

Figurative Language in Novel *The Notebook* and *The Host*

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Abstract

This study was aimed at describing the types of figurative language used in two genres; they were romance (*The Notebook*) and science fiction (*The Host*) and the reasons underlying the finding. This research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative design which relied on words to describe the phenomena. The data was analyzed by using Miles *et.al* 's interactive model of data analysis. Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that simile, hyperbole, metaphor, and personification existed in both of the genres. The reasons underlying this finding were to create tone and communicate emotion, to create humor and abstract thinking, and cultural cohesiveness. These reasons were tied to both the romance and also science-fiction genre.

Keyword: *figurative language, novel, genre*

Introduction

The most important tool that makes a literary work meet its goal largely depends on the words that lie on it. It guides the readers' thinking to various interpretations, and that is the art takes places. In literary works, figurative language plays an important role as it adds aesthetics effect on it by evoking the readers' imagination and emotion. In addition to add arts on words, the essence of figurative language is useful to describe a thing, experience, or condition that is hard to be explained. In genre-specific such as fiction, figurative language is used to emphasize the value that the writer wants to share (Lazar, 2007:2).

Rozakis (1995:331) states that there are 5 kinds of figurative language, such as: metaphor (implicit comparison between two unlike objects by identifying or substituting one with other); simile (direct comparison between different kinds of things); personification (inanimate object given an animate quality); irony (saying something whose meaning is completely different from what is said); and hyperbole (the exaggeration of a situation).

Tajali (2003:11) states that there are some reasons of using figurative language in literature, they are: (1) creating tone and communicating emotion. Figurative language is sometimes used to evoke the readers' emotion. It can be done by using vivid and descriptive wordings; (2) humor and abstract thinking. It can also be used to take the readers' imagination. Their imagination can reveal a humor for them because of the unusual thing happens or exists in their mind; (3) cultural cohesiveness. Figurative language can also be used to represent the way of certain community lives together.

Lonanda (2013) conducted a study about the use of figurative language in two short stories entitled of *Nightingale* and *The Rose*. The researcher found that there were 14 figurative languages from both of the short stories which were divided into 8 similes, 1 metaphor, 2 personification, 2 ironies, and 1 hyperbole. However, the researcher did not mention the genre of the short-story. Thus, it was quite difficult to get the specific point of the finding. Besides, Saputri (2014) also studied about the figurative language used in *The Mark of Athena*, a fantasy adventure or fiction genre. The researcher found that there were 94 sentences that used figurative language; and the most dominant one was simile. The researcher further stated that it made the story become interesting. The two previous studies were similarly aimed at finding the figurative language used in the stories.

However, in order to get a deeper understanding of the use of figurative language, a study on genre specific should be conducted. Thus, this research was conducted with the aim of comparing the figurative language used in romance-genre (*The Notebook*) and science fiction (*The Host*); and describing the reasons underlying the use of figurative language between the two genres.

Method

This research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative design which used words to describe the phenomena. The source of the data was the romance-genre novel *The Notebook* written by Nicholas Spark and sci-fi genre novel *The Host* written by Stephenie Meyer. The data was the sentences that represented figurative language. The data was collected by following some steps, such as: (1) reading both of the genres of novel; (2) identifying the sentences that used figurative language; (3) collecting the data; and (4) classifying the collected data based on the categories of figurative language. After collecting the data, they were analyzed by following Miles *et.al* (2014) technique of data analysis such as: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

Result

Types of Figurative Language in *The Notebook* and *The Host*

Theoretically, figurative language is divided into 5 types, such as: simile, metaphor, personification, irony, and hyperbole.

Practically, there were only 4 types of figurative language used in both of the novels, they were: simile, hyperbole, metaphor, and personification.

Simile

Rozakis (1995:33) states that simile is a direct comparison between different kinds of things. It is indicated by using words *like* or *as*.

Data 1

Like a living ribbon, she twisted and rippled, stretching, happy to be free of the cryotank

Data 1 was categorized as simile because the meaning within the sentence was a comparison between the act of twisting and rippled; and a living ribbon. The form of living ribbon and twist and ripple is not the same, but the action of her twisting and rippling is similar like a living ribbon Thus, the sentence is categorized as simile.

Hyperbole

Rozakis (1995:33) states that hyperbole is the exaggeration of particular condition.

Data 2

He watched his friends die around him; watched as some of them **were buried thousands of miles from home.**

Data 2 was categorized as hyperbole as the underlined clause could not be taken literally. Nobody could see something staying away from the point he stood with his bare eyes. It was an exaggeration of a condition; that was to emphasize that the subject kept his eyes on his friends as they were dead.

