



## **FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN J.M BARRIE'S PETER PAN**

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigates the use of figurative language in J.M. Barrie's Peter Pan through a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected using observation and note-taking techniques, and analyzed based on Keraf's (2007) theoretical framework. The analysis identified six types of figurative language: simile, metaphor, personification, metonymy, hypalase, and irony. Among these, simile was found to be the most dominant. The results provide important insights for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in comprehending and enjoying English literature and advance our understanding of figurative language in literary texts.*

**Keywords:** *Figurative Language, Literary Analysis, Peter Pan, Semantics*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Everyone knows that language has various meanings that can be developed in all of aspects of communication process. As a part of human life, they will show the expression of their thought through the language and how they can interpret it according to the context. However, the most difficult part in language is how to learn the meaning (Jubilezer Sihite, 2016). Understanding meaning is quite an important aspect in language. Through meaning, it can express many things, such as understanding information, messages in reading, context in conversation and to avoid ambiguity.

One of branch of linguistic that discusses about the meaning is semantic. It is the study how the meaning expressed in language and focuses on the literal meaning (Portner, 2013). Furthermore, the meaning of language also has two types which is used in language, such as literal and non – literal meanings. The literal meaning can be occurred when someone's says the real meaning, whereas non – literal meaning has the hidden meaning from actual meaning.



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However, this study focuses to find the hidden meaning through figurative language in English literary works. Novel is a part of literature that is type of literally works. It can also be said that the novel is a narrative of an experience related to imaginative thoughts (Burgess, 2022). Thus, a long scene is created which is poured into the writing with various genres, several elements, and language style, one of which is figurative language as the main topic. Figurative language is the language that contains the meaning which is that cannot be translated or look it up word for word in the dictionary. According to Abrams (1999) figurative language is a special meaning or effect used to understand the standard meaning of words in something poetic. There are a lot of figurative language that cannot be translated literally, especially when it comes to phrases, idioms or figure of speech.

The researchers was interested to analyze the figurative language in *Peter Pan* novel by JM Barrie. Novel “Peter pan” is the fantasy fiction that contains the children’s adventures. This novel tells the readers about a boy who can fly freely, as we know his name is Peter pan who invites three children of darling family to go to Neverland and meet mermaids is also a pirate. He told the darlings' children that growing up was a waste of time . The writer of this novel is JM Barrie who comes from Scotland and his work, which has the full title *Peter Pan, the Boy who Wouldn't Grow Up*, was first staged as a play in London on 27 December 1904. This study focused on analyzing the types of figurative language found in J.M. Barrie’s *Peter Pan* and interpreting the meaning of each type identified. The analysis was based on the classification proposed by Keraf (2007), who categorizes figurative language into sixteen types: simile, metaphor, allegory, personification, allusion, eponym, epithet, synecdoche, metonymy, antonomasia, hypallage, irony, satire, innuendo, antiphrasis, and paranomasia.

Several similar studies have been conducted by previous researchers. For example, Harya (2017) focused on the types of figurative language and their contextual meanings. She collected the data using a documentation method and followed several steps to gather relevant information. Leech’s theory was applied to identify and interpret the figurative language based on its contextual meaning. Another study was conducted by Tiarawati and Ningsih (2019), who aimed to identify and analyze the types of figurative language in *Ugly Love*, a novel by Colleen Hoover. They employed Leech’s theory and adopted a descriptive qualitative method. The results revealed that personification was the most dominant type, comprising six categories found in the novel. Personification occupied the highest position with 33 instances, followed by simile with 19, irony with 11, hyperbole with 10, metaphor with 9, and metonymy with 5 instances.

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Figurative language is more difficult to understand than it first appears, especially when understanding English literary texts. According to (Firdiansyah, 2022) the difficulties faced by readers and students in understanding novels or English literary works is caused by a lack of understanding of the meaning of a text and the knowledge demands on readers. In other words, some people have difficulties to connect parts of the story or ideas obtained while reading because English literary usually works by presenting poetic words. To have good reading, they should be able to interpret and analyze the phrases or idioms presented. Some people still struggle with language rules and clarity because they do not comprehend the terms and meanings in English literature, which leaves them perplexed.

