

Figurative Language Used in Happy Place by Emily Henry

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ABSTRACT

This undergraduate thesis examines the pragmatic study of the figurative language used in the 2023 fiction novel Happy Place written by Emily Henry. The novel, set against the backdrop of a beautiful seaside town, explores themes of love, friendship, and self-discovery through the lives of Harriet and Wyn. As figurative language is an essential tool for evoking emotions and enriching a story, this research aims to explore how Emily Henry employs various figures of speech, such as metaphor, simile, hyperbole, and personification, to deepen the readers' connection with the characters and their experiences. The study focuses on two primary research inquiries: (1) what are the meanings of figurative language found in "Happy Place" Novel by Emily Henry (2) What are the types of the figurative language found in "Happy Place" Novel by Emily Henry. The study aims to identify and describe the language styles in the movie using Perrine's (1982: 61) theory of figurative language, which classifies and explains the meanings of various figures of speech, this study systematically analyzes the textual examples. Furthermore, Abrams and Harpham (2009) theory is utilized to examine the types of figurative language that contain in the dialog or narrative found in the novel. The findings of the study indicate that figurative language in Happy Place serves not only as a stylistic device but also as a fundamental tool for emotional expression and character insight. Through metaphors and other figurative devices, Henry portrays the complexities of human relationships and personal growth, enabling readers to experience the characters' inner worlds more vividly. The study concludes that figurative language enriches the narrative, deepens the thematic exploration of love and identity, and enhances the novel's emotional impact.

Keywords: happy place, theory of figurative language, novel

ABSTRAK

Tesis sarjana ini mengkaji studi pragmatis tentang bahasa kiasan yang digunakan dalam novel fiksi 2023 Happy Place yang ditulis oleh Emily Henry. Novel ini, berlatar belakang kota tepi laut yang indah, mengeksplorasi tema cinta, persahabatan, dan penemuan diri melalui kehidupan Harriet dan Wyn. Karena bahasa kiasan adalah alat penting untuk membangkitkan emosi dan memperkaya cerita, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana Emily Henry menggunakan berbagai kiasan, seperti metafora, perumpamaan, hiperbola, dan personifikasi, untuk memperdalam hubungan pembaca dengan karakter dan pengalaman mereka. Studi ini berfokus pada dua pertanyaan penelitian utama: (1) apa arti bahasa kiasan yang ditemukan dalam Novel "Happy Place" oleh Emily Henry (2) Apa jenis bahasa kiasan yang ditemukan dalam Novel "Happy Place" oleh Emily Henry. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan mendeskripsikan gaya bahasa dalam film dengan menggunakan teori bahasa kiasan Perrine (1982: 61), yang mengklasifikasikan dan menjelaskan makna dari berbagai kiasan ucapan, penelitian ini secara sistematis menganalisis contoh tekstual. Selanjutnya, teori Abrams dan Harpham (2009) digunakan untuk mengkaji jenis-jenis bahasa kiasan yang terkandung dalam dialog atau narasi yang terdapat dalam novel. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bahasa figuratif di Happy Place berfungsi tidak

hanya sebagai perangkat gaya tetapi juga sebagai alat mendasar untuk ekspresi emosional dan wawasan karakter. Melalui metafora dan perangkat figuratif lainnya, Henry menggambarkan kompleksitas hubungan manusia dan pertumbuhan pribadi, memungkinkan pembaca untuk mengalami dunia batin karakter dengan lebih jelas. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa bahasa figuratif memperkaya narasi, memperdalam eksplorasi tematik cinta dan identitas, dan meningkatkan dampak emosional novel.

Kata kunci: tempat bahagia, teori bahasa kiasan, novel

INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication tool for every human as his/her primary foundation needs to deliver information and messages to each other. It serves as a primary tool for human interaction, allowing for information sharing and social connections. According to Fasold, (2015), Language is "composed of separate sounds, words, sentences, and other utterance units," highlighting its structural components and functional role in communication. Therefore, language can be used in delivering human feelings, emotions, ideas, imaginations, and thoughts, whether through written messages such as novels, poems, or magazines and by spoken language such as songs, speech, music, podcasts, and many more. That is why all language aspects is one of the important foundations that may connect human beings.

