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Stylistic Analysis of Figurative Language at the ARTJOG 2025 Art Description Discourse

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Abstract

Discourse in art exhibitions serves as a communication bridge, translating visual ideas that are often abstract and polysemous. This research aims to describe the forms and connotative meanings of figurative language used in the descriptive discourse of the ARTJOG 2025 exhibition, "Motif: Amalan." This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach from a stylistic perspective. The research data consist of words, phrases, and sentences containing figurative language, collected through observation and note-taking from catalogs and artwork labels on the official ARTJOG 2025 website. Data analysis was conducted using the referential identity method based on Gorys Keraf's theory of figure of speech. The results show 16 instances of figurative language, including personification, metaphor, simile, and synecdoche. The dominance of personification (62.5%) indicates a curatorial effort to position artworks as active subjects capable of performing real actions, aligned with the exhibition's theme. The use of such figurative language plays a crucial role in transforming visual elements and the artists' complex philosophies into emotional narratives that are easily understood by the audience.

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INTRODUCTION

Citing the concept of linguistic studies, discourse is understood as the most complete language unit that occupies the highest grammatical hierarchy because it presents ideas in their entirety in a certain communication context (Djadjasudarma, 2017). Discourse is not only a series of sentences, but also a complete, coherent, and interpretable unit of meaning based on the relationship between language, speakers, readers, and the social context that surrounds it (Hartono 2012). Rohana & Syamsuddin (2015) It also emphasizes that discourse is a series of orderly, systematic speeches that convey certain ideas, concepts, or communication effects. Thus, discourse can be present in various forms, both oral, written, visual, and multimodal. In the context of fine art, discourse is not only manifested in visual works such as paintings, sculptures, installations, and other artistic objects, but also in the accompanying verbal texts.

Fine art is a medium of expression that conveys experiences, ideas, and feelings through visual signs. Tolstoy in Dewi (2012) Viewing art as a human activity to convey feelings through outward signs so that others can feel the artist's inner experience. However, works of art, especially contemporary art, are often symbolic, abstract, conceptual, and open to various interpretations. Therefore, art exhibitions function not only as a space for displaying works, but also as a meeting space between artists' ideas, curatorial strategies, and visitors' interpretive experiences (Rezky et al., 2024). In the context of contemporary Indonesian art, exhibitions can also be an arena for social criticism, knowledge production, and the formation of public discourse because the meaning of the work is determined not only by the visual object but also by the curatorial context, audience interaction, and narrative that surrounds it (Ramli & Nagara, 2025).

One of the contemporary art exhibitions that has an important position in the development of Indonesian art discourse is ARTJOG. ARTJOG is known as an annual contemporary art exhibition in Yogyakarta that not only presents artworks, but also builds a space of communication between artists, curators, art markets, and the public (Tunikmah, 2018). In 2025, ARTJOG carries the theme "Motif: Practice" curated by Hendro Wiyanto. Based on official information from ARTJOG, the theme is the closing of the "Motif" trilogy, which started in 2023 and is directed to highlight how artistic ideas can be implemented as actions, real contributions, and practices that have ethical and social weight in the life of art and society (ARTJOG, 2025). This theme shows that artwork is

not solely positioned as a passive aesthetic object, but as a practice that can work, respond, move, and relate to social reality.

In art exhibitions, the text of the work's description plays an important role as a bridge between the visual work and the audience's understanding. This kind of text can be aligned with museum texts, work labels, interpretive captions, exhibition catalogs, or curatorial texts that serve to provide information, context, and interpretive direction to visitors (Ravelli, 2006). McManus (1989) It shows that visitors to the exhibition are not only looking at the object but also reading and interacting with the text that accompanies it. Research Reitstätter et al. (2022) It also confirms that the work's label affects the observer's pattern of observation, as the interpretation deepens as the visitor obtains additional textual information. In line with that, Li & Xu (2025) Explaining that *interpretive captions* in the context of museums play a role in complementing and strengthening visual communication because text helps connect verbal information with the visual meaning of the work. Therefore, the descriptive text in an art exhibition cannot be seen as a mere administrative complement, but as part of the construction of the meaning of the work.

