

# THE USE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN “THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA” FILM

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## ABSTRAK

Skripsi berjudul “The Use of Figurative Language in *The Devil Wears Prada* film” ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui jenis-jenis gaya bahasa apa saja yang dipakai dalam film *The Devil Wears Prada*, gaya bahasa apa yang sering dipakai dalam film ini dan arti gaya bahasa berkaitan dengan situasi pada saat ujaran itu diucapkan. Teori yang digunakan yaitu prinsip kerjasama dari Grice (1975) dalam Gibbs Jr (1994). Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif dan kualitatif karena skripsi ini menggambarkan suatu fenomena bahasa dan hasil analisis disampaikan dengan kata-kata. Data yang menjadi objek penelitian ini adalah DVD film *The Devil Wears Prada* dan transkrip film tersebut. Penulis menggunakan metode simak bebas libat cakap dan teknik catat dalam mengumpulkan data. Kemudian dalam menganalisis data, penulis menggunakan metode padan referensial dengan menggunakan *purposive* dan *random sampling*. Dalam menyajikan hasil analisis data, penulis menggunakan metode informal.

Dari hasil analisis data, penulis menemukan 123 buah gaya bahasa dalam film yang terdiri dari: ironi, hiperbola, sinekdok, metafora, paradoks, oksmoron, litotes, metonimi, klimaks, eufemisme, dan pertanyaan retorik. Jenis gaya bahasa yang paling banyak dipakai adalah metonimi (33.33%) dan yang paling sedikit digunakan adalah paradoks (0.81%), oksimoron (0.81%) dan pertanyaan retorikal (0.81%). Mereka menggunakan bahasa kiasan untuk menyampaikan emosi mereka, membujuk pendengar agar menyetujui opini pembicara, menegaskan opini pembicara, menunjukkan kepribadian pembicara dan membuat komunikasi lebih singkat dan komunikatif.

**Keyword** : figurative language, film, maxim

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Indirect meaning needs more efforts to be understood instead of using a direct meaning. It is because the meaning is not only what it is stated, but the audience also must reveal the additional meaning to understand what it is all about. One example of indirect meaning is figurative language.

*The Devil Wears Prada* film uses so many figurative languages in its dialogue. As a based-on novel-film, the director has a challenge to summarize the whole book to a limited duration film. To accommodate all story parts, the director must find a way to present the story as brief as possible without reducing the tension of the movie itself. The figurative language is used to accommodate what the character wants to say, and what the character is feeling inside. Many characters in this film use figurative language in the conversation from the protagonist, antagonist to tritagonist. Thus, the writer is interested in discussing about analysis the use of figurative language as a communication way in *The Devil Wears Prada* film.

### **1.1.Purpose of Study**

This research is aimed at:

1. Explaining what types of figurative language used in *The Devil Wears Prada* film.
2. Discovering what kinds of figurative language which are mostly used in film.
3. Explaining the meaning of figurative language in relation to the situation when it is said.

## **2. Literary Review**

### **2.1. Pragmatics**

Peccei (5) states that “Pragmatics concentrates on those aspects of meaning that cannot be predicted by linguistics knowledge alone and takes into account knowledge about the physical and social world”.

### **a. Cooperative Principle**

The basic assumption of this principle is that when people are in a conversation, they are trying to cooperate with our conversational partner to build a meaningful conversation. Grice, (in Gibbs Jr, 81) states that: “make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged”. The cooperative principle carries with its four maxims, namely:

- a. Maxim of Quantity  
Make your contribution as informative as is required, but not more so, for the current purposes of the exchange.
- b. Maxim of Quality  
Do not say what you believe to be false or for which you lack adequate evidence.
- c. Maxim of relation  
Say only what is relevant for the current purposes of the conversation.
- d. Maxim of manner  
Be brief, but avoid ambiguity and obscurity of expression.

(Gibbs Jr, 81).

