

## Research article

# Figurative Language in Amy Tan's "The Joy Luck Club"

Indradesman Telaumbanua<sup>1</sup>, Anak Agung Ayu Diah Kusuma Wardani<sup>2</sup>, Mirsa Umiyati<sup>3</sup>, I Gusti Ayu Agung Dian Susanthi<sup>4</sup>

Master of Linguistics, Warmadewa University

### ORCID

Mirsa Umiyati: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8335-4220>

Gusti Ayu Agung Dian Susanthi: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0779-3907>

### Abstract.

Figurative language can appear in various types and the meaning may not be determined by its components. This study aimed to identify and analyze the meaning of figurative language found in the novel *The Joy Luck Club*. Two theories were used in this study. The first was theory of figurative language proposed by Knickerbocker and Reninger, and the second was theory of meaning by Leech as the supporting theory. The data in this study were directly taken from *The Joy Luck Club* novel. Thirty-six figurative languages were found. They were collected by observation method and data analysis. The collected data were analyzed by using qualitative and descriptive method. This study applied informal method to present the analysis. The result of this study showed that there are nine types of figurative language found in song lyrics. They were allusion, simile, metaphor, irony, personification, hyperbole, dead metaphor, metonymy, and paradox. Most of the figurative language found in those novels were classified in simile. Four of seven types of meaning used in those novels to understand the figurative meaning in the novel, they were connotative meaning, conceptual meaning, affective meaning, and collocative meaning.

**Keywords:** figurative language, meaning, "The Joy Luck Club" novel

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbol by means of which a social group cooperates (Bloch and Trager, 1942). The form of language may consist of speech sounds, letters, words, phrases and clauses that has been written and spoken always contains of message inside which may be configure into larger forms. Language can be one way to express the condition, with language people can share information, publish their ideas, opinion, and emotion. People have different ways to express their feelings or message in their communication to each other. Sometimes people directly stated or implied what their message in their communication called explicit. In other way, some people indirectly stated or implied about their message or meaning in their communication and its meaning is different from the literal interpretation it's called

Corresponding Author:

Indradesman Telaumbanua;  
email: [indradesman@gmail.com](mailto:indradesman@gmail.com)

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implicit. People are continually creating new expressions and novel utterances by manipulating their linguistic resources to describe new object and situations (Yule, 2010). Some people want to deliver their feelings implicitly, or even they use beautiful arrangement of sentence in order to get deeper feeling from their listener or the reader. This situation usually happened with song composer, novelist, and poet. They make the readers and listener difficult to understand what the composer, novelist and poet means in his songs or writing because what they conventionally says is not always the same as what he or her intends to express. Figurative language is a way to engage with the readers or the listener ushering them through your writing with a more creative tone.

According to Tarigan (1985) figurative language is language that is used imaginatively and not literary. In addition, Figurative language is language that uses words or expression with a meaning that is different from the literal interpretation. Interpretation is needed to understand about the figurative meaning that the writer or speaker put on their language. However, most of people find difficulty when they are reading or understanding some figurative meaning. Novel is the entertainment for a part of people. Most the people love read the novels. There are many kinds of novels, they are horror, romantic, action, and cartoon. The novel is not only be a source of entertainment, but also it can be a source of education. Communication, like dialogue is the most important parts in the novel, the writer can abuse the readers with language style that they used in their writing. Most of novel use some figurative language in deliver its story, sometime figurative language contain in the dialog to make the reader more interesting to read. With the assumption that figurative language is often used in dramas, this research will discuss particularly the used of figurative language in the novel *The Joy Luck Club*. The novel is based on the eponymous 1989 novel by Tan. The film was produced by Bass, Tan, Wang and Patrick Markey while Stone served as an executive producer in 1993. The *Joy Luck Club* was formed by four women in San Francisco. The members have mainly played mah-jong and told each other's stories over the years. They emigrated from their native country, China, remarried, and gave birth to children in America. Related to the background, there are several previous studies are used as references in this study. Habibi (2016) conducted a study entitled "An Analysis of Figurative Language in Edensor Novel by Andrea Hirata" demonstrate that there are 6 types of figurative language in the Edensor novel. There are 20 sentences of simile, 8 sentences of metaphor, 6 sentences of personification, 5 sentences of hyperbole, 1 sentence of synecdoche, and 4 sentences of symbol. Moreover, Hasanah (2018) also conducted a study which entitle "An Analysis of Figurative Language Used in some Poems by Oscar Wilde"