As a descriptive discourse, the text of the description of the work is in charge of describing a certain object, situation, idea, or experience so that the reader seems to be able to see, feel, and understand the object described (Hartono, 2012). However, describing a work of art cannot always be done in literal language because the visual ideas to be described are often abstract, emotional, and philosophical. In such situations, figurative language becomes an important linguistic strategy. Keraf (2005) Explains that the style of figurative language is formed through comparisons, equations, links, or distortions of meaning from the use of ordinary language to produce certain effects. Cognitively, metaphors and other figurative forms serve not only as rhetorical ornaments, but also as a way for humans to understand abstract experiences through more concrete experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Lakoff (1993) It even emphasizes that metaphors are essentially conceptual, while language expressions are manifestations of this metaphorical way of thinking. This view is in line with Kövecses (2010) which states that metaphors help humans map one realm of experience onto another, making complex meanings easier to understand.

The study of stylistics provides an important foundation for reading how language choices, including figurative language, produce certain aesthetic effects and meanings. Al-Ma'ruf (2009)

shows that figurative language in literary works can contain strong expressive, associative, and aesthetic power. Sinabutar et al. (2019) It also found that the use of idioms, metaphors, similes, personifications, and hyperbole can shape the peculiarities of language styles and reinforce aesthetic effects on readers. Meanwhile, Anwar et al., (2023) Explains that figurative language not only embellishes the text but also serves to bring things to life, evoke the imagination, and help the reader understand the implicit meaning. Although most of these studies focused on literary works, the findings are relevant to the analysis of figurative language in descriptive texts for art exhibitions, as curatorial texts and work descriptions also use language to create aesthetic meaning.

Research on figurative language has been conducted widely across literary objects and popular media. Khalidi & Yaakob (2022) For example, examining figurative language as a vehicle for explaining emotive elements in novels and finding that language styles can reinforce emotional imagery and increase reader engagement. Albab et al. (2025) researching figurative language in the romantic dialogue of *the 1990 film Dilan*, and showing that language style plays a role in building the expression of feelings and the atmosphere of communication between characters. Jayantini et al. (2022) It also shows that majas in poetry texts can be a form of poetic expression that must be maintained to convey the message, nuances, and beauty of language. These studies prove that figurative language is an important element in the formation of meaning, emotions, and aesthetic effects. However, the objects studied are still predominantly in the form of novels, poems, songs, or films. In contrast, the study of figurative language in the textual description of works of art remains relatively limited.

The study's limitations indicate an important research gap. The descriptive text of the artwork in the exhibition, in particular ARTJOG 2025 "Motif: Practice", has a different character from that of literary texts because it lies between curatorial language, artistic language, and public communication. Descriptive texts not only describe the visual form of the work but also interpret the artist's ideas, direct the audience's experience, and build relationships between the art object and the socio-aesthetic issues that underlie it. If the exhibition labels and captions can direct the way audiences see and interpret the work Reitstätter et al. (2022), and if interpretive captions can strengthen the relationship between text and image (Li & Xu, 2025), Therefore, figurative language in the description of artworks is worth studying as a stylistic strategy that helps transform visual ideas

into imaginative, emotional, and communicative verbal experiences.

Based on this background, this study aims to describe the connotative form and meaning of figurative language used in the discourse of art descriptive works at the ARTJOG 2025 exhibition "Motif: Practice". This research uses a stylistic perspective, drawing on Gorys Keraf's classification of language styles, especially to identify figurative language forms such as simile, metaphor, personification, and synecdoche. Through this study, figurative language is understood not only as a decorative element of the text but also as an aesthetic communication strategy that bridges visual works, artists' ideas, curatorial narratives, and audience understanding. Thus, this research is expected to enrich the study of stylistics, especially in non-literary objects in the form of descriptive discourses of contemporary art exhibitions.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a stylistic perspective. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on interpreting linguistic meanings, functions, and symptoms in the context of specific use, rather than on testing the relationship between variables statistically. Creswell & Poth (2018) Explains that qualitative research is used to understand phenomena in depth through natural data, contextual interpretation, and researcher involvement as the main instruments. This view aligns with Denzin & Lincoln (2018), which positions qualitative research as an interpretive practice for understanding the meaning of a phenomenon in its social and cultural context. In the context of this study, the phenomenon studied is the use of figurative language in the discourse of art descriptive works at the ARTJOG 2025 exhibition "Motif: Practice". Meanwhile, the descriptive approach is used because the research aims to systematically describe the form, pattern, and connotative meaning of figurative language based on the textual data found. Sugiyono (2023) states that descriptive qualitative research is conducted in natural settings, with the researcher as the primary instrument, while Moleong (2017) emphasizes that qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written, oral, or observable behaviors.