In the general perspective of language, figurative language is one of the interesting topics to be discussed because it delivers various non-literal meanings and implicit linguistic expressions as a means to make aesthetic results of literary work through the author's mind. Figurative language itself appears in multiple forms with use in different meanings. In addition, figurative language can be classified into five categories: resemblance or relationship, emphasis or understatement, figure of sound, verbal games, and errors. Abrams and Harpham (2009) simply define figurative language as the standard meaning in order to achieve some special meaning or effect. The use of figurative is effective in describing a "thing, experience or condition" that is challenging to explain. Then, the user borrows words or phrases in which represent the thing, experience, or condition they want to describe (Griffith, 1982).

Figurative language is defined as a deviation in the use of words from the literal meaning or simple and general practice. Figurative language has connotative or implied meanings that we cannot find in dictionaries as denotative meanings. Figure of speech is a non-literal way of saying something: that is, words must be interpreted to understand the intended meaning (Elder, 2004: 292). In this thesis, the researcher is interested in analyzing the figurative expressions that are found in novel entitled "Happy Place" by Emily Henry because the researcher found more figurative language in this novel and this novel express the cruel moment in the relationship. Besides, the synopsis tells about bittersweet second-chance romance, Harriet and Wyn navigate their breakup while trying to figure out what to do with the feelings that don't seem to have gone away all with the backdrop of a beautiful Maine coast,

old friends and rolling waves. Furthermore, the figurative language analysis through whole of a novel is not often conducted by researchers. It is usually conducted in analyzing the movies, short story, conversation or monologue in an event, and songs.

This research is different from other previous researcher, because this research analyzes the figurative language through teenager to adult romance plot novel. The main character's imagination and mind creation by uttering the poetic words that represent his characterization is very unique based on his weird behavior and the impact on his surroundings.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research design helps the researcher to do the study concerning the purpose. This study uses descriptive qualitative research. This research used qualitative research. Bogdan and Taylor in (Moleong, 2006) stated that qualitative method is used as research procedures that resulted in descriptive data containing of spoken and written words and people behaviors which can be observed. The focus of this research is to describe and analyze the types and meanings of figurative language used in the novel "*Happy Place*" by Emily Henry.

Data Source

Data source in this study is a novel entitles *Happy Place* by Emily Henry and this novel consists of 403 pages in total and it was published in 2023. The researcher found a number of figurative languages which are 8 chapters taken in this novel started from chapter 1 to chapter 8 which contain a plot of a lovers in a group who has complicated within consist of simile, metaphor, hyperbole, etc.

Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The method for compiling data on the subject for study is novel coding. Because researchers collect data from a new source, they use a novel coding strategy. The novel coding itself uses a certain abbreviation while delivering the data such as *sim* for simile, *hyp* for hyperbole, etc. Therefore, the author needs to take notes as a record to collect the data. Data collection is carried out in the following steps:

1. Reading the novel entitled *Happy Place*
2. Highlighting the sentences and phrases that contain figurative language then writes them into data list.
3. Classifying based on the type of figurative language.
4. And for the final step, the data collected is given the information of figurative meaning and insert to the Excel table.

Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

The researcher analyzed the figurative language in the novel by Emily Henry entitled "*Happy Place*". According to Frankel and Wallen (1993) which stated descriptive method is a method used to explain, analyze, and classify things through

various techniques, surveys, interviews, questionnaires, observations, and texts. Hence, the researcher categorized the sentences that contain figurative language, then calculated the total amount of figurative words founded. Then the figurative words, give the explanation of figurative types and information regarding the plot which told from the novel.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Types of Figurative Language Used in *Happy Place* by Emily Henry

Before explaining the types of figurative languages and their datum examples, the researcher wants to describe the data categorized in this study. There are three parts of words and numbers that are bordered by slashes. The following is an example:

2 / Sim / 6

Number 2 above is the order of figurative languages found. Then the Sim word above shows that the datum is a simile which one of types in figurative languages. And the last is number is 6 which means the page number where the data was found.

In addition to the Sim code which show Simile, there are code terms from other types of figurative languages, including *Meta* as Metaphor, *Meto* as Metonymy, *Hyp* as Hyperbole, *Syn* as Synecdoche, and *Pers* as Personification. These code terms will often be found in the appendix where the entire data citation is included in that last section. The data table above shows the summary of figurative language types found by the researcher.

