

Figurative Language Used In *Genshin Impact's* and *Honkai: Star Rail's Special Program Videos*

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify various types of figurative language used in the video advertisements for two games, *Genshin Impact* and *Honkai: Star Rail*. Following Harris's (2018) theory on rhetorical devices, particularly figurative language, the researchers analyzed the utterances in these videos. According to Harris (2018), there are 11 types of figurative language namely: simile, analogy, metaphor, catachresis, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, allusion, eponym, apostrophe, and transferred epithet. Using qualitative research methods, the researchers collected and analyzed the data. The results indicated that the types of figurative language found in *Genshin Impact* were simile, analogy, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, and allusion whereas simile, analogy, metaphor, metonymy, personification, and allusion were found in *Honkai: Star Rail*. Synecdoche, personification, and the combination of metaphor and synecdoche were absent in *Honkai: Star Rail*. The possible reasons for the differences might probably be because of the differences in the game's themes and the amount of information.

Keywords: figurative language, game advertising, *Genshin Impact*, *Honkai: Star Rail*

INTRODUCTION

To effectively promote a product, sellers need to make the product known to their target audiences. A product needs to be communicated well if the seller wants to capture the audience's interest; in which this is where advertising shines. Advertising is not limited to promoting goods or services; but it can also disseminate and promote information, for example, by using infomercials.

Infomercials or informative commercials, according to Miller (2011), are a type of video marketing that could provide useful information for the audience while promoting goods or services. Miller (2011) explains that this type of video has the following characteristics: (1) videos that are interesting, useful, or entertaining, (2) provide value to the viewers, and (3) lead the viewers to the promoted goods or services.

Most game developers often employ this type of advertising approach. For instance, MiHoYo has videos called *Special Program* to promote their game's update. These *Special Program* videos embodied the characteristics of informative commercials. In the *Special Program*, the game characters' voice actors hosted the program, and were represented as animated chibi characters. Several segments from the *Special Program* are the voice actor skits, the trailer for future events, a preview of future characters or enemies, and gift codes. These videos can help players prepare for upcoming events and stories. At the same time, audiences interested in trying the game can download it through the links in the video description. Through the *Special Program*, the developers have the opportunities to communicate with their players.

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Genshin Impact and *Honkai: Star Rail* has gained worldwide popularity following its successful release. Although both games were developed by the same developer, they have very different themes. *Genshin Impact* has more artistic, adventurous fantasy elements than *Honkai: Star Rail*. On the other hand, *Honkai: Star Rail* leans more towards a realistic sci-fi space fantasy theme that often incorporates popular references. *Genshin Impact* frequently used creative descriptions and language to elaborate on their fantasy world, while *Honkai: Star Rail* used a more direct and known language.

To limit the *Special Program* videos from *Genshin Impact* and *Honkai: Star Rail*, the writers implement several limitations, that is, the language of the videos, the version of the games, the number of likes, and the exclusion of the trailers and previews. All videos must be in English and the version picked was from version 1.1 up to 1.6. After that, the top four most liked videos are chosen. Finally, any trailers or previews in the videos must be excluded from the analysis.

This study analyzes the figurative language used in *Genshin Impact* and *Honkai: Star Rail Special Program* videos. The writers wanted to analyze figurative language within this data because, according to Harris (2018), rhetorical devices are commonly used to create narrative works that add a more interesting and intricate touch. Out of 10 rhetorical devices, the writers will focus on one device: figurative language. Harris (2018) describes 11 categories of figurative language: simile, analogy, metaphor, catachresis, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, allusion, eponym, apostrophe, and transferred epithet. The writers were also curious because the finding of the study conducted by Gail and Anmarie (1999) revealed that paper advertising using rhetorical devices was more effective. However, with the improvement of technology, there are many different forms of advertising. The writers wanted to see if different types of rhetorical devices are used in other advertisements.

Through this study, the writers aim to give readers a further understanding of the use of figurative language in advertising, specifically in-game advertising. The writers hope that readers will have a better understanding of this figurative language and may implement it to create more effective advertising. The writers also aim to contribute to the study of figurative language in advertising and provide further information for future research in this area.

METHOD

The writers used a qualitative research method proposed by Creswell and Creswell (2018) to examine the collected data for this study. In the study, the writers analyzed the *Special Program* videos from the games *Genshin Impact* and *Honkai: Star Rail*. The source of data for the study was the transcription of the videos, while the data for the study is the speakers' utterances that contain figurative language.