Analyzing figurative language has many benefits as authentic media in the scope of language learning, especially for students in reading comprehension and also adds information which contains many idioms that cannot be interpreted literally. According to (Yasrida et al., 2017) authentic media as the main key to solving students' problems in reading comprehension. Good materials are essential for students to succeed in reading comprehension because they still have a limited understanding of metaphorical language. Figurative language can be used in the scope of education that have many benefits in learning reading through understanding the meaning of using figurative language and its various types.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design, which is commonly used to describe and interpret research data in the form of words and language. The focus of the research is the use of figurative language in *Peter Pan* by J.M. Barrie. The data were collected from the novel through close reading and note-taking, specifically identifying sentences containing figurative language and recording them on data cards. The collected data were then confirmed and rechecked through multiple readings to ensure accuracy. The analysis procedure involved several steps: (1) identifying types of figurative language based on Keraf's theory; (2) tabulating and coding the data; (3) classifying the data into categories using data cards; (4) ensuring the trustworthiness of the findings by applying the criteria proposed by Ary et al. (2010); (5) interpreting the meaning of each identified expression; (6) reporting the results; and (7) drawing conclusions.

To ensure the credibility of the data, the researchers employed strategies such as investigator triangulation, hypothesis validation, and peer debriefing. In the use of multiple

investigators, data were collected independently by different researchers and subsequently compared to ensure consistency. Through peer debriefing, the researchers submitted the data and analytical descriptions to colleagues for critical review, allowing for validation of interpretations based on the presented evidence. Additionally, multiple theoretical perspectives were considered to support the interpretation and explanation of the phenomena under investigation.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

Based on the analysis, the researchers discovered that J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* contains the following categories of metaphorical language:

**Table 1.** The Types of Figurative Language in *Peter Pan* by J.M Barrie

No	Types of Figurative Language	Number of data	Percentages
1	Simile	23	54.8%
2	Metaphor	5	11.9%
3	Personification	10	23.8%
4	Metonymy	2	4.8%
5	Hypalase	1	2.4%
6	Irony	1	2.4%
	Total	42	100%

Based on the table above, the writer had calculated the percentage of figurative language to find the dominant types of figurative language in the *Peter Pan* novel by J.M Barrie. The data showed that simile brings out 23 of 42 data or 54.8%, metaphor brings out 5 of 42 data or 11.9%, personification brings out 10 of 42 data or 23.8%, metonymy brings out 2 of 42 data or 4.8%, hypalase bings out 1 of 42 data or 2.4%, and irony brings out 1 of 42 data or 2.4%. Therefore, the highest percentage of figurative language lies on simile.

According to the table, can be seen the data analysis and the result of research. Novel *Peter Pan* by J.M Barrie as the focus data. The researchers analyzed and categorized within figurative language types applied theory states by (Keraf, 2007), which from 16 types of figurative language, the researchers merely found six type consist of simile, metaphor, personification, metonymy, hypalase, and irony.

### Discussion

#### 1. Simile

The first type of figurative language is simile. It is a figure of speech that compares an equation that is stated directly or explicitly with something else using words such as, like, as if, same and so on (Keraf, 2007). A figure of speech that directly compares two things using

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words like like or as. Perrine (1982) describes simile as a comparison expressed by the use of a word or phrase such as *like*, *as*, *than*, or *resembles*, aiming to clarify or intensify meaning. Some example from the novel such as *Her romantic mind was **like** tiny boxes* compares a romantic mind to small boxes; *It is quite **like** tidying up drawer* compares an activity to cleaning drawers. Another example *came through on the other side like the faces on a bad coinage* compares details imprinted in the brain to faces on a bad coin. By using the word *like* these examples explicitly compare two different things, thereby creating similes.

The author also used simile in the novel Peter Pan by J.M Barrie, in the form of positive degree of comparison. Abrams and Harpham (2012) state that simile makes comparison explicit using terms such as *like* or *as* to show resemblance between two entities. This theory explains that a simile is a figure of speech that compares two different things using words of comparison, such as *like*, *equal to*, *as* and so on. In a simile, we explicitly compare two different things using words of comparison, making the comparison clearer and more direct. Here are some examples; *pressing this to her cheek as if it were **as nice as a kitten***; *looking **as sharp as a knife with six blades and a saw***. The words *as...as* in these examples explicitly compare two different things, thereby creating similes.