Theoretically, this study takes a stylistic perspective because the object of study is language choice, expression style, and the meaning that appears in the text description of the artwork. Stylistics examines how certain linguistic forms, particularly figurative language, produce aesthetic, imaginative, and communicative effects in the

discourse of exhibitions. Figurative language in this study is understood as a linguistic style that involves deviations or expansions of meaning from literal meaning to produce certain effects. Figurative language classification refers to language style theory Keraf (2005), especially the categories of similes, metaphors, personification, and synecdoche found in the research data. With this perspective, the analysis is not only directed at determining the type of *majas* but also at their connotative meanings and stylistic functions in bridging the artwork's visual idea with the audience's understanding.

The data of this research is in the form of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, or fragments of discourse describing artworks that contain figurative language. The source of research data is the text of the description of the work in the ARTJOG 2025 exhibition "Motif: Practice", both contained in the official exhibition catalog and the description of the work available through the official source of ARTJOG 2025. The data were selected purposively, i.e., only a part of the text met the criteria for figurative language and was relevant to the research focus. Merriam & Tisdell (2016) explained that the selection of data in qualitative research can be done purposively because researchers need to choose the richest source of information according to the purpose of the research. The data criteria in this study include: 1) in the form of linguistic units in the discourse of ARTJOG 2025 work descriptions; 2) contains symptoms of comparison, insight, insight, linking, or expansion of meaning; 3) can be classified based on the category of Keraf language style; and 4) have a connotative meaning related to the representation of the artwork, the artist's idea, or the curatorial narrative.

Data collection was carried out by the observation method and recording technique. The simak method is used because the research data are in the form of written language, which is observed and listened to carefully. Mahsun (2017) Explained that the simak method is a method of collecting data by listening to the use of language, both verbally and in writing. The note-taking technique is used as an advanced tool to document language units suspected of containing figurative language. In its implementation, the researcher reads the entire text of the description of the work that is the source of the data, marks the linguistic units that contain figurative elements, records the quotations into the data card, and then provides a data code based on the source of the work, the name of the artist, the form of figurative language, and the context of the meaning. This recording procedure is carried out to maintain data traceability and facilitate

classification. Patton (2015) emphasizing that data documentation in qualitative research needs to be carried out systematically so that the interpretation process can be traced and accounted for.

The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself as a human instrument. In qualitative research, the researcher plays the role of a planner, data collector, interpreter, analyst, and researcher of research results (Moleong, 2017). To enhance data collection and analysis consistency, this study also uses auxiliary instruments, including data cards and figurative language classification tables. The data card contains the data number, text quote, source of the quote, the name of the artist or work, the type of figurative language, linguistic markers, literal meanings, connotative meanings, and interpretive notes. The use of classification tables helps researchers group data by language style categories, making the analysis more focused. Saldaña (2021) emphasizing that coding and grouping qualitative data are important for identifying meaningful patterns, categories, and themes.

Data analysis was carried out using the referential matching method and the sorting of determinant elements. The matching method is used because the determining tools in analysis are outside language, namely referents, the artwork's context, curatorial ideas, and connotative meanings built through the relationship between text and art objects. Reistanti (2022). Explains that the matching method is used to study lingual units with determinants that are outside the language. Sudaryanto (2015) It also states that the matching method is a language analysis method whose determining tool is not part of the language being studied. The technique of sorting determinants is used to identify linguistic elements that exhibit characteristics of figurative language, such as the use of explicit comparators, the mapping of direct meanings, the attribution of human nature to inanimate objects, or the use of partial elements to represent the whole. After the data are sorted, each citation is classified by the type of *majas*, and its connotative meaning and stylistic function are interpreted.