### **2.2.Flouting Maxim**

Gibbs Jr (82) says that “if speakers are assumed to be cooperative, they may flout any of the conversational maxims as part of their attempt to communicate some meaning via figurative language”. We can assume that flouting a maxim often can be found in the use of figurative language. Martinich and Stroll (12) state that flouting maxim is when the speaker seems to violate the maxim. The speaker lets the listener know that he or she is not following the maxims. The listener will be expected to know that there is some extra meaning in that utterance and understand it, for example :

- a) Elizabeth: “You have a lot works to be done this weekend”  
Meredith: “That’s good, it will save my time.”

When Elizabeth says “You have a lot works to be done this weekend”, normally it will spend Meredith’s time because she must work overtime. Instead of saying the truth,

Meredith says the opposite to emphasize the contrary between what happens and what is said.

### **2.3.Figurative Language**

#### **a. Anticlimax**

Anticlimax is “sequence of ideas that abruptly diminish in importance at the end of passage,” for example: “She wanted to *focus her mind on her family, on helping to build up the nation, on the cosmic meaning of life*. But she could *only think of her pimple*” (Lingga 291).

#### **b. Antithesis**

Antithesis is “juxtaposition of two words, phrases, clauses or sentences opposed in meaning in such a way to emphasize contrasting idea”, for example: *Speech is silver but silence is golden* (Lingga, 287).

#### **c. Apostrophe**

Apostrophe is “addressing a person who usually is either absent or deceased, inanimate object, or abstract idea”, for example : “*Oh Fate, Why do you pursue me so relentlessly?*” (Danesi, 93).

#### **d. Climax**

Climax is an “arrangement of words, clauses, or sentences in the order of their importance, the least forcible coming first and the others rising in power, until the last”, for instance : “*I came, I saw, I won*” (Lingga 291).

#### **e. Euphemism**

Euphemism is a “substitution of delicate or inoffensive term or phrase for one that has unpleasant association”, for example: “He is senior citizen here”. (Lingga, 297).

**f. Hyperbole**

Hyperbole is an “inordinate exaggeration according to which a person, thing or condition is depicted as being better or worse, or larger or smaller than is actually the case”, for instance: “Cause you know I would walk a *thousand miles* if could see you tonight” (Vanessa Charlton).

**g. Irony**

Irony is a “dryly humorous or lightly sarcastic mode of speech, in which words are used to convey a meaning contrary to their literal meaning”, for example: “I *love* being *tortured*.” (Danesi,93)

**h. Litotes**

Litotes is an “understatement employed for the purpose of enhancing the effect or idea expressed”, for example: “I achieved *not a little* in a life” (Lingga,287).

**i. Metaphor**

Metaphor is a “use of a word or a phrase for kind of referent in place of another for the purpose of suggesting an association between the two”, for instance: “Alexander *is a fox*” (Danesi, 94).

**j. Metonymy**

Metonymy can defined as “use of a word or a phrase for another to which it bears an important relation”, for example : “Langley decides to close that investigation immediately”.

**k. Oxymoron**

Oxymoron is a “combination of two seemingly contradictory or incongruous words”, for example: “It is an *open secret* that Megan lives together with his boyfriend”.

**l. Paradox**

Paradox is a “statement that appears contradictory to common sense yet is true in fact”, for example: “*Standing* is more tiring than *walking*” (Danesi,94).

**m. Personification**

Personification is a “representation of inanimate object or abstract ideas as a living beings”, for example : “*Love* conquers all” (Lingga, 286).

**n. Rhetorical**

Rhetorical question is a “ question asked not to receive an answer, but to assert more emphatically the obvious answer to what is asked”, for example: “You know what I mean, *don't you?*” (Lingga,288).

**o. Simile**

Simile is “a specific comparison by means of the words *like* or *as* between two kinds of comparison”, for example: “He is *as* strong *as* an ox”(Danesi, 94).

**p. Synecdoche**

Synecdoche is a “use the part to stand for the whole or the whole to a part”, for example : “He has many *mouths* to feed” (Lingga, 290). Another kind of synecdoche is : “*Italy* beat *England* in World Cup 1996” It is *totem pro parte* synecdoche or a whole for a part.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

To collect the data, the writer uses some methods, i.e observation and note taking method. In this research, the writer uses *Simak Bebas Libat Cakap* (non-participant observation) because the writer did not involve directly in the conversation. The writer watched the film, listened to the conversation of the characters and read the transcript to find out the figurative language used in this film. Then the writer took note all the utterances in the film that contain figurative languages.