Several steps were taken to collect the data. First of all, the writers watched the videos. Next, Anthiago (<https://anthiago.com>) was used to create the transcriptions of the videos before having them cross-checked with the videos and basic translation guidelines provided by the Transcription Certification Institute to ensure the clarity and accuracy of the transcriptions. Long utterances were split based on the pauses the speakers made. When there was a pause over two seconds, long utterances were split into two utterances in different lines. After checking the transcription, the utterances were sorted in video trailers or previews as they were not analyzed due to a lack of context. A curly bracket ({ }) was added to indicate which utterances in the transcription

are part of the video trailer or preview. For example, when there is a video trailer, {Video Trailer} was added before and after the utterances. A specific numbering system was also employed to indicate which utterances contain figurative language.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the data based on the theory proposed by Harris (2018), the findings were summarized in the following table.

Game Title	Figurative Language										
	S	An	Me	Ca	Mo	Syn	Per	Al	Ep	Ap	TE
<i>Genshin Impact</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			
<i>Honkai: Star Rail</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓			

Descriptions:

S: Simile

An: Analogy

Me: Metaphor

Ca: Catachresis

Mo: Metonymy

Syn: Synecdoche

Per: Personification

Al: Allusion

Ep: Eponym

Ap: Apostrophe

TE: Transferred Epithet

Figurative Language

Harris (2018) categorizes figurative language into 11 categories, simile, analogy, metaphor, catachresis, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, allusion, eponym, and transferred epithet. The findings showed that out of 11 types of figurative language, only simile, analogy, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, and allusion can be found in *Genshin Impact's Special Program* videos. On the contrary, only simile, analogy, metaphor, metonymy, and allusion can be found in *Honkai: Star Rail's Special Program* videos. Further explanations on each finding are given below.

Simile

A simile (Harris, 2018) is a figurative language that compares two very distinct things by highlighting at least one similarity. Harris (2018) further explains that this figurative language is a tool that can be used to enrich writing and clarify the unknown. Two examples of simile used by the speaker in the *Special Program* videos of *Genshin Impact* and *Honkai: Star Rail* are given below.

- Utterance 1.1.5

“So that way I could come **crashing down from the sky like lightning.**”

In utterance 1.1.5, the speaker, Corina, used a simile to compare one of the new characters' fighting styles with a natural phenomenon. The utterance above contains several characteristics of simile, including the use of **like**, the **significant difference**, and the **similarity** between the two things being compared. By using the comparison, Corina employed this simile to give the audience

a better understanding of the fighting style using something that is more familiar to the general audience.

- Utterance 2.3.1

“In any case, Jingliu is unpredictable at the best of times, but if you catch her on a good day, **she's as calm as moonlight on a silent night**”

In utterance 2.3.1, the speaker, March 7th, used a simile to compare one of the new characters' personalities with an image or idea. The utterance above contains several characteristics of simile, including the use of **as ... as**, the **significant difference**, and the **similarity** between the subject and the image being compared. March 7th employed this simile to highlight and give the audience a better understanding of the character's personality by using an image of something that is more known to the general audience.

Analogy

Similar to simile, according to Harris (2018), an analogy is figurative language that compares two objects by highlighting anything they have in common. Analogy has several characteristics. It highlights multiple similarities, is designed to provide clarity of concept, and is a useful tool to help readers understand complex concepts. Below are the two examples of analogy found in *Genshin Impact* and *Honkai: Star Rail Special Program*:

- Utterance 1.2.4

“So **it's like we'll have a ticket back** if we don't want to stay in the harder world then”

In the utterance above, the speaker, Zach, used the analogy to help the audience understand the complex new game features. The analogy compares two distinct things while having multiple points of similarity. The similarities are that both can be used to go back and the ticket and the feature gives the user the option to use them or not.

- Utterance 2.1.1

“Kafka's abilities are kind of terrifying, **her enemies are like flies trapped in a way of slowly taking damage**, until—”

In utterance 2.1.1, the speaker, Owlbert, used the analogy to compare the effect of the character's ability with an image or idea. The difference between the two is distinct enough, while there are multiple similarities between them. Owlbert used the analogy to highlight how dangerous the character is.

Metaphor

According to Harris (2018), metaphor compares two distinct things while defining the subject as the picture. In contrast to the first two figurative languages mentioned above, Harris (2018) explains how a metaphor considers the subject as the picture rather than just how it is similar to the subject. Two examples of metaphor used by the speaker in *Genshin Impact* and *Honkai: Star Rail Special Program* videos are given below.

