



English Teacher's Figurative Language in Classroom Teaching Process

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Abstract

This study analyzes the teachers' figurative language in the classrooms. The objectives of the research were to describe the kinds of figurative language English teachers in the teaching process in the classroom at eighth grade and the meaning of Figurative Language English teachers on the teaching process in the classroom at eighth grade at SMPN 3 Bandar Lampung. This research was descriptive qualitative research with observational methods to capture and analyze instances of figurative language used by teachers. The subject was the teacher and students in the eighth grade of SMPN 3 Bandar Lampung. Data was collected through direct observation and recording. Only two types were included in the learning from eight figurative languages in the classroom: two similes and 15 metaphors. Therefore, this research did not find irony, personification, hyperbole, allusion, metonymy, and symbol. This study's findings contributed to understanding figurative language's impact on classroom dynamics and student engagement.

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INTRODUCTION

The demand for English learning has risen along with English proliferation globally. The practice of English was not broadened beyond international purposes but also local communication. Therefore, the trend has shifted from copying the native speaker's style to successfully communicating using English (Gunantar, 2016). Not only in secondary schools but even in primary schools, some already implement English language learning. Language is a communication tool people use, orally or in writing. The basic aim of language learning nowadays is communication, and vocabulary plays an important role in the conversation (Nursolihat & Kareviati, 2020). Whether spoken or written, language currently plays an important role in life.

Language is believed as the bridge that could connect humans and nations. Language helps people express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings or even build a good relationship with one another (Adam et al., 2023). Language is used widely by many people who do not share the same language to build communication. As a main communication tool, language has a very important role in human life because by using language, people can express their intentions, wants, messages, and information to other people, whether spoken or written. Understanding figurative language is an important aspect of effective communication in English. Figurative language includes metaphors, similes, personifications, and idiomatic expressions that give additional nuance and meaning to communication (Ratna, 2017). Therefore, understanding figurative language can improve students' language skills.

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Based on Halliday, the function of language is (1) Instrumental function, the use of language to achieve material things such as eating, drinking, and others; (2) regulatory, the use of language to govern and improve behavior; (3) Interactional function: the use of language to share feelings of thoughts between a person and another; 4) private function: a person uses language to express feelings and thoughts, (5) heuristic function: the use of language to reveal the veil of phenomena and the desire to learn it, (6) the imaginative function: the use of language to express one's imagination and images of someone's discovery and not by reality (real world), and (7) representational functions: the use of language to describe thoughts and insights to convey it to people (Law & Matthiessen, 2023). The function of language is to reflect the feelings, attitudes, and thoughts of people who use the language.

A teacher is a person who has obtained a teaching qualification for the English language in a teacher education institution and whose training has been recognized by the award of an appropriate teaching certificate, and by decree, he is officially appointed to teach English as a foreign language by his teaching certificate (Agus Hidayat, 2015). Teachers are usually native speakers or near-native speakers of the language and can cope with various decision-making steps that deal with language use; on the other hand, in the foreign language setting, teachers are typically non-native speakers who have never spent time in an English-speaking country and therefore may find it much harder to make decisions of a native like-nature. Teachers provide a supportive, trusting, and non-threatening environment where students enjoy learning positively. Successful teachers actively engage their students in learning (Arkam, 2015). Teachers serve as role models for their students. Therefore, teachers will do their best to teach a second language to their students to the best of their abilities.

Figurative language uses the figure of speech as a way of saying something and another meaning. Figurative language cannot be taken literally and says something other than the ordinary way or says one thing and means another (Glucksberg, 2001). It is used in an imaginative sense rather than in a literal sense. Figurative language is often used in daily communication, literary works (novels, poems, poetry, and short stories), and advertisements (Zakiyah, 2015). Figurative language is a language that is rich in meaning.

As stated by X. J. Kennedy, Figurative Language is a language that uses figurative speech. A figurative speech is a way of saying something other than the word's literal meaning. For the sake of freshness or emphasis, the figure of speech may occur whenever a speaker or writer departs from the usual denotation of the word. X.J. Kennedy states that there are eight types of figurative language such as metaphor, irony, simile, personification, hyperbole, allusion, metonymy, and symbol (Kennedy & Gioia, 2007). Figurative language does not have just one type but several types, and different experts also have different opinions about these types of figurative language.

Previous researchers have conducted studies on this topic, such as the study of figurative language by university lecturers (Fatimah Fatimah et al., 2020) (Deli & Girik Allo, 2015), the communication strategies by teachers (Pangaribuan et al., 2022) the figurative language found in songs (Mitsalina et al., 2024), and figurative languages found in novels (Harya, 2017). However, no study has specifically analyzed the figurative language used by teachers in English subjects. Therefore, the researcher was motivated to analyze the use of figurative language in the classroom teaching process by teachers.