To analyze the data, the writer uses *padan referensial* because the language determiner device of the data is a language reference. In this research the language reference refers to a situation where the utterance is said. The utterance that contains of figurative language is compared to the situational context with the purpose of finding the meaning of its figurative language.

To present the data analysis the writer uses informal method since the analysis of this study is some descriptions about figurative language and its meaning in *The Devil Wears Prada* film.

### 4. RESULT AND DESCRIPTION

There are 123 utterances which use figurative languages in this film. These are samples of each of them and its interpretation.

**Table of Figurative Language**

Figurative Language	Total Utterances	Percentage of Utterances
1. Irony	17	13.82%
2. Hyperbole	17	13.82%

3. Anticlimax	0	0%
4. Synecdoche	10	8.13%
5. Antithesis	0	0%
6. Metaphor	22	17.88%
7. Paradox	1	0.81%
8. Apostrophe	0	0%
9. Oxymoron	1	0.81%
10. Litotes	5	4.06%
11. Metonymy	41	33.33%
12. Simile	0	0%
13. Climax	2	1.62%
14. Euphemism	2	1.62%
15. Rhetorical Q.	1	0.81%
16. Combined figurative languages	4	3.25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100%</b>



## 1. Irony

1.b. Andrea : Okay. You think my clothes are hideous. I get it.  
But, you know, I'm not going to be in fashion forever... so I don't see the point of changing everything about myself just because I have this job.”

Nigel : Yes, that's true. That's really what this multibillion-dollar industry is all about anyway, isn't it? -Inner beauty!”

Andrea Sachs was a graduate student from a law school who has a nerdy look. In her daily lifestyle, she loved wearing a thick sweaters and skirts. First day working at the new job, she was considered as a fashion disaster in *Runway*. One day, in *Runway* cafeteria, she accidentally met Nigel, Miranda fashion advisor. The conversation began when Andrea spilled her food on her sweater, but Nigel said that it should not have been a problem because she must have had a lot of sweaters

Nigel’s utterance in (1b) seems to violate Grice’s maxim of quality, which holds that “do not say what you believe to be false” (in Gibbs Jr, 81). *Runway* was a fashion magazine, and, therefore, those who worked for *Runway* were obliged to wear fancy dresses. Fashion industry concerns external, physical appearance rather than such internal quality as inner beauty. Since what Nigel said is in opposition of what he meant, his utterance is an irony. What Nigel wanted to say is that being a smart person will be nothing in *Runway* without having stylish appearance. He wanted to tell her how naïve she was and hoped that she would realize and change her style.

## 2. Hyperbole

2.p. Andrea : Oh, baby. You should see the way these girls at *Runway* dress.  
I don't have a thing to wear to work.

Nate : Come on. You're gonna be answering phones and getting coffee.  
You need a ball gown for that?

At night, after celebrating Andrea’s new job with friends, Andrea and her boyfriend, Nate, were talking together on their way back home. Andrea told him that she was confused because she considered that none of her clothes deserved to be worn to go to work in *Runway*. In *Runway*, all employers always wore stylish and fancy dresses.

It seemed that Nate had violated the maxim of quality by asking a false question. According to *Oxford Learner’s Pocket Dictionary*, “ball” means “large formal social

gathering for dancing” (27), and “gown” means “woman’s long dress for special occasions”(182). It can be assumed that ball gown is more luxurious and expensive than a work dress. It was impossible to literally wear a ball gown to work since she only did Miranda’s errands. As Nate exaggerated “a woman dress for working” with “ball gown”, his utterance is a hyperbole. Nate wanted to make a point that it would be fine for Andrea to wear her current dresses because her jobs did not require a fancy dress.