On the other hand, the author used forms of simile to compare the same thing as another thing by using the words *as*, *as if*, and *same as* in the novel Peter Pan by J.M Barrie. Here are the examples: *It just goes out of itself when she falls asleep, **same as the stars***; *Peter sprang erect, as wide awake at once **as a dog**, all traces of human weakness gone, **as if a bucket of water had passed over him***. Those examples categorized into similes because they use the words *same as*, *as* and *as if* to compare two different things. *Same as the stars* compares the way fire goes out to stars; *As wide awake at once as a dog* compares Peter's speed in waking up to a dog and *as if a bucket of water had passed over him* compares the effect of dancing on a person to the effect of a bucket of water being poured over them.

Thus, it can be concluded that a simile is a figure of speech that compares two different things using comparative words such as *like*, *equal to*, *as if* and so on. Similes help us to better understand abstract concepts and create more vivid and interesting images in the reader's mind. By using similes, writers can express ideas and concepts more creatively and effectively, making their writing more interesting and memorable. In writing, similes can be used to describe the nature, characteristics, or condition of an object or subject more clearly

and interestingly. Therefore, similes are an important figure of speech in writing and can help writers express their ideas and concepts more effectively.

## 2. Metaphor

The second type of figurative language found in Peter Pan is metaphor, which, according to Keraf (2007), functions similarly to simile by comparing two different things, but without the use of comparative words. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors are not merely decorative language, but essential to human thought, framing how readers interpret abstract themes like time or imagination. Here are the examples; *Coddle her! Nobody coddles me. Oh dear no! I am only the breadwinner; While Peter lived, the tortured man felt that he was a lion in a cage into which a sparrow had come; I'm a little bird that has broken out of the egg.* In the examples above, the author omitted comparative words and instead directly equates one thing with another. As a result, the metaphor produces a more vivid and impactful image in the reader's mind, enhancing the intensity and clarity of the comparison.

Thus, it can be concluded that a metaphor is a figure of speech that compares two different things without using words of comparison. Metaphors create more direct and powerful comparisons, helping readers to better understand abstract concepts. By using metaphors, writers can express ideas and thoughts more creatively and effectively, making their writing more interesting and memorable. Metaphors are a powerful tool in writing to create a more vivid and engaging image in the reader's mind.

## 3. Personification

The third type of figurative language found in Peter Pan is personification. According to Keraf (2007), personification is a figure of speech in which abstract ideas, inanimate objects, or non-human entities are endowed with human qualities, such as the ability to act, feel, or exhibit consciousness. It consists in giving the attributes of a human being to an animal, an object, or a concept (Perrine, 1982).

Personification allows writers to give human characteristics, feelings, or actions to inanimate or abstract objects, so that these objects seem to come alive and possess human-like consciousness. Here are the examples from the novel; *When you wake in the morning, the naughtiness and evil passions with which you went to bed have been folded up small and placed at the bottom of your mind and on the top, beautifully aired, are spread out your prettier thoughts, ready for you to put on; They were already the only persons in the street,*

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*and all the stars were watching them ; And the smallest of all the stars in the milky way screamed out “Now, Peter!”*

These examples illustrate personification, as abstract concepts and inanimate objects are endowed with human characteristics. In the phrases *naughtiness and evil passions* and *prettier thoughts*, these intangible ideas are described as if they can be physically folded and stored, implying agency and physical form. Similarly, the statement *all the stars were watching them* attributes the human ability to observe to celestial bodies, while *the smallest of all the stars... screamed out* assigns the human act of screaming to an inanimate object. Such expressions exemplify personification by attributing human actions and emotions to non-human elements, thereby enhancing the narrative's vividness and emotional resonance.

Personification is a figure of speech that gives human traits or characteristics to inanimate or abstract objects, thereby creating a more vivid and interesting image in the reader's mind. Personification helps writers express ideas and concepts in a more creative and effective way, and enables readers to better understand abstract concepts. By using personification, writers can create more engaging, memorable, and compelling written works that resonate strongly with readers.