The analysis stage is carried out through several steps. First, the researcher conducts repeated readings of the text describing the work to gain a thorough understanding of the discourse's context. Second, the researcher identified language units that contain figurative language. Third, the data found is encoded and classified according to the Keraf theory. Fourth, each data point is analyzed for its literal and connotative meanings, considering the work's context, the visual object described, and the theme of the ARTJOG 2025

exhibition "Motif: Practice". Fifth, similar data were compared to identify trends in figurative language usage. Sixth, the results of the analysis are presented in the form of frequency tables and descriptive-interpretive descriptions. Saldaña (2021) Explains that qualitative data analysis includes the process of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion extraction and verification. Krippendorff (2019) also emphasizes that the analysis of the text must take context into account so that the inferences produced are not divorced from the communication situation that underlies it.

The validity of the data is maintained through diligent observation, repeated reading, category checking, and theory triangulation. Observation diligence involves carefully reading the data to ensure that the chosen language unit actually contains figurative elements. Category checking is done by matching the characteristics of each data with the concept of language style in Keraf theory. Theoretical triangulation is achieved by combining stylistic perspectives, connotative semantics, and language analysis methods so that interpretation does not depend on a single point of view. Lincoln & Guba (1985) states that the credibility of qualitative research can be strengthened through process traceability, perseverance of observation, and careful examination of interpretation. With this procedure, the research results are expected to have a clear, accountable, and relevant analytical basis for explaining the function of figurative language in the discourse describing ARTJOG 2025 artworks.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study found that the art-descriptive discourse in the ARTJOG 2025 exhibition "Motif: Practice" employs figurative language as a stylistic strategy to connect visual objects, artists' ideas, and the audience's interpretive experience. Figurative language in this context serves not only as linguistic ornaments, but also as a conceptual means for translating abstract visual ideas into more concrete, imaginative, and communicative verbal narratives. This is in line with the view Keraf (2005) that the style of figurative language works through comparisons, linking, and distortion of meaning to create a specific effect. In stylistic studies, figurative language is also understood as an element that can bring the text to life, strengthen expressiveness, and build an aesthetic effect for the reader (Al-Ma'ruf, 2009; Anwar et al., 2023; Sinabutar et al., 2019).

Distribution of Figurative Language Forms in the Description Discourse of ARTJOG 2025

Based on the results of the identification of the discourse on the description of ARTJOG 2025 artworks, 16 figurative language data consisting of personification, metaphors, similes, and synecdoches were found. The distribution of these findings is shown in the following table.

Table 1. Data

Figurative Language	Sum
Simile	1
Metaphor	4
Personification	10
Synecdoche	1

The table shows that personification is the most dominant form of figurative language, accounting for 10 data points (62.50% of the total findings). The dominance of personification shows the tendency of the ARTJOG 2025 description text to present objects, materials, sculptures, installation works, money, paper, earth, soil, and other visual elements as living, acting, feeling, or communicating entities. This tendency is relevant to the textual character of art exhibitions, which not only explain the work's form but also direct how visitors perceive the relationships among objects, ideas, and aesthetic experiences. McManus (1989) shows that the exhibition text plays a role in establishing interaction between the visitor and the object, while Reitstätter et al. (2022) affirm that a work's label can influence visitors' viewing and reading patterns in art museums. In this context, figurative language is an important part of the exhibition's interpretive strategy.

Personification as a Strategy to Bring Art Objects to Life

Personification is a form of figurative language that gives human qualities, actions, or abilities to inanimate objects, abstract concepts, or non-human elements. In the theory of language style, personification is included in the comparative language style because it presents something that is not human as if it has human characteristics (Keraf, 2005). In the discourse of ARTJOG 2025, personification is the dominant strategy because the artwork description presents many visual objects as active subjects. This can be seen in the following excerpt: "Banknotes depicted with natural panoramas, monuments and buildings as well as traditional ceremonies carry out the mission of the unity and progress of the country." (*Aditya Novali*).