- Utterance 1.1.3

“**Time flies** when you're farming Dragonspine”

In utterance 1.1.3, the speaker, Jen, used the metaphor to highlight how time passes so quickly. Time cannot fly; however, the act of time passing by quickly is similar to flying. Jen used

the metaphor to show how enjoyable Dragonspine was, that she did not realize how fast the time went by.

- Utterance 2.3.2

“Well, as you may know, among the universe's major investors and lenders, **the IPC is a big fish**”

In utterance 2.3.2, the speaker, Owlbert, uses a metaphor to highlight the subject using a more familiar image. The metaphor asserts that the subject is the image. Through this utterance, Owlbert suggests that the IPC is a very big and important organization.

Metonymy

In his book, Harris (2018) explains that when something strongly associated with the subject is used instead of the subject, it is called metonymy. In short, it uses an associated word or image to refer to the subject. Two examples of metonymy found in the *Genshin Impact* and *Honkai: Star Rail Special Program* videos are listed below.

- Utterance 1.2.1

“Okay, so is it just me or is she starting to sound less like a **woman of the cloth** and more like an assassin of the blade?”

In utterance 1.2.1, the speaker, Corina, used a metonymy to highlight how the character looked like a nun. The metonymy substitutes the subject, clergywomen, with the associated idea, woman of the cloth. Corina used the metonymy to show or indicate how the character still looked similar to a nun despite being an assassin.

- Utterance 2.1.2

“Yeah, from **HP-sacrificing maniacs** and **emotionless sociopaths**, to **the coolest kid on the block**”

In utterance 2.1.2, the speaker, Owlbert, used metonymy to highlight the new characters' characteristics. The metonymy used is the substitution of the subject with the associated idea. The character Blade is known as an HP-sacrificing maniac because he cannot die. Kafka is known as an emotionless sociopath because she cannot feel fear and rarely shows any emotion. However, Kafka herself often manipulates and inflicts fear on her enemies. On the other hand, Luka is known as the coolest kid on the block because he is famous for being a fighting champion and is popular with the children in the town. Owlbert used the metonymy to introduce the new character, giving the audience the interesting characteristics of the characters.

Synecdoche

Harris (2018) explains that synecdoche is also a metaphor category, similar to metonymy. However, instead of substituting the association with the subject like metonymy, synecdoche substitutes something partly or fully. Below is an example of synecdoche found in *Genshin Impact's Special Program* videos.

- Utterance 1.1.3

“Time flies when you're **farming Dragonspine**”

In utterance 1.1.3, the speaker, Jen, used the synecdoche to show how much things can be done in Dragonspine. The synecdoche used in the utterance is a whole for a part because Jen used

the whole Dragonspine instead of part of it. The synecdoche used by Jen further highlights how big Dragonspine is and how many things can be done in the area.

Personification

According to Harris (2018), personification is another type of metaphor in which inanimate objects, other non-human beings, or even thoughts are given human characteristics. Below is an illustration of personification in *Genshin Impact's Special Program* videos.

- Utterance 1.1.8

“Let's get right to the music and **let the notes do the talking**”

In utterance 1.1.8 above, the speaker, Jen, used personification to give the idea of how good the music is. The **notes**, as in musical notes, cannot **talk**. However, the personification used by Jen gives the idea that the notes will do its job.

Allusion

Harris (2018) explains that an allusion is a brief reference to something popular, such as famous people or memorable events. Harris (2018) also specifies that the must-have qualities of allusion are familiarity, endurance, and specific attributes. The reference of an allusion must be something that is familiar to the audience and can be something memorable. The allusion, according to Harris (2018), also needs to have a specific attribute if necessary. Two examples of allusion used by the speakers in *Genshin Impact* and *Honkai: Star Rail Special Program* videos are listed below.

- Utterance 1.1.7

“In the **Vishaps and Where to Find Them** event, Katheryne will post eight different expedition commissions each day, from which Travelers can choose four to complete.”

In utterance 1.1.7, the speaker, Corina, explained one of the new events coming in the next version of the game. The utterance above can be considered an allusion because the title of the event is a reference to J.K. Rowling's popular work, “*Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*.” The use of this allusion is to give the audience a sense of familiarity. The audience may also grasp the idea of the event through the familiar title.

- Utterance 2.2.1

“**My trailblazer senses are tingling.**”

In utterance 2.2.1 above, the speaker, Nick, used an allusion, referencing a popular phrase from the character Spider-Man: “My spider sense is tingling.” Nick's use of allusion here indicates that he already knows something is coming, similar to how the character Spider-Man knew when something was coming his way.

