbole have the same quantity of data in figurative language. Personification is one of the figurative languages used on BBC Learning English in the Storytelling of Milly and The Rainbows. On the other hand, the simile is a minor figurative language because it is one type of figure rarely used in this storytelling. The other figurative language, metonymy, irony, and synecdoche, does not apply to this study.

Based on the findings by researchers in this study, it can be seen that personification is the most used in English storytelling videos, particularly on BBC Learning English. This personification is more commonly found in this study because it is easier to use as a description of the behavior of objects that resemble human activities. According to Perrine (1969), personification is figures of speech in which human attributes are given to an animal, an object, or a concept (Sopiansyah & Inayah, 2021). This point is also represented by Meyer (2018), arguing that personification displays human characteristics in inanimate objects so that the object seems to have a life like a human. It is often used in literary work due to the existence of a partition or boundary between humans and inanimate objects, so personification works by removing these restrictions so that humans can live or appreciate them better. As found in the study results, *rain clouds sweep over the hills*. From this sentence, the sweep gives "typically human" characteristics to an inanimate object or creature other than humans (Siburian, 2020). Personification is a figurative language that creates a sense of belonging and connection between inanimate objects and their surroundings (Davis et al., 2021). Many use figurative language because there is a basis that humans are copycat creatures. Therefore, the first thing that humans will do is appreciating the things around them. It is much easier to live the beauty of nature for people who are less sensitive to its beauty if one can liken nature to that of a human being.

The one that is least used is a simile. Based on the theory of Perrine, a figure of speech describes a condition by comparing one thing with another. Comparison in simile is the nature or character. The characteristics of a

sentence can be analyzed using a simile with word choices such as "like" (Erdita, 2021). That statement is supported by Fitriani (2021), stating a simile is a parable and uses the word "as or like". For example, as a result, is, *she whizzed along like a button-up vacuum cleaner*. And the other one *was like a tiny white box with a rainbow in the garden*. It is suitable if dramatic reinforcement is needed but does not have to be as powerful as a metaphor. In addition, it is more suitable for use in non-literary works such as speech and lecture texts because it will be easier to understand in one word or once read by the reader or listener (Siburian, 2020).

In addition, figurative languages such as hyperbole and metaphor are located in a position of not too much and not too little, being in an average position. Based on the theory of Perrine, hyperbole is one type of figurative language of contradiction with a figurative language style of satire. Hyperbole is a figurative expression in which the writing or pronunciation seems exaggerated from the facts or data as stated by Werdiningsih (2021) and Chakrabarty et al. (2022). As a result, these figurative languages can give a witty or dramatic impression depending on how it is used. The listener has to understand what it means. From the result of analysis, an example of this figurative is: *Suddenly, she was shooting back through the rainbow faster than a firework*. In the example of the word type of hyperbole, "The Milly," the main character conveys when he sees the rainbow. The main character uses the hyperbolic expression "faster than a firework." It is an exaggerated phrase. The narrator uses hyperbole to emphasize the ongoing situation to describe to the listeners (Fitriano et al., 2022) so that they understand and get the intent and purpose, followed by an understanding of the impression of the storytelling. The use of this hyperbolic figurative language in the implementation of language and literature learning is also emphasized by Maulana and Mubasyira (2021), who states that teachers utilize the Hyperbole language style to evaluate student appearance, criticize, and direct them. Not only that, teachers use it as a way to convey excessive evaluation or criticism to put students in a dominant position.

The next is a figure of speech used to describe an object or action using a comparison,

metaphor. According to Purwati, Rosdiani et al. (2018), it is a figurative language used to express an equation that compares two things indirectly in a short form. The metaphor does not necessarily compare something with something else but explains an intention or idea (Kosimov, 2022). Often metaphors and similes are considered the same, but the difference between metaphor and simile lies in using the word pointer. The simile will use the word pointer: *like, look, etc.*, while the metaphor does not use it. For example, *the sky was peacock blue*. The sentence is a metaphor because it compares the state of the sky at that time with the colour of peacock blue. The example contains an illustrative language style because it does not have the word comparison but explains its other meanings.

How beautiful and beautiful the state of the sky at that time is like the beauty of the peacock's charm. Both, then, are compared instantly. From a psychological point of view, the effect of this blue color can make a person feel calmer and more relaxed (Yu & Egger, 2021). It is a metaphor because it describes the sky with another specific word for comparison (Kövecses, 2006). Metaphor can add a dramatic effect to a sentence so that a work will be felt more potent with its meaning. The power or dramatic effect produced by the metaphor lies in the contrast of the comparisons made. Therefore, of the four figures of speech in this study is used to compare or explain something so that the sentences become livelier and more convincing.

The implication is that the storytelling offered by BBC Learning English is suitable for use as teaching material for junior and senior high schools, even for the higher ones, because it still falls within their range, compatible with their learning growth. Furthermore, this storytelling makes use of suitable linguistic elements, such as the use of appropriate diction and idioms. Additionally, teachers and students can employ figurative language analysis to expand their vocabulary in English.

## Conclusion

This research used figurative language for data metaphor, data personification, data hyperbole, and data simile. The sum of the numbers is 15 sentences that use figurative language. The dominant appearance of figurative language in Storytelling on BBC Learning English's "The Milly and the rainbow" is on personification. It is due to its easy use to describe the behavior of objects that resemble human activities. Hyperbole and metaphor are located in an average position, and the least used one is simile. For further research, there is better information about the type of figurative language, especially storytelling as a learning strategy; complete information will be used. The current research found difficulties separating the various figurative language forms and evaluating storytelling as literary works. Collections of Storytelling provided at BBC Learning English, such as The Milly and The Rainbow, can be used as teaching materials in learning English to increase students' sensitivity in analyzing and appreciating works in English.