In the quote, the phrase "**carrying out a mission**" endows the banknotes with human

agency. Literally, money is an inanimate object that cannot have consciousness, will, or duty. However, through personification, the banknotes are portrayed as having an ideological responsibility to carry the country's message of unity and progress. The choice of the word **"carry"** reinforces the impression that the visual objects in Aditya Nowali's work not only function as a medium of exchange or representational objects, but also as a medium that contains collective memory, national identity, and national construction. Thus, personification here serves to expand the meaning of objects from material objects to symbolic subjects with social roles.

A similar personification appears in the following quotation: "He becomes a more intimate object, that is, a collection of memories and relationships." (*Aditya Nowali*). The word **"familiar"** is commonly used to describe emotional relationships between people. When the word is attached to an object, the text establishes the impression that a visual object can have an affective closeness to a human. Art objects are no longer seen as distant, cold, or merely looked at, but as places that store relationships, memories, and experiences. From a stylistic perspective, the use of this kind of language shows that the choice of diction can change the reader's relationship to the object being described (Al-Ma'ruf, 2009). In other words, personification helps the reader see the object of art as a space of memory, not just as an aesthetic object.

Personification also seems strong in the description of Asmudjo J. Irianto's work, namely "Asmudjo's multimedia installation work is a dark 'theater' with four sculptures playing the role of the main actors." (*Asmudjo J. Irianto*). The quote brings the statue to life through the phrase **"playing the main actors"**. A statue that is physically still positioned as if it has a dramaturgical role in a performance. The words **"theater"**, **"role-playing"**, and **"actor"** form the field of performance meaning so that the installation is not only read as an arrangement of visual objects, but as a narrative space that presents conflict, atmosphere, and dramatic tension. Studies of exhibition texts show that verbal texts can strengthen the relationship between visual information and visitors' interpretive experiences (Li & Xu, 2025). In this excerpt, personification helps the viewer imagine the sculpture as a narrative subject who is "talking" through its position, form, and relationship within the installation space.

The trend continues in the following quote: "A charred statue stands pointing at this statue." (*Asmudjo J. Irianto*). The word **"accusing"** denotes a human act that carries gestural, social, and even

moral meanings. When a statue is depicted as pointing, the text creates the impression of accusations, conflict, or tension between the subjects. The personification in this quote not only makes the sculpture seem alive but also creates a dramatic atmosphere that allows the reader to grasp the relationship between objects as a social one. Anwar et al. (2023) explains that figurative language can bring text to life and evoke the reader's imagination. In this context, personification not only makes the reader aware of the sculpture's visual form but also makes them feel the emotional tension the work is about to build.

Personification also appears in the image of the wounded statue's body, which is "One ultimate figure hanging from the ceiling, his body 'pierced' by several brightly lit neon lights." (*Asmudjo J. Irianto*). The word **"stabbed"** gives the impression of a body that has suffered wounds and suffering. Although the object in question is a statue or an installation figure, the choice of words leads the reader to the experience of the human body being hurt. The effects that appear are not only visual, but also affective. Readers are invited to imagine the existence of pain, violence, and vulnerability. In stylistics, personification can reinforce emotional intensity by endowing inanimate objects with human qualities (Sinabutar et al., 2019). In this data, personification becomes a means to transform the installation object into a representation of suffering that the audience can imaginatively feel.

Other data shows the personification of natural objects, for example: "As a critique, this work warns us to have a dialogue to find a solution to the weakness of the Earth, a dialogue as it is with the Earth and the Earth." (*Dian Hardiansyah*). The quotation presents the work, the earth, and the land as entities that can warn and dialogue. This personification shows that the artwork's description not only conveys aesthetic information but also carries an ecological message. The earth and the earth are voiced in order to be present as subjects that demand human attention. In the study of contemporary art, works of art are often used to represent ecological and social critiques, including man's relationship with nature (Ramli & Nagara, 2025). Therefore, the personification in this data serves as a strategy to strengthen ecological awareness by highlighting the livelihoods of natural elements.

The personification of material is also seen in the following quotation: "However, he chooses to be open to his own material: allowing it to 'take over' some parts of the process rather than subduing it." (*Dzikra Afifah*). The phrase **"takeover"** suggests that the material is endowed

with power, will, and autonomy. In art practice, materials are usually understood as a medium mastered by the artist. However, this quote reverses that relationship: the material is no longer entirely subject to the artist, but rather determines the direction of the creation process. This personification shows the dialogical relationship between the artist and the material. This aligns with the idea that the work description's text can expand visitors' understanding of the creative process rather than just the work's final result (Reitstätter et al., 2022).