Metaphor

Rozakis (1995:33) states that metaphor is an implicit comparison in which two unlike objects are compared.

Data 3

As the whispers of the Healing students buzzed in the far corner of the operating room, **his lips pressed together into a tight line.**

Data 3 was categorized as metaphor. The clause his lips pressed together into a tight line showed that the writer compared lips and a line. Literally, there was not any similarity between lips and a line, but the writer intended to say that when lips were pressed together, it formed something like a tight line.

Personification

Rozakis (1995:33) states that an inanimate object was viewed as if it possesses animate quality.

Data 4

I open the curtains, and the moon stares back, large and full, the guardian of the evening.

Data 4 was categorized as personification. The clause *the moon stares back, large and full, the guardian of the evening.* The moon is an inanimate object which does not have eyes. Thus, it does not have an ability to stare.

The number of categories of figurative language in *The Notebook* and *The Host* can be seen in this following table.

Table 4.1. Figurative Language Used in *The Notebook* and *The Host*

No.	The Notebook (romance-genre)	f	The Host (sci-fi genre)	f
1.	Simile	27	Simile	3 9
2.	Hyperbole	14	Hyperbole	2 2
3.	Metaphor	12	Metaphor	1 4
4.	Personification	19	Personification	2 2
Total		72	Total	9 7

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that both the romance and the sci-fi novel used the same figurative language. However, science fiction genre used more figurative language than the romance-genre.

The Reasons of the Use of Figurative Language in *The Notebook* and *The Host*

Theoretically, Tajali (2003:18) states that there are some reasons of using figurative language, they are: (1) creating tone and communicating emotion; (2) humor and abstract thinking; (3) cultural cohesiveness; and (4) marketing.

Practically, both of the novel genre showed the same reasons for using the figurative language, such as: (1) creating tone and communicating emotion; (2) humor and abstract thinking; and (3) cultural cohesiveness. The analysis of the reasons underlying the use of figurative language on the novels can be seen in these following data.

Creating tone and communicating emotion

This reason refers to the effect of figurative language that causes an emotional reaction. It was characterized as being vivid and descriptive. It can be seen in this following data

Data 5

It clicks and groans and spews hot air like a fairy-tale dragon, and still my body shivers with a cold that will never go away, a cold that has been eighty years in the making

The underlined word *like* is categorized as simile because it compares two different things but one object acts, possess certain feature as the other one. The simile expression is vivid and descriptive as it creates an image to the reader's mind of how the hot air is spewed.

Humor and abstract thinking

This reason refers to the ability of the figurative language to help people play with abstract ideas. This reason lies on this following data.

Data 6

We each had a hundred arms and on each arm a thousand eyes, so that, with our thoughts connected, not one sight in the vast waters went unseen.

The underlined phrases above represented the use of hyperbole because there has not been found any human that possesses a hundred of arms and a thousand eyes. It was such an quite abstract thing and it was funny at the same time because the readers would likely think that it was a group of aliens talking in the novel.

Cultural cohesiveness

The words someone chooses for comparison in similes and metaphors can reveal different meaning among the culture. This reason is implied in the data below:

Data 7

I suppose it has most resembled a blue-chip stock: fairly stable, more ups than downs, and gradually trending upward over time.

The underlined phrase belonged to metaphor. The *blue-chip-stock* was taken from a poker games which was the most valuable chip among the others. However, in other community, blue-chip stock also means shares of well-recognized companies with a long history of good financial performance. The meaning would likely be interpreted differently depending on what community read it.

After analyzing the data, the reasons for using figurative language can be seen in this following table.

Table 4.2. The Reasons of Using Figurative Language

The Reasons	Creating tone and communicating emotion	Humor and abstract thinking	Cultural cohesiveness	Marketing
Novels				
The Notebook	✓	✓	✓	-
The Host	✓	✓	✓	-

From the table above, it can be seen that there was no marketing reason of using figurative language on the *The Notebook* (romance-genre) and *The Host* (sci-fi genre). The reason underlying this finding was because the novels was aimed at entertaining the readers not to persuading them to buy products.

Discussion

This study showed that there were 27 similes, 14 hyperboles, 12 metaphors, and 19 personifications used in romance-genre novel *The Notebook*; while there were 39 similes, 22 hyperboles, 14 metaphors, and 22 personifications in science fiction genre novel *The Host*. In short, the science-fiction genre had more figurative language than the romance genre. In addition to this finding, this study also revealed that the reason underlying this finding was to create tone and communicate emotion, to create humor and abstract thinking, and cultural cohesiveness. All of these reasons presented in both genres, but it was dominantly existed in science fiction novel.

Despite of this finding, this study was a comparison between two genres of novel. Instead, future research is suggested to study more about figurative language in various genres.

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