#### 4. Metonymy

The fourth type of figurative language is metonymy. A style of language that uses a word to express something else, because it has a very close relationship with the object it replaces words (Keraf, 2007). Metonymy is a type of figurative language that uses words to express something else because it has a very close relationship with the object it replaces. In metonymy, the words used do not literally refer to the object in question, but rather to concepts or relationships related to that object. Metonymy helps writers express ideas and concepts more concisely and effectively. In this research, the writer only found 2 data containing metonymy. Here are the data; *Of course they lived at 14; If only I had accepted that invitation to dine at 27, Mrs. Darling said.*

The sentences *of course they lived at 14* and *If only I had accepted that invitation to dine at 27* can be considered examples of metonymy. The numbers 14 and 27 are used to refer to addresses or houses located at numbers 14 and 27, rather than just numbers. In this case, the words 14 and 27 are used to replace the concept associated with the address or house, thereby creating examples of metonymy. Thus, it can be concluded that metonymy is a figure of speech that uses a word to express something else because it has a very close relationship with the object it replaces. Metonymy allows writers to express ideas and

concepts more creatively and effectively, as well as create more interesting and memorable written works.

#### 5. Hypalase

The fifth type of figurative language is hypalase. Hypalase is a style of language that uses certain words to explain a word, which must be applied to another word (Kerap, 2007). Hypalase is a type of figurative language that uses certain words to describe other words, which should actually be applied to different words. In hypalase, words are used in an unusual way to create a certain effect. Hypalase allows writers to express ideas and concepts in a more creative and engaging way. In this research, the researchers found 1 datum containing hypalase *He drew back his hanger and for that instant his sun was at noon*. The author used hypalase as a language style in the Peter Pan novel by J.M Barrie. It shows that the sun is already in the middle with its heat. This is related to Tootles' burning desire to try to make Wendy the mother of the pirates. Therefore, it can be concluded that hypalase is a figure of speech that uses words to describe other words in an unconventional manner, thereby creating a specific effect and enabling writers to express ideas and concepts in a more creative way.

#### 6. Irony

The last type of figurative language is irony. Irony is a reference that wants to say something with a meaning or purpose that is different from what is contained in the series of words (Kerap, 2007). Irony is a type of figurative language that uses words to express a meaning different from what is literally contained in those words. Irony is often used to express the contrast between what is expected and what actually happens, thereby creating a complex and interesting effect. For instance, Abrams and Harpham (2012) define irony as a statement in which the meaning that a speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed. Similarly, Leech (1969) classifies irony under the category of "conflictive illocution," where the speaker's intended meaning is in conflict with the literal meaning.

There is only 1 datum containing irony found in this novel; *Wendy, one girl is more use than twenty boys*. The sentence can be considered as an example of irony if the context suggests that Wendy is a useless or incompetent girl, making the statement illogical and ironic. However, if the sentence is used to praise Wendy's extraordinary abilities or contributions, then the sentence is not ironic. Thus, it can be concluded that irony is a figure

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of speech that allows writers to express ideas and concepts in a more complex and interesting way, as well as create a strong and memorable effect in writing.

## **CONCLUSION**

Using Keraf's (2007) theoretical framework, this study examined and classified 42 examples of figurative language found in *Peter Pan* by J.M. Barrie. The findings uncovered six types: simile (54.8%), metaphor (11.9%), personification (23.8%), metonymy (4.8%), hypalase (2.4%), and irony (2.4%), with simile being the most frequently occurring. The frequent use of simile enriched the narrative by providing vivid comparisons that enhance the reader's imaginative engagement. All things considered, this study advances our understanding of literary figurative language and emphasizes its educational value. By encouraging students' critical thinking and reading comprehension, figurative language not only enhances literary interpretation but also aids in language acquisition. As a result, this study offers valuable information for academics, educators, and students, especially when it comes to using literary texts as efficient teaching tools. To find more figurative phrases like allusion, exaggeration, and antonomasia, further research is recommended to use alternative analytical frameworks or examine other literary works.

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