## References

- Aziza, A. N. N. (2022). *An analysis of figurative language in the Album of made in the A.M. by One Direction*. Hasanuddin University.
- Betts, J. (2019). *Examples of figurative language: Guide to 12 common types*.
- Chakrabarty, T., Choi, Y., & Shwartz, V. (2022). It's not Rocket Science: Interpreting figurative language in narratives. *Transactions of the Association for Computational Linguistics*, 10, 589-606. <https://doi.org/10.1162/tacl.a.00478>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Erdita, D. (2021). Translation strategies of similes in "Game of Thrones" Novel. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Translation*, 4(4), 172-177. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2021.4.4.18>
- Fitriani, F. (2021). *An analysis on figurative language in the short story nobody ever dies by Hemingway*. Universitas Mataram.

- Fitriyono, S., Mulyono, T., & Khotimah, K. (2022). Figure of speech in the anthology of literary poetry by aulia irmawati et al. and its implications in literature learning in junior high schools. *ALINEA Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Pengajaran*, 2(3), 477–490.
- Glucksberg, S. (2001). *Understanding figurative language: from metaphor to idioms*. Oxford University Press.
- Kosimov, A. (2022). Figurative language devices and their classification in english. the difference between metaphor and other figurative language devices. *International Journal of Formal Education*, 01(09), 35–41.
- Kövecses, Z. (2006). *Language, mind, and culture. A practical introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Leo, S. (2013). *English for academic purpose: Essay writing* (Andi (ed.)).
- Loveana, N. F., Hawa, F., & Wahyuni, S. (2021). The analysis of figurative language used in Meghan Trainor’s album “Title.” *Proceeding of English Teaching, Literature and Linguistic (ETERNAL) Student Conference, Vol. 1, No*, 418–426.
- Luu, L. . T., Nguyen, T. . Q., Vo, N. . T., & Nguyen, M. . H. (2021). The Need of Applying English Learning Apps to Help Van Lang University Students Improve Their Spoken English Performance. *AsiaCALL Online Journal*, 12(2), 72–86.
- Mandarani, V., & Ardiansyah, N. M. (2020). An analysis of figurative language elements upon an American short story entitled “The Monkey’s Paw. *JEES (Journal of English Educators Society)*, 3(1).
- Maulana, I., & Mubasyira, M. (2021). Figurative language in video of comedy central stand-up “losing arguments with your wife after her brain surgery” by Jim Gaffigan. *JEdu: Journal of English Education*, 1(1), 14–18. <https://doi.org/10.30998/jedu.v1i1.4411>
- Meyer, J. (2018). *What is Literature? A Definition Based on Prototypes*. (No. 41; 1). <https://doi.org/10.31356/silwp.vol41.03>
- Nainggolan, F., Siahaan, D. A., Sinurat, B., & Herman. (2021). An analysis of figurative language on Joe Biden ’ s victory speech. *International Journal on Integrated Education*, 4(3), 364–375.
- Peng, Z. (2021). A comparative analysis of generic structure features in the news on Hong Kong National security law Between Chinese and American newspapers the case of people’s daily and The Washington Times. *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Humanities and Social Science Research*, 554(Ichssr), 120–124.
- Perrine, L. (1969). *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry*. Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.
- Purwati, Rosdiani, R., Lestari, R. D., & Firmansyah, D. (2018). Analyzing metaphoric language style in the novel “Laskar Pelangi” by Andrea Hirata. *Parole (Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia)*, 1(3), 291–302. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22460/p.v1i3p%25p.598>
- Rahim, I. B. (2019). *Figurative language in one ok rock ’ s song album*.
- Nee, C. R., & Santana, A. D. (2022). Podcasting the pandemic: Exploring storytelling formats and shifting journalistic norms in news podcasts related to the Coronavirus. *Journalism Practice*, 16(8), 1559–1577. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2021.1882874>
- Siburian, A. E. et al. (2020). Figurative Language Analysis in Poems of Maya Angelou. *Global Science Independent Journal*, 1(1), 40–53. <https://www.syniutajournals.com/index.php/GSIJ/article/view/169%0A35>.
- Sopiansyah, I., & Inayah, R. (2021). The analysis of figurative language in “Girl on Fire” song lyrics By Alicia Keys. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 4(2), 208. <https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v4i2.p208-215>
- Suzuki, W. A., Feliú-Mójer, M. I., Hasson, U., Yehuda, R., & Zarate, J. M. (2019). Dialogues: The science and power of storytelling. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 38(44), 9468–9470.

- <https://doi.org/10.1523/JNEUROSCI.1942-18.2018>
- Tabieh, A. A. S., Al-Hileh, M. M., Abu Afifa, H. M. J., & Abuzagha, H. Y. (2020). The effect of using digital storytelling on developing active listening and creative thinking skills. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 10(1), 13-21. <https://doi.org/10.12973/EU-JER.10.1.13>
- Ampa, A. T., & Quraisy, H. (2018). Needs analysis of the English writing skill as the base to design the learning materials. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 42, 00050. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20184200050>
- Werdiningsih, S. (2021). *An analysis of figurative language on Emily Dickinson's Poem entitled "I'll Tell You How The Sun Rose."* IAIN Ponorogo.
- Yu, J., & Egger, R. (2021). Color and engagement in touristic Instagram pictures: A machine learning approach. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 89, 103204. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2021.103204>