Table 1. Total Summary

Types of Figurative Language	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Simile	29	20%
Metaphor	26	18%
Metonymy	20	14%
Hyperbole	38	26%
Synecdoche	18	12%
Personification	15	10%

Total	146	100%
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Table 1 above describes the total summary of figurative language data analysis found in narrative dialog sentence the novel entitled “Happy Place” by Emily Henry.

Meaning of Figurative Language Types Used in Happy Place

This section explains about the meaning of each type of figurative language found in the novel entitled “*Happy Place*” by Emily Henry in the narrative and dialog of the main character. The explanation of the data meaning are presented below.

Based on the data presented in the previous table, there are 146 sentence uses figurative language in six types. To streamline the meaning explanation from the results of the data, the researcher only took five samples from each type of figurative language data found as the representative data.

a. Simile

Simile is a figure of speech that draws an explicit comparison between two dissimilar things using "like" or "as" to create a vivid image or evoke deeper understanding. In the novel, the author which Emily Henry not only uses a comparison of humans with an object or certain things, but also compare subjects in the form of a situation or condition with objects of the same type.

Here are some examples of simile found in the novel:

Excerpt 1:

1 / Sim / 3

“Her braids were pulled into her neon-green scrunchie and her clothes smelled like turpentine”

This part where the beginning of the story begins where one of the main characters which Harriet explained, namely Cleo. Quite different with the main character who appears such as a normal college student but Cleo identifies such an artsy girl who appears in the quirky outfit style with one line color and the accessories that attached into her body

The example of the sentence above is considered as simile, because “*her clothes*” as a main subject is equated with the “*smelled like turpentine*” the turpentine itself is not a solvent fluid extracted by distilling resin from live trees, mainly pines. But is a smelled that appears because of the outfits Sabrina’s color that make imagination of the identical of green color which is trees in the jungle. Also, there are supporting argument from the first one “*Her braids were pulled into her neon-green scrunchie*” that make all of them were related into one imagination that Sabrina wears green clothes and all of her accessories packed in harmony of green color.

Excerpt 2:

2 / Sim / 5

“Some passengers in the back burst into applause, and I yank out my earbuds, anxiety lifting off me like dandelion seeds.”

This text talked about Harriet that going back into her home after she finish her residency program in abroad country. She going back to London to continue her degree as surgeon. However we can see that sentence on the above telling about Sabrina condition in the transportation that include amount of people called plane.

The sentence above is categorized as simile which has an indicator “like” in that sentence. The author mentioned about Sabrina condition in the first sentence while she in the condition among of people and in airplane. Some people nowadays feeling anxious while he or she is among the group of people *“anxiety lifting off me like dandelion seeds.”* In this sentence telling about Sabrina feeling’s while she in the plane feeling of worried because still mostly people are afraid while they on the plane but all of the anxiousness went off *“like dandelion seeds”* the dandelion seeds is the figurative expression about the anxious felling. And because people are getting prepared to settle down and mentioned in this sentence *“Some passengers in the back burst into applause”* it means the destination has reached.

b. Metaphor

Metaphor goes beyond a direct comparison like similes, as it asserts that one thing *is* another. This creates a more intimate and impactful connection between the two subjects being compared. Unlike similes, metaphors do not rely on “like” or “as,” instead making the comparison through implication, which leads to stronger, more nuanced associations.

Like simile, Emily Henry uses the metaphor in this novel not only to compare a person with another thing but compare one situation with another that is more fantastic as a depiction of an events.

The following are the samples of data taken from the novel.

Excerpt 1:

3 / Meta / 3

“The shouting always gave way to an even deeper silence after,”

This line describes a recurring pattern in the characters' interactions, likely referencing moments of intense conflict or arguments that are followed by a heavy, uncomfortable silence. Instead of simply saying that arguments lead to quiet, the sentence uses metaphor to deepen the impact of that silence, portraying it as *“deeper”* than the noise of shouting. Here, silence becomes more than the absence of sound; it is almost a physical presence, something heavier and more profound than the loudness that preceded it.

Excerpt 2:

5 / Meta / 5

“The vast, brilliant expanse of the sky makes my heart flutter, no imagination required.”