### 3. Synecdoche

3.i. Miranda : And what are you doing here?” [Clears Throat]

Andrea : Well, I think I could do a good job as your assistant. And, um... Yeah, I came to New York to be a journalist and sent letters out everywhere... and then finally got a call from Elias-Clarke... and met with Sherry up at Human Resources. Basically, it's this or Auto Universe

Andrea attended the job interview at *Runway* fashion magazine. Actually she had been pre-interviewed by Emily, Miranda’s first assistant, but got rejected by Emily because she thought that Andrea was not suitable to work there. Suddenly Miranda came and saw Andrea. Because Miranda thought that Emily was incapable of choosing the two previous secretaries, Miranda decided to interview Andrea by herself

Andrea said that she got a call from *Elias-Clarke*, a group management which owned all the business in the building where *Runway* magazine was located. In fact, she just got a phone call from someone who worked in that building, so her utterance can be categorized as synecdoche totem pro parte. She seemed to violate the maxim of manner, which holds “avoid obscurity expression” (In Gibbs Jr, 82). It would be impossible if the Elias-Clarke called her since it was the name of group management, not a people’s name. There was someone called her and that person was working in one office at Elias-Clarke’s building. Andrea talked this way because she considered that Miranda had known what she meant, so the figurative language was used to make the conversation brief.

### 4. Metaphor

4.k. Andrea : Oh, I get it. I get it. I get it. The piece is called "urban jungle, right?"

Nigel : Yes, the modern woman unleashes the animal within to take on the big city. [Growls] Good. Go.

The concept of photo shoot for the next *Runway*'s edition is an urban jungle because the main motif of the clothes used the motif of the jungle, such as leaves and animal print.

Nigel's utterance in (4k) had violated Grice's maxim of quality since he said something untrue. It was impossible for a woman to have an animal inside her body. The word "animal" means any other creature other than a human being" (14), according to *Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary*. Since a woman is a human being, so the "animal" here was a symbol. A woman has a characteristic which relates to the characteristic of an animal living in a jungle, such as wild. By making resemblance between two different things, human and animal, without any linking verb, Nigel's utterance is a metaphor.

Nigel wanted to say that the concept of urban jungle showed the real personality of a woman. Even though a woman lived in a modern life, she still had a wild side that she used to adapt herself to live in a big city. Nigel used the word "animal" to refer the exact wild characteristic to keep on living, just like an animal.

## **5. Paradox**

5.a. Nigel : (to Andrea) Hmm? -Chairman of Elias-Clarke, Irv Ravitz.  
You know what they say? Tiny man, huge ego.

Andrea accidentally met Nigel, Miranda's fashion advisor, in *Runway*'s cafeteria. Actually they were not friends, but he felt pity on her because she did not realize her weakness. Miranda had moved up the Run through, a meeting hold to choose the fashion style in the *Runway*'s latest issue, 30 minutes earlier, so they stopped their lunch. In the middle of the way, they accidentally met Irv Ravitz, a businessman who owned of *Runway* magazine. After Irv left them, Nigel made a statement to describe Irv personality.

"Tiny" can be defined as "extremely small" (435) and "huge" is "very large" (203) based on *Oxford Pocket Learner Dictionary*. Since Nigel combined two contradictory words, his utterance could be a paradox. Nigel seemed to violate the maxim of quality since he attributed the word "tiny" to describe Irv which is a bit shorter than

Nigel. Nigel wanted to say that Irv's ambition was a lot bigger than his physical appearance

## 6. Oxymoron

6.a. Andrea: (talking to someone on the phone) "Yes, yes, yes, yes. I've been on hold. It's for Miranda Priestly. It's very important. Yes, I know it's impossible to get... but, well, I was wondering *if you could make the impossible possible*... if that's at all possible. [Laughing]

Miranda ordered Andrea to buy her a steak and get the unpublished Harry Potter novel because Miranda's twin daughter wanted to have the unpublished Harry Potter. Even though it seems impossible, but she kept on trying by calling several people. Unfortunately, she did not get it anyway.

"Impossible" and "possible" are the antonym. Since she combined two contrast words in one phrase, her utterance was an oxymoron sentence.