A similar tendency is seen in the following quote "In Louise's vision, the material in the graphic arts has its own autonomous character and impossibility, giving birth to potentially astonishing coincidences." (*Henryette Louis*)—the words **"disposition"** and **"childbirth"** present material as having character and productive ability. The choice of diction reinforces the idea that art materials have vitality, surprise, and possibilities that the artist cannot always fully control. In the context of ARTJOG 2025 "Motif: Practice", this kind of personification is in line with the idea that artwork is an active practice, not a passive object. That is, works, materials, and visual objects are positioned within artistic actions that operate within social and aesthetic spaces.

The following data also shows the same pattern: "Each strand and fiber weave contained in the handmade paper tells a story." (*Scotland*). The word **"spreading the story"** gives the paper a narrative ability. Paper, as a material object, is depicted as able to explain, unfold, or convey a story. In this quote, the personification shifts the paper from a mere writing medium or visual material to a narrative subject that holds the experience. Thus, personification reinforces the impression that the artwork's material has history, memory, and sound. Figurative language like this extends the description beyond physical information, shaping the reader's aesthetic and emotional experience.

Based on all data, personification in the ARTJOG 2025 description discourse has three main functions. First, personification brings the art object to life, making it appear as an active subject. Second, personification intensifies the reader's emotional response to the work. Third, personification builds a conformity between the descriptive text and the theme "Motif: Practice", which is art as practice, action, and involvement. These findings show that the dominance of personification is not a stylistic coincidence but a discourse strategy that gives works of art a sense of vitality and action.

Metaphor as a Means of Compaction of Visual and Conceptual Meaning

In addition to personification, metaphor is also an important form of figurative language in the discourse of the ARTJOG 2025 description. Metaphor is a style of language that compares two things directly without using explicit comparative words such as *like*, *as*, or *like* (Keraf, 2005). In conceptual metaphor theory, metaphor is not only understood as a decoration of language, but as a way of thinking that allows humans to understand one realm of experience through another realm of experience (Kövecses, 2010; Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In art discourse, metaphors are important because works of art often contain abstract ideas that need to be bridged through concrete images.

The metaphor appears in the following excerpt: "A chair and a cable phone of the past in the cubicles are silent witnesses of intergenerational 'conversations': the survivors of the events of 1965 and those of us who live in the present." (*Maharani Mancanagara*). The phrase **"silent witness"** is a metaphor that condenses the relationship between objects, history, and memory. Chairs and landlines are not really witnesses in the human sense, but their presence is associated with past events that are not yet fully concluded. This metaphor turns old objects into historical markers that connect the survivors of the 1965 events with the current generation. Thus, metaphor expands the meaning of domestic objects into a medium of historical memory. In the study of metaphorical discourse, metaphors can help build complex social and historical concepts through more recognizable imagery (Revita, 2024).

The next metaphor appears in the following quote about Krisna Murti: "More than his role as an artist, video art historian, curator and educator, the figure of Krisna Murti is actually the 'infrastructure' of the new media art itself in Indonesia." (*Mahardika Yuda & Umi Lestari*). The word **"infrastructure"** is used to refer to the figure of Krisna Murti. Literally, infrastructure refers to the basic infrastructure that allows a system to run. When applied to a figure, the metaphor confirms that Krisna Murti is not only an art actor but also the foundation that supports the development of new media art in Indonesia. This metaphor conveys the character's contribution in a concise, clear manner. In the context of art criticism, metaphors are often used to explain the quality, position, or contribution of works and art figures that are not easy to explain literally (Gaut, 1997).