This line captures a moment of awe and emotional response to nature, where the narrator, likely Harriet, finds herself deeply moved by the beauty of the sky. Instead of merely stating that the sky is beautiful, the author uses metaphor to convey the impact of the sky’s grandeur on Harriet’s emotions. The phrase *“makes my heart flutter”* suggests that the sky’s beauty is so overwhelming that it causes a physical, almost involuntary reaction in Harriet. Her heart doesn’t actually flutter like wings, but this metaphor vividly expresses the excitement, wonder, and slight nervousness she feels in the presence of something so vast and beautiful.

c. Metonymy

Metonymy is a figure of speech that substitutes the name of one object or concept for another to which it is closely related, rather than using direct comparison. Metonymy enhances the efficiency of language, often simplifying or condensing ideas while still invoking a broader context.

Excerption 1:

1 / Meto / 13

““Huh,” Kimmy says. “I was wondering what Danny DeVito was doing here.””

This line reveals Kimmy’s sense of humor and her knack for using pop culture references to make her friends laugh. Danny DeVito, an American actor, producer, and director, is known for his unique appearance, short stature, and unforgettable personality. DeVito’s iconic roles often showcase his quirky charm, larger-than-life attitude, and distinct comedic presence, making him a recognizable figure in popular culture. By referencing him here, Kimmy quickly conveys an image of someone who, in her eyes, has qualities or an appearance similar to DeVito’s.

Excerption 2:

5 / Meta / 5

“The vast, brilliant expanse of the sky makes my heart flutter, no imagination required.”

This line captures a moment of awe and emotional response to nature, where the narrator, likely Harriet, finds herself deeply moved by the beauty of the sky. Instead of merely stating that the sky is beautiful, the author uses metaphor to convey the impact of the sky’s grandeur on Harriet’s emotions. The phrase *“makes my heart flutter”* suggests that the sky’s beauty is so overwhelming that it causes a physical, almost involuntary reaction in Harriet. Her heart doesn’t actually flutter like wings, but this metaphor vividly expresses the excitement, wonder, and slight nervousness she feels in the presence of something so vast and beautiful.

d. Hyperbole

Hyperbole involves deliberate exaggeration for effect. It is not meant to be taken literally but is used to emphasize a point or to create a dramatic or humorous impact.

In the novel, researchers find varied hyperbole in sentence and phrases and are arranged with many different forms. As already stated in the first table that this type of figurative language is the type most found in the novel to give a deeper impression of describing an ordinary condition.

Here some data are taken from the novel.

Excerpt 1:

1 / Hyp / 5

"In mere minutes, after the longest year of my life, I'll reunited with my favorite people in the world."

This part is the moment when Harriet back to London

Based on the situation of the sentence above, Harriet was back from the residency program which she took her medical education specifically in surgeon. Within the sentence Harriet tells her feeling through in heart.

Excerpt 2:

3 / Hyp / 7

"She's crawled in her god - awful serial-killer handwriting"

This sentence appears in the early part of the story, setting a humorous and exaggerated tone as the narrator describes another character's handwriting. Unlike a straightforward description that might label the handwriting as simply messy or illegible, this sentence takes it to an extreme level, amplifying the effect to evoke a strong, humorous reaction from readers. Instead of merely critiquing the handwriting, the author uses hyperbole to highlight just how chaotic or unsettling it appears to the narrator.

e. Synecdoche

Synecdoche is a specific type of figurative language where a part of something is used to represent the whole, or conversely, the whole is used to represent a part. This figure of speech is often employed to draw attention to a specific aspect of an object or idea, thus highlighting its significance.

Excerpt 1:

1 / Syn / 3

"I loved poring over my biology textbooks, running out of highlighter as I Went"

This sentence reveals a lot about the character's dedication and enthusiasm for learning, particularly in biology. Here, "running out of highlighter" serves as a synecdoche, representing the extensive amount of studying and highlighting the character does. The highlighter, a small part of the study process, stands in for the larger effort, time, and energy the character invests in studying biology. Rather than explicitly stating that she studies for hours or is deeply absorbed in her textbooks, the mention of "running out of highlighter" implies this dedication subtly and effectively.