## 7. Litotes

7.c. Miranda : We're so happy you were able to come to our little gathering.  
Jacqueline: Of course. I plan my whole year around this.

*Runway* magazine held a gala dinner annually in Metropolitan Art museum, called *The Benefit*. It was attended by many socialites and high class society, including Miranda's rival, Jacqueline Follet. She was the editor-in chief of *Runway* France, the rival of American *Runway* magazine. Jacquelline was invited by the owner of *Runway*, Irv Ravitz. She should have attended *The Benefit* after Miranda had left in order to avoid an uncomfortable situation between them. However, in this occasion she came with Irv before Miranda left. This made Miranda have to greet her.

Little can be defined as "small" (Oxford Learner Pocket Dictionary,244). That was the word the Miranda used to attribute *The Benefit*. The screen showed that *The Benefit* was not a small gala dinner, but it was big. Since she deliberately described the condition less than it was, her utterance was litotes. She seemed to violate the maxim of quality by something untrue by saying that *The Benefit* was a little gathering. In fact it was a big one. The implicature of this utterance was Miranda wanted to show off to Jacquelline by making a point to her that Miranda afforded to arrange a big gala dinner

like *The Benefit*. Arranging a gala dinner which could invite many high society people was not a simple task. However, Miranda could do that every year.

## 8. Metonymy

8.g. Lily : Oh, my God! This is the new Marc Jacobs!  
This is sold out everywhere. Where did you get this?"  
Andrea : Miranda didn't want it, so..."

At that night, Andrea had an appointment with Nate, her boyfriend, and their closest friends, Doug and Lily in a Cafe. Andrea gave the *Clinique* serum to Doug and "Marc Jacobs" bag to Lily. She knew that Lily really wanted the bag, but unfortunately she did not get it because it was sold out everywhere

Marc Jacob is the name of a world class designer, who designs clothes, shoes, bags and so on. In the previous dialogue, Lily used the brand name to refer to the bag. This means she used metonymy in her utterance. She seemed to violate the maxim of quantity, which holds "make your contribution as informative as is required" (In Gibbs Jr, 81). No one asked Lily about the creator of that bag and what edition the bag was. Lily wanted to say that this bag is the newest edition which had been released by the brand of "Marc Jacobs".

## 9. Climax

9.a. Nate : [Chuckles]  
Andrea: It's not funny. She's not happy unless everyone around her is panicked, nauseous or suicidal. And the Clackers just worship her.

Andrea's utterance in (9a) contained climax since she raised the sense of her utterances. First she started with the word "panicked", then nauseous and finally suicidal. According to *Oxford Learners Pocket Dictionary*, panic means "sudden uncontrollable feeling of great fear" (297), nausea means "feeling of sickness"(275), and suicidal means "likely to lead to suicide (deliberately killing to oneself) (415). The idea rose from sudden fear, increased into the real symptom of sickness and ended up in a situation in which a person wanted to kill herself or himself.

In this case, actually Andrea seemed to violate the maxim of quality, quantity and manner. She violated the maxim of quality, which is stated that "do not say

something which lack of evidence” (In Gibbs Jr, 81), since Andrea had no proof that someone had committed a suicide just because of Miranda. Maxim of quantity, which says “ do not make your contribution more informative than is required” (In Gibbs Jr, 81). In this case, Nate did ask what the feeling that Miranda could make when she got close to her employee, he was chuckles. The maxim of manner, which holds “be brief” (In Gibbs Jr, 82), seemed to be violated since she actually could say to Nate that Miranda was cruel instead of explaining what Miranda was like in a long sentence.

From Andrea’s utterance the implication which could be taken was Miranda had to be very cruel to Andrea, so Andrea was hate her so much. The word “ she was cruel” could represent what Andrea was meant but it could not represent what Andrea was feeling about Miranda. Since Nate did not see by himself, Andrea gave the closest descriptions about Miranda’s personality based on her opinion as the new second assistant. Miranda always made her staffs got frustrated with her comment and her orders. Eventually she made them quit from the job or fired them.

