



# Figurative Language Used in the Reviews of *World of Warcraft* Game

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## Abstract

*This study aims to investigate the types of figurative language used in online reviews of a game. The method applied in the study was qualitative. The data were obtained from ten online reviews of the World of Warcraft game found on the internet. The data were analyzed using a stylistic approach. The results show that four types of figurative language tend to be used in the reviews. They are hyperbole (40%), personification (24%), simile (23%), and metaphor (13%).*

**Keywords:** *figurative language, online reviews, game*

## Introduction

A review is defined as a critical appraisal of a book, play, film, etc. published in a newspaper or magazine (online dictionary.com). With the advancement of information technology, a review is not only found in newspapers or magazines but also on the web. As a result, online reviews are very common nowadays. Online reviews are not only about books, plays, or films, but also about anything, such as cosmetics, hotels, or games. Furthermore, a review is a kind of evaluation of something which may help the potential user or consumer make a decision about whether to use or buy the product or not. In other words, a review is a tool of word-of-mouth communication (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004) that can influence consumers' evaluation of products, purchasing decisions, and purchasing behaviors (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004). Persuasive language, like figurative one, has been used a lot in advertising products both tangible and intangible. So, this study raised an issue about what types of figurative language are mostly used, especially in online reviews of games.

The use of figurative language has been well investigated. It has been conducted in novels (Harun et al., 2020; Lubis, 2020), song lyrics (Milana & Ardi, 2020; Swarniti, 2022), news (Al-khasawneh, 2022; Shen & Wang, 2019), and online product reviews (Wu et al., 2017) to mention a few. However, the study of figurative language focusing on online review games has not been found yet as far as my concern. Hence, this study took the opportunity to enhance the study of figurative language in online reviews of a game.

Figurative language generally refers to speech where speakers mean something other than what they say (Gibbs Jr & Colston, 2012). It may appear in various figures of speech, like hyperbole, simile,

metaphor, personification, etc. understanding the figurative language has significance for several reasons. It may persuade consumers in purchasing a product. In the novel, as revealed by (Harun et al., 2020), it becomes a powerful device to represent the social, political, and cultural problems in Aceh during the conflict, and post-conflict era. In general, understanding figurative language may help English language learners to gain communicative competence. Thus, this study addressed two questions in this study.

1. What figures of speech are commonly used in online reviews of the game?
2. What is the interpretation of the figures?

## Theoretical Framework

### Figurative Language

Figurative language is defined as a language whose meaning is not literal. The purpose of using such a language is to give special aesthetic value or to persuade. Figurative language appears to be several categories some of which are hyperbole, metaphor, personification, and simile. Each of these types is accounted for below.

#### Hyperbole

Hyperbole has been used since classical Greek which refers to exaggeration. It is associated with the stylistic devices commonly used in love poetry, sagas, tall tales, classical mythology, political rhetoric, and advertising (Claridge, 2011). In advertising, for example, the function of hyperbole is to persuade as the nature of advertising is to make people buy a product. Saeed (2016) exemplified hyperbole below.

- 1) *I've read this millions of times.*
- 2) *You're the only woman in my life.*

#### Metaphor

According to Leech (1980), metaphor refers to a covert comparison. It means it is a figure of speech which implied the comparison between two different entities as defined in Encyclopaedia Britannica (Kövecses, 2010). Sentence 3 is the example.

- 3) *Achilles was a lion in the fight.*

In this sentence, a lion is considered a metaphor. It is possible to make the metaphorical identification since both *Achilles* and *lion* have something in common: bravery and strength.

#### Personification

Personification or *prosopopoeia* is defined as the rhetorical figure by which something not human is given a human identity or 'face' (Melion & Ramakers, 2016). Defisyani et al., (2018) exemplified personification in advertising below.

- 4) *Beautiful moments are born in the shower.*

### Simile

This figure of language is overt comparison which is the opposite of metaphor (Leech, 1980). Thus, simile offers explicit comparison. Unlike metaphor, it has comparison markers, such as, like, as, and like as which are easily recognized. Two examples from (Skorupa & Dubovi, 2015) illustrate this figure of speech.

- 5) *Easy as Dell*
- 6) *Now hands that do dishes can feel soft as your face.*

### Method

The source of data from this descriptive qualitative study applied is a document in the form of a review of an online game called World of Warcraft Game. Documentation is one of basic characteristics of qualitative a method as listed by Cresswell (2018, p. 257). The data were obtained from 10 reviews of an online game called "World of Warcraft Game". Before analyzing the data, figurative language types in each review were selected. Then they were classified based on the type. The classification was presented in figure 1. After that, they were analyzed according to the features of each type. The last, the conclusion was drawn based on the analysis. The stages of analysis are illustrated in the figure below.

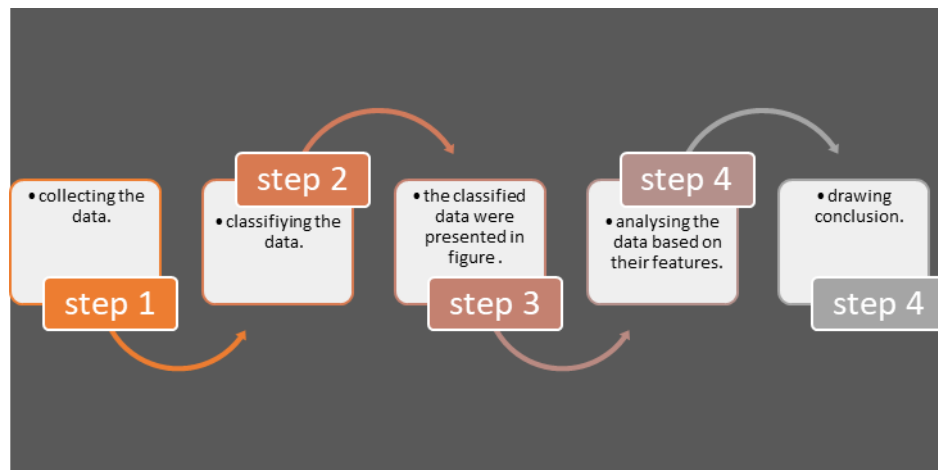


Figure 1. The steps of analysis

## Results and Discussion

### Results

Figure 1 shows that there are four types of figurative language found in 10 reviews of the World of Warcraft game. They are hyperbole (40%), personification (24%), simile (23%), metaphor (13%). In other words, in game reviews, hyperbole is the most frequently figure used, followed by