which found results based on analysis the data, they were the poems are A Lament, A Fragment, Sonnet on Approaching Italy, Symphony in Yellow, To My Wife, The 93 New Remorse, Requiescat, Desespoir, Madonna Mia, and Impression - Le Reveillon. Most of types of figurative language used in those ten poems is visual imagery. The second types of figurative language mostly used in those poems are hyperbole. The third types of figurative language mostly used in those poems are personification. Then simile are the fourth dominant, there are fourteen sentences in those ten poems. Simile is the fifth dominant, there are eleven sentences in those ten poems. While the other types of figurative languages used in these poems almost has the same frequency. Then, the contextual meaning was explained in each parts of poems in the previous chapter. Some of them was 'Requiescat' poem, one of the sentence was 'the daisies grow' it means that the writer associated the woman with flowers like daisies and the kind of figurative language is symbol. On the other hand, Magfiratirrahmah (2018) also doing similar study entitled "An Analysis of Figurative Language on the Lyrics of Raef's Selected Songs". In her research, the finding show there were 24 lines of lyrics that contained of figurative language. There were six types of figurative language found from nine types of figurative language in Kennedy's concept they were hyperbole and personification (21%), paradox (8 %), metaphor (42 %), simile and synecdoche (4 %). In conclusion metaphor comes as the most dominant type of figurative language used, while simile and synecdoche show a very little number of usage. Based on previous study above, this research different from those previous study that has been discuss before. This reseach aim to find out the types of figurative languages are found in Tan's novel The Joy Luck Club. This research will describe in detail about figurative language which is seen from the type and the meaning it contains. Moreover, this research find out What types of figurative language are found in the novel The Joy Luck Club? and What meaning do they convey from the novel The Joy Luck Club?

## 2. METHOD

According to Hornby (2000), method is a particular way of doing something. In order to get the expected and required result, method should be used in comprehensive way. Referring to the problems that have already been formulated, there are three components of the research method, namely: data source, data collection and data analysis. The data source of this research is taken from the Tan's Novel entitled The Joy Luck Club, released on 1989. The data collection was done by observation method. The working procedure can be divided into several steps. The first step is reading the novel

The Joy Luck Club repeatedly and intensively in order to understand and comprehend the contents of the story. Furthermore, try to find out the specific statement that related to some types of figurative language that used in the novel. Moreover, after collecting the data from the novel, the collected data is analyzed through qualitative/descriptive method base on theoretical concept. In this research the data analyzed through literary theory by Knickerbocker's and Reninger's theory.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In analyzing the figurative language in novel "The Joy Luck Club", researcher analyzed the data based on the theory proposed by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963), and theory by Leech (1971) as supporting theory. Researcher found that there are nine kinds of figurative language found in the novel "The Joy Luck Club", they are Simile, Metaphor, Personification, Metonymy, Hyperbole, Irony, Dead Metaphor, Paradox, and Allusion. In addition, researcher found four kinds of meaning of in those figurative meaning, such as: Connotative Meaning, Conceptual Meaning, Affective Meaning, and Collocative Meaning. Therefore, in finding kinds of figurative meaning in novel "The Joy Luck Club", researcher found nine kinds of figurative language. First, simile. Simile is state of comparison of two dissimilar things introduced by the words like or as. In this research, there five simile found in the novel. Second, metaphor. Metaphor is a figure of speech that makes an implicit, or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated, but which share some common characteristic. Here there are five metaphor found based on the data. Third, personification. Personification is a type in which a lifeless object, animal or abstract ideas is made to act like a person and thereby gives animation, personification is a metaphor, of course, in the sense that there is implied a comparison between the non-human thing and a human being. It is used a great deal in our everyday language or expression. Here there are five personification found based on the data. Fourth, metonymy. Metonymy is a figure for describing one thing by using the term form another thing closely associated with it. Here also found five metonymy based on the data. Fifth, hyperbole. Hyperbole is an exaggeration of the important word or event, while understatement refers to downplaying the importance. In this kind of figurative, researcher found there are five data of metonymy. Sixth, irony. Irony is a statement of which the real meaning is completely opposed to its professed of surface meaning. There four kinds of irony found in the data which has been provided. Seventh, dead metaphor. Dead Metaphor is a metaphor which has its figurative meaning but which has lost it's a sense through endless use. Researcher found only one dead metaphor

based on data that has been analyzed. Eighth, paradox. Paradox is a statement of which surface, on obvious meaning seems to be illogical, even absurd, but making good sense upon closer examination. Here, there are three types of paradox found based on the data. Last, allusion. Allusion is a brief and indirect reference to a person, place, thing or idea of historical, cultural, literary or political significance. However, there are three kinds of allusion found in novel "The Joy Luck Club".

Moreover, in analyzing meaning of figurative language which found in novel "The Joy Luck Club", researcher found there are four kinds of meaning, such as: Connotative Meaning, Conceptual Meaning, Affective Meaning, and Collocative Meaning.

In addition, researcher use the theory which is applied for analysing the types and the meaning of figurative language was carried by novel The Joy Luck Club is the theory about figurative language by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963), and also supported with theory types of meaning by Leech (1974).

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing analysis and discussion, the following points can be drawn as conclusion: There are nine types of figurative language found in this novel. They were allusion, simile, metaphor, irony, personification, hyperbole, dead metaphor, metonymy, and paradox. Most of the figurative language found in that novel were classified in simile. The novel which are analyzed have the same main theme in which they are about life and love. How the Chinese woman continue their life around the war. How they through the pain of life, and how they tell about the Chinese culture to their children who grew up with most of western culture. Moreover, there are four types of meaning found in this novel The Joy luck Club. They were connotative meaning, conceptual meaning, affective meaning, and collocative meaning. Most types of meaning found in those novel were classified in connotative meaning, such as in page thirty-seven, the figurative language Cloudy face as is shown in the data above is metaphor which has an innocence and the purity of heart and emotions which is mean an anger. Cloudy face symbolized a disappointment, irritation and the hopelessness. How someone get some expression when she get angry, and the expression reference that she doesn't like the situation anymore.

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