## **10. Euphemism**

10.b. Miranda: Coat, bag. What's that? Oh, I don't want that. I'm having lunch with Irv. I'll be back at 3:00. I'd like my Starbucks waiting. Oh, and if you don't have that Harry Potter book by then... don't even bother coming back.

As Andrea made mistake when she was on duty, Miranda punished her by ordering her to find the further Harry Potter’s manuscript which was unpublished yet. She also ordered Andrea to buy a steak. Andrea was successful to buy Miranda a steak but Andrea still did not get the book yet. However, Miranda rejected the steak and forced Andrea to get the manuscript immediately.

Miranda’s utterance can be categorized as euphemism because the word “don't even bother coming back” replaces the word “fire”. Miranda seemed to violate the maxim of manner which is “be brief” (In Gibbs Jr,82). Miranda could only say “ you will be fired” but she chosen to say a prolixity.

The implicature is if Andrea did not get the book in the mentioned time, she was fired. Miranda wanted to give more effect in this word, to lessen the warning. It could be linked to Miranda’s behavior which really liked to say something in soft tone but sharply.

## 11. Rhetorical Question

11.a. Miranda : Is there some reason that my coffee isn't here?

Has she died or something?!

One morning, Emily called her that Miranda asked her to buy a coffee as soon as possible. Because too early, the shop did open yet in moreover, Andrea took the public transportation. It made her took a longer time to arrive at the office and she came after Miranda's arrival. Miranda became angry since she must have waited her errands which she never done before.

In (11a), Miranda used a rhetorical question. She seemed to violate the maxim of quality because she said something that she believed to be false. Miranda knew that Andrea was not dead yet, but she made a question asked whether Andrea was dead or not.

She wanted to persuade Emily that Andrea was too long to come to the office. It seemed like she died on the way she got there. She was so emotional because her coffee was not ready yet.

## 12. Combined figurative language

12.b. Miranda : Mm. Paris is the most important week of my entire year. I need the best possible team with me. That no longer includes Emily.”

Andrea : Wait. You want me to... No, Miranda. [Exhales] Emily would die. Her whole life is about Paris. She hasn't eaten in weeks. L-I can't... do that.”

Andrea's utterance comprises two figurative languages, namely: hyperbole and metonymy. Hyperbole was shown because she exaggerated that Emily would die if her Paris plan failed. Then, using another word to refer the concept of certain thing can be categorized as metonymy. The word “Paris” did not refer to the capital city of France. It was used to refer the fashion show held in Paris.

Andrea seemed to violate the maxim of quality, which holds “do not say something that you believe it false” (In Gibbs Jr, 81), because Andrea knew that Emily would not die even though she did not attend the Paris fashion week. The maxim of quantity was violated, which holds “make your contribution as informative as it required”. She should have said Paris fashion week, instead of saying Paris. The maxim of manner, “avoid the obscurity of expression” (In Gibss Jr, 82), was violated since Paris

could be meant as the capital city of France, or fashion week. Andrea wanted to emphasize about how big was Emily's desire for going to Paris fashion week such as working very hard beside Miranda and doing extreme diet just to wear couture.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The writer has found several conclusions from the data analysis of the use of figurative language in *The Devil Wears Prada* film namely: From 123 utterances, there are 12 figurative languages found such as irony, hyperbole, synecdoche, metaphor, paradox oxymoron, understatement, metonymy, climax, euphemism, and rhetorical question. Among those figurative languages, the mostly used figurative language in the *Devil Wears Prada* film is metonymy (33.33%) since it is a film about fashion which contains of many brands mentioned inside. The characters in this film used the name of the brand to represent the thing associated with that brand, rather than using a complete sentence. The least of figurative languages which are mostly used are climax (0.81%), oxymoron (0.81%) and rhetorical sentence (0.81%). The figurative languages used among the characters fulfill several roles in a communication, such as to persuade the interlocutor to have the same opinion with the speaker, to make a point about speaker's statement, to express the emotional expression of the speaker, to show the speaker's personality and to make a conversation become more communicative and brief.

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