Combination of Figurative Language

The writers' findings and analysis revealed that the speakers used a combination of figurative language in *Genshin Impact's Special Program* videos. The combination found is the use of metaphor and synecdoche in utterance 1.1.3,

“**Time flies** when you're **farming Dragonspine**”

In the utterance above, the speaker, Jen, used the combination of figurative language to highlight how even though there are so many things that can be done in Dragonspine, it is so enjoyable that time passes by very quickly. Jen's use of these two figurative languages in the

utterance is possibly intended to show that even though there is a whole new area that needs to be explored; it is so enjoyable that the speakers do not realize that it is already time for a new area. The metaphor compares time to the act of flying, expressing how time passes by so quickly as if it is flying by. The synecdoche substitutes part of the idea of Dragonspine for the whole mountain.

Similarities and Differences

The first similarity between the two games is the use of simile, analogy, metaphor, metonymy, and allusion. These types of figurative language are commonly used to provoke the audience's interest. Simile, analogy, metaphor, and metonymy can also be employed to ensure the audience can understand the information. On the other hand, allusion can also help the audience connect with the information through the use of something familiar to them. For instance, in utterance 1.1.7, “In the **Vishaps and Where to Find Them** event, Katheryne will post eight different expedition commissions each day, from which Travelers can choose four to complete.”

In the utterance above, Corina as the speaker explained one of the new events coming in the next version of the game. The utterance above can be considered an allusion because the title of the event is a reference to J.K. Rowling's popular work, “Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them.” The purpose of employing allusion is to create a sense of familiarity and pique their interest.

The second similarity between the figurative language used in both games' videos is the absence of catachresis, eponym, apostrophe, and transferred epithet. It is possible that several reasons may cause this. For example, the lack of catachresis might be from the target audience for both games. The global audience for *Genshin Impact* and *Honkai: Star Rail* comes from many parts of the world, and English might not be their first language. The audience might not fully understand the catachresis used by the speaker, which will distract them from the information given by the speaker.

In the case of eponym, a lot of allusion is used instead, especially in *Honkai: Star Rail*, as the game often implements references from popular culture. It is possible that they chose allusion because it is more direct and familiar to the audience. As for apostrophe, this figurative language is commonly used to create a diversion or build-up. The lack of apostrophe in both games might happen because the speakers use other methods to do such things. For instance, one of the speakers, Owlbert, tends to stop to create tension for build-up.

For transferred epithet, although it can provoke the audience's interest, it is possible that the speakers chose not to use figurative language because they wanted to focus on relaying the necessary information. It is also possible that they chose a more direct figurative language to ensure the clarity of the information they share, which has been done by using other figurative languages.

Aside from the two similarities explained above, there are also two differences found between both videos. The first difference is the use of synecdoche and personification. The writers could not find synecdoche and personification in *Honkai: Star Rail's Special Program* videos, while the two figurative languages are used in the *Genshin Impact's Special Program* videos. This could result from the amount of information the speakers needed to relay, giving them less room to slip in any figurative language.

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The second difference between the two is the combination of figurative language in one utterance. This combination only appeared in *Genshin Impact's Special Program* videos. The combination found is the use of metaphor and synecdoche in utterance 1.1.3,

“Time flies when you're farming Dragonspine”

The speaker, Jen, possibly used these two figurative languages in the utterance to show that even though there is a whole new area that needs to be explored, it is so enjoyable that the speakers do not realize that it is already time for a new area.

CONCLUSION

This study's findings showed that out of 11 types of figurative language, only simile, analogy, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, and allusion can be found in *Genshin Impact's Special Program* videos. On the contrary, only simile, analogy, metaphor, metonymy, and allusion can be found in *Honkai: Star Rail's Special Program* videos. There are similarities between the two games' videos, mainly the use of simile, analogy, metaphor, metonymy, and allusion. Another similarity is the lack of catachresis, eponym, apostrophe, and transferred epithet. On the other hand, there are two differences between the two videos. The first difference is the absence of synecdoche and personification in *Honkai: Star Rail's Special Program* videos. The second difference is the combination of two figurative languages in one utterance that is only used in *Genshin Impact's Special Program* videos. The reasons behind these findings mainly come from the difference in the game's themes and the amount of information. *Genshin Impact's* theme gives their speakers more room to use figurative language. On the other hand, when there is a lot of information the speakers need to relay, the speaker also tends to have less room to slip in the figurative language. Given this study's limitations, further research on similar subjects with broader limitations is recommended. This study's subject is limited to two games from one developer mainly because of their popularity. Thus, many other ways of advertising can be selected to be analyzed or compared. Another recommendation for further research is to examine other games with similar or different themes from this study.

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