This research is conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Bandar Lampung, the location of the previous researcher's Field Practice Program. During the program's implementation, the researcher found that English teachers used figurative language in their classroom instruction. Therefore, the researcher became interested in conducting research at this school.

However, the use of figurative language by English teachers in the teaching process in eighth grade at SMP N 3 Bandar Lampung has not yet been widely researched. Previous research has focused more on the use of figurative language in literary works or at higher levels of education. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the use of figurative language by English teachers in the teaching process in eighth grade at SMP N 3 Bandar Lampung.

This research provided a deeper understanding of how figurative language is used in the context of English language teaching at the eighth-grade level by analyzing teachers' use of figurative language. By understanding the teacher's use of figurative language, it can be identified what types of figurative language are often used and what the meaning of the figurative language used is (Giora, 2002).

Understanding teachers' use of figurative language can help evaluate the extent to which teachers follow established curricula and teaching guidelines. This research can also provide additional insight into effective teaching strategies for using figurative language to improve students' understanding of English (Graham et al., 2006).

Thus, this research has theoretical and practical relevance. Theoretically, it complements complemented previous research on figurative language use. Practically, it can provide input to English teachers at SMP N 3 Bandar Lampung on improving their teaching by effectively utilizing figurative language.

With this background, this research is hoped to significantly contribute to developing English language teaching in eighth grade at SMP N 3 Bandar Lampung. By better understanding teachers' use of figurative language, it is hoped that they can create a more interesting and effective learning experience for students in learning English.

METHOD

The researchers employed qualitative research in this study, a method that delves deep into the exploration of verbal data, such as interviews or conversations, to gain a profound understanding of the experiences of individuals or groups (Sugiyono, 2014). This approach provides a rich and nuanced understanding of the subject matter, enlightening the reader with comprehensive insights. Qualitative research is a comprehensive approach encompassing a wide range of data, including recorded interviews, texts, documents, and images (Ary et al., 2009). The thoroughness of this research is evident in its focus on discovering figurative language in a teacher's teaching process in the eighth-grade classroom and interpreting its meaning, reassuring the reader of the study's depth.

This research used a descriptive research design. Descriptive research is defined as a method that describes the characteristics of the population or phenomenon being studied. This methodology focuses more on the "what" of the research subject, not the "why" of the research subject. In other words, descriptive research primarily focuses on describing demographic trait segments without focusing on "why" a particular phenomenon occurs (Lodico et al., 2006). In other words, it "describes" its research subject without covering "why" it happened. Thus, the resulting research report will contain data quotations to provide an overview of the presentation of the report. This data is generated from interview scripts, field notes, photos, videos, personal documents, notes or memos, and other official documents. This aims to create a systematic, factual, and accurate picture, picture, or painting regarding the facts, nature, and relationships between the investigated phenomena.

The researcher collected the data through observation and interviews. To analyze the obtained data, the researcher implemented Miles and Huberman data analysis, which consisted of data reduction, data display, and verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Bandar Lampung with English teachers of 8th-grade classes as the research subjects. After the researcher found the research findings and analyzed the data, the teacher used two kinds of figurative language: simile and metaphor. The teacher did not apply all figurative language based on the theory. The teacher does not apply several kinds, namely irony, personification, hyperbole, allusion, metonymy, and symbol.

In the first observation conducted on 20 February 2024, the researcher found two types of figurative language: simile and metaphor. In the first meeting, simile was used only once, while metaphor was used eight times. In the second observation on 27 February 2024, the researcher also found simile and metaphor as the two types of figurative language. In this second observation, metaphor was used five times, and simile was used once. In the third observation on 28 February 2024, the researcher found only one type of figurative language used, which was a metaphor, with only two instances.

The research results show that the teacher used metaphorical figurative language more frequently than similes. Out of 8 types of figurative language sentences, according to X.J. Kennedy's Theory, there are two kinds that the teacher used: two utterances of simile and 15 utterances of

metaphor. The research results show that using figurative language by English teachers demonstrates creativity in delivering messages to students, which can enhance students' interest and understanding of the subject matter.

There are several repetitions, namely the use of metaphors, comparing someone to a "shining star in the class," done consistently, creating a clear and positive picture. Meanwhile, the use of similes is rarely spoken by teachers in their classroom learning. Metaphor allows for more space for creativity and imagination in teaching. Teachers feel that metaphors can spark students' interest and make learning more engaging than similes, which tend to be more direct. The use of metaphor is more common and frequently encountered in everyday communication, so teachers tend to rely more on metaphor in teaching. Simile requires a higher level of understanding than metaphors, so teachers prioritize using metaphors to ensure students can quickly grasp the message. Thus, from this research, teachers tend to use metaphors more than similes due to creativity, customary usage, and students' level of understanding.