personification, simile, and metaphor. Although, the findings of Defisyani et al. (2018) who studied figurative language on products' advertisements look similar, but they only found three kinds of figure, namely, personification, simile, and hyperbole in which personification is in the first place which is different from the findings of this study. In contrast, (Harun et al., 2020) who found seven kinds of figures (simile, satire, hyperbole, metonymy, metaphor, sarcasm, synecdoche, personification, and irony) in a novel, simile appears to be the most frequent occurrence.

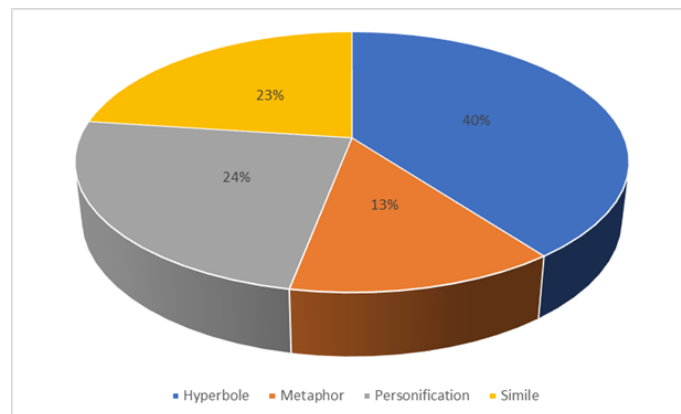


Figure 2. Figurative types found in the online reviews of World of Warcraft Game

## Discussion

### Hyperbole

Hyperbole previously stated refers to a kind of figure which is for exaggeration. It is used dominantly in the data. Several instances are presented below.

No	Hyperbole	Interpretation
1	It's no wonder so many millions of gamers were obsessed with it.	The exaggeration words in this sentence are "so many millions of gamers". The sentence was too long and too much to explain the number of players. The writer tried to tell reader that there are many players
2	Anyone who is serious about playing Burning Crusade Classic has to make peace with the fact that at least a few hundred hours will be spent doing completing repetitive quests or killing the same few monsters again and again.	The exaggerating words in this sentence are "at least a few hundred hours". The writer tried convey the message that it took a long time to play the game. It is something important to know before playing the game.

3	It's (grinding items) a crucible of soul-crushing grinding.	The exaggerating words in the sentence are "soul-crushing grinding". The sentence was not make any sense. Why it (the game) can crush the player's soul? However, it is the expression that playing the game require a lot of patience.
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### Personification

No	Personification	Interpretation
	It ruined the whole climate.	"It" in this sentence refers to "remade of set items". The writer tries to convey that the "remade of set items" ruin the look of the items.
	But I actually prefer just How intimidating this Classic version of Azeroth feels.	The sentence indicate that Classic version is intimidating. A game is a dead thing managed by its developer. However, the challenge in the game gives pressure to its player.
	WoW Classic shows its age, but it's as addictive as ever.	In this sentence, WoW Classic is a game which is doing an action, showing. However, it is a game, it cannot do an action. It means that the game is old.

### Simile

No	Simile	Interpretation
1	It's uncanny how much World of Warcraft Classic continues to feel <b>like a wormhole</b> to a bygone era of gaming.	The sentence compares two things with word "like". The two things compared in this sentence are "World of Warcraft Classic" and "a wormhole".
2	I'm not opposed to Blizzard charging for a shortcut, but this feels like paying top-dollar for a historical tour of Rome and then being handed a crumpled up MapQuest printout and a travel-sized bottle of cheap sunscreen.	There are two things being compared in this sentence using word "like". The two things are "charging for a shortcut" and "paying top dollar for a historical tour of Rome". The similar things between them is both are worthy to buy.

3	It is unforgiving combat that smashes players together like atoms.	The two things being compared in the sentence are “unforgiving combat” and “atoms”. Atoms is a name of a bomb with huge explosion effect. The unforgiving combat also shock players just like the atoms bomb explode.
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### Metaphor

No	Metaphor	Interpretation
1	For players who already love the game and have been anxious to break through the level cap, The Burning Crusade is a done deal.	In this sentence, the two things that being compared is “The Burning Crusade” and “A done deal”. In the context, the sentence before told us about people who are looking for breaking the level cap and already know the game is the similarities of those two things.
2	That data is worth its weight in gold.	The two things compared in this sentence is “That data” and “gold”. It shows the similarity that the data is really worth just like the worth of gold. Both are valuable.
3	The trade-off is that classic is an enormous investment of time with no guaranteed reward.	The two things compared here is “Classic” and “an enormous investment of time”. As Classic is a game with a lot of time to play, it is similar as we investing our time in it.

### Conclusion

Referring to the analysis above, it may be concluded that there are four types of figurative language used in online reviews of the World of Warcraft game. They are hyperbole, personification, simile and metaphor. It implies that the writer tends to express his feelings by using words of exaggeration, personification, comparing entities both explicitly and explicitly by using simile and metaphor.

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