Excerpt 2:

5 / Syn / 7

"She until strikes me the same as that first day we met"

This line captures a nostalgic and powerful sentiment, where the narrator reflects on their unchanged impression of a character, likely Sabrina, since the moment they first met. The phrase "the same as that first day we met" serves as a synecdoche, with "first day" symbolizing the entirety of the initial experience, emotions, and impressions associated with meeting Sabrina for the first time. Rather than recalling every detail or describing how Sabrina looked or acted, the narrator uses "first day" as shorthand to evoke a specific memory and feeling from that pivotal moment.

f. Personification

Personification is a type of figurative language where human qualities are attributed to non-human objects, animals, or abstract concepts. By imbuing inanimate objects or abstract ideas with human traits, personification creates an emotional connection between the reader and the subject.

Excerpt 1:

1 / Pers / 9

"Tragic," she tuts. The car's engine growls to life"

This line serves as an introduction to one of the main characters, Harriet. She is depicted as having a unique perspective, as indicated by her casual use of the word "Tragic" and her interaction with the environment around her. Unlike other characters who may respond more neutrally, Harriet's reaction and the description of the car's engine reveal a dynamic personality. The car, in turn, is anthropomorphized with its engine described as "growling," a sound typically associated with animals rather than machines.

Excerpt 2:

3 / Pers / 17

"Now my whole brain seems to be on fire, random pieces of data flying at me"

This part appears early in the story, where the main character, Harriet, is experiencing intense mental strain. Quite different from a calm or focused character, Harriet here is shown to be overwhelmed, her mind racing as she attempts to process an overload of information. Instead of simply saying she feels stressed, the author uses vivid imagery and personification to emphasize the intensity of her experience.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we analyzed the types and meanings of figurative language found in *Happy Place* by Emily Henry. Using Abrams and Harpham's theory as a framework, we identified six primary types of figurative language: simile, metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, synecdoche, and personification. Each type was represented with varied expressions throughout the novel, contributing to the richness and depth of the text.

The analysis revealed that hyperbole was the most frequently used type, which emphasizes the emotional intensity and dramatic moments in the novel, especially in the portrayal of relationships and internal conflicts. Similes and metaphors also played a significant role, adding vivid imagery and enabling readers to connect more deeply with the characters' experiences and emotions. Personification and metonymy added layers of symbolic meaning, enhancing the relatability of the settings and scenarios, while synecdoche provided subtle emphasis on particular aspects of characters and settings.

Overall, figurative language in *Happy Place* serves not only to beautify the text but also to offer insights into character development and thematic elements. Through these devices, the author is able to express complex emotions, relationships, and internal struggles in a relatable way, allowing readers to engage more fully with the narrative. This study contributes to the understanding of how figurative language enriches literary works, making characters and their experiences resonate on a more profound level with readers.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are offered to expand the analysis of figurative language in literature and its applications in education and research.

First, future research could explore the use of figurative language across various literary genres beyond romance, such as fantasy, science fiction, or historical fiction. Each genre has its own conventions and stylistic approaches, which may influence the use of figurative language. Examining how different genres employ devices like metaphor, simile, or personification could provide a broader understanding of the role figurative language plays in enhancing narrative and thematic depth in diverse contexts.

Second, comparative studies could be conducted to analyze figurative language across multiple works by the same author or by different authors in similar genres. For instance, comparing Emily Henry's *Happy Place* with other contemporary romance novels could highlight unique stylistic choices and reveal common patterns in the use of figurative language within the romance genre. This approach may offer insights into authorial style and how specific figurative devices contribute to genre-specific themes and character dynamics.

Third, the findings of this study could have valuable applications in educational settings, particularly in literature and language arts curricula. Educators may consider incorporating examples of figurative language from *Happy Place* or similar modern novels to engage students and enhance their understanding of literary devices. Using contemporary works that students find relatable can make learning about figurative language more accessible and enjoyable, fostering an appreciation for literary analysis.

Lastly, future studies might focus on the cultural implications of figurative language, particularly in novels that incorporate diverse cultural elements. Figurative expressions often rely on shared cultural understandings, and analyzing how cultural context affects interpretation could deepen insights into the universal and culturally specific aspects of figurative language. Such studies could be especially useful in cross-cultural literary analysis, helping readers appreciate how figurative language shapes and reflects cultural identities.

These suggestions aim to encourage further exploration and application of figurative language analysis, underscoring its importance in enriching literature and enhancing readers' emotional engagement and understanding.

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