The researcher posed five questions to the 8th-grade teacher based on the interview. Here are the answers to the five questions posed to the teacher:

In response to the first question about how often the teacher uses figurative language in the classroom, the teacher explained, "It's quite rare because the students' vocabulary is still limited. Sometimes even common vocabulary is not fully understood by them, let alone figurative language; they might struggle to grasp the meanings. However, I occasionally used it and explain it to ensure they understand." The teacher clarified that they seldom use figurative language in their class due to the students' limited vocabulary, but they occasionally use it with explanations to help students understand.

For the second question, the teacher provided an example of figurative language commonly used in their class: "You're a shining star in your class." This expression conveys that the student stands out in the class, not in a literal sense. The teacher further explained the meaning to ensure the students understood it.

In response to the third question about the effectiveness of using figurative language for students in the class, the teacher stated, "If they truly understand the meaning of figurative language, it can be effective. When I praise them, there is a positive impact on them. When I use sarcasm, they also understand the meaning and receive a gentle reprimand. It's not directly pointing out their mistakes, but rather subtly addressing them through figurative language. There is effectiveness in that." The teacher emphasized that the use of figurative language in class is effective in motivating students.

Regarding the fourth question about the challenges faced in using figurative language in the classroom, the teacher explained that the students' limited vocabulary poses a challenge, so they use it less frequently and sometimes have to translate it into English during the teaching process.

The fifth question asked whether the teacher would continue to use figurative language in the classroom in the future. The response was, "For the future, I will continue to strive to incorporate figurative language into the lessons so that they become more accustomed to it and not always rely on common language." The teacher will use figurative language to enrich the student's vocabulary.

During the classroom research, the teacher predominantly used figurative language to motivate students regarding their academic achievements. For instance, when a student can answer the teacher's questions correctly, the teacher praises them using figurative language. Using such figurative language, students become even more interested in participating and receiving similar praise from their peers. Despite the teacher's limited use of figurative language, it proves effective, as students can become acquainted with language nuances in the classroom that go beyond common language to include expressions they may not often hear.

The research findings indicate that simile and metaphor are the types of figurative language predominantly used by teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Bandar Lampung. Teachers favor these because similes and metaphors can stimulate imagination and convey vivid imagery. This helps students become more engaged in learning and grasp concepts more profoundly and memorably. Similes and metaphors are relatively easy to understand and use for students, as they do not require deep language knowledge or complex linguistic skills. Therefore, teachers tend to utilize these two types of figurative language because students can easily comprehend them. Thus, the choice to use simile and metaphor as types of figurative language in teaching is not only based on their popularity and

presence in everyday language but also because they effectively support the learning process for students in formal education contexts.

This research can be a foundation for further language education and linguistics studies. The information obtained can be used to develop more effective teaching strategies using figurative language. By understanding how often teachers use figurative language, we can evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching. Understanding figurative language can enhance the appeal of learning and help students understand the material better. Using figurative sentences can help students expand their vocabulary and understanding of language. By analyzing figurative language, we can see to what extent teachers provide opportunities for students to become familiar with creative language. This research has important implications for improving the quality of language teaching and students' understanding of figurative language.

Several previous studies support the findings of this study. Fatimah et al. found that the teacher employed rhetoric, simile, metonymy, personification, repetition, paradox, metaphor, and litotes in the teaching process (Fatimah et al., 2020). Also, Hutauruk revealed in her study that students used symbols, metaphors, and personifications in the teaching and learning process (Hutauruk, 2019). The results of the previous studies further strengthen this study regarding teachers' and students use of figurative language.

English teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Bandar Lampung use figurative language to improve understanding, enrich vocabulary, attract interest, develop critical thinking skills, and connect learning with real life. This method makes learning more exciting and effective in helping students understand and use English more creatively and meaningfully. This research is closely related to the English language education department. Studies like this can provide valuable insights for prospective English language teachers in understanding effective teaching practices and assisting students in better understanding figurative language and the importance of comprehending and using figurative language in English communication.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that teachers tend to use metaphors more frequently than similes in applying figurative language in their teaching, as evidenced by the finding that out of 8 types of figurative language sentences, there are two simple sentences and 15 metaphor sentences. Using figurative language by English teachers demonstrates creativity in conveying messages to students, which can enhance the appeal and understanding of the lesson material. Sentences like "you're a shining star in your class" are used as a form of positive reinforcement to students who can answer questions well. This indicates that using figurative language can build motivation and confidence in students. The use of figurative language is tailored to the situation and conditions of the classroom, showing that teachers can organize and apply figurative language styles appropriately according to the needs of classroom learning.

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