Metaphors also appear in today's description of visual experience, which is "Our perception is in the midst of an overflow of information and a visual

flood, relentlessly shaken by the increasingly blurring of boundaries between virtual experience and real experience." (*Syagini Ratna Wulan*). The phrase "**visual flood**" is a metaphor that describes the abundance of visual imagery. Flooding is literally an uncontrollable overflow of water and can cause damage. When the word is combined with visuals, the meaning arises that contemporary humans are in a condition of excess image that disturbs the stability of perception. This metaphor not only conveys the "multitude of images" but also implies a state of desperation, uncontrollability, and shock amid the abundance of visual information. Research Langoday (2024) suggests that metaphors can shape readers' understanding of social criticism. In this data, the metaphor of "visual flood" builds a critique of the human condition in an image-filled digital culture.

Another metaphor is seen in the following quote: "Through this reflection, women in Zuraissa's work are placed as the main pillars in building virtue and togetherness by combining both secular and sacred elements." (*Zuraissa*). The phrase "**main pillar**" is a metaphor that places women as the pillars of virtue and togetherness. Pillars are literally the parts of a building that support the structure and keep it standing. When women are referred to as pillars, it means they hold an important position as the social, moral, and spiritual foundation of our common life. This metaphor works by moving architectural concepts into the socio-cultural realm. In this way, the description text can convey the idea of women's roles in a concise, powerful, and imaginative way. This kind of metaphor shows that figurative language can encapsulate complex ideas in the form of images that are easy for the reader to understand (Kövecses, 2010).

Based on this data, the metaphor in the ARTJOG 2025 description discourse has several functions. First, metaphors condense historical, social, and philosophical meanings into concise expressions. Second, metaphors help readers understand abstract concepts through concrete images. Third, metaphors strengthen the text's critique of social, historical, gender, and visual cultural issues. Thus, metaphor is one of the main tools for deepening the meaning of the artwork's description.

Simile as an Explicit Comparison to Explain Inner Experience

Simile is a style of comparative language that uses explicit markers, such as 'like,' 'laksana,' or other forms of comparison. In contrast to metaphors that directly equate two things, similes maintain a distance between two things that are

compared through certain linguistic markers (Keraf, 2005). In art descriptions, similes help readers understand the atmosphere, inner experience, or visual impression through vivid comparisons. This is evident in the following quote: "Nature is present not as a setting, but as a metaphor for a psychic landscape: the silence of the forest, the fog, or the roar of the sea as an unspoken inner echo" (*Flowers Yuridespita & Matthew Oaten*).

The quote compares the elements of nature with the state of the human mind. The phrase "**the roar of the sea as an unspoken inner echo**" links the sounds of nature with restrained emotional experiences. Although this quotation also contains the term "metaphor", the comparative structure marked by the word "**as**" indicates an explicit relationship between the two realms of meaning, namely the natural and the mind. The silence of the forest, the fog, and the roar of the sea are used to describe the psychic landscape that cannot be fully said literally. In the study of figurative language, explicit comparisons like these help readers build a bridge of meaning between sensory experience and emotional experience Anjani (2024).

Makna konotatif dalam kutipan tersebut terletak pada pemindahan pengalaman alam ke ranah batin. "**The roar of the sea**" not only refers to the sounds of nature but also describes the upheaval of strong, repetitive, and elusive feelings. Meanwhile, **the "forest silence"** and **"fog"** lead the reader to a quiet, vague, and not entirely bright inner mood. Thus, the simile or explicit comparison in this quotation serves to interpret the visual work as a psychological space. These findings are in line with research Sinabutar et al. (2019) which shows that figurative language can build the distinctiveness of the image and strengthen the reader's understanding of the experience depicted.

In the context of ARTJOG 2025, simile serves as a bridge between natural visuality and inner experience. The comparison makes the description of the work not only explain what it seems to be, but also what it feels like. If metaphors work by compaction of meaning, similes work by clarifying the relationships between ideas through comparative markers. Therefore, even though the number of simile findings is only one piece of data, its presence remains important because it suggests another strategy for translating visual experiences into emotional ones.

Synecdoche as a Representation of Parts for the Whole

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a part is used to represent the whole, or the whole to represent a part. In the classification of language styles, synecdoche is divided into *pars pro toto* and

totum pro parte (Keraf, 2005). In the discourse of the description of ARTJOG 2025, the synecdoche is found in the following quote: "If technology and modernity separate man from nature, Anusapati uses tree trunks and dead roots to 'redeem' him, breaking through those barriers and boundaries." (*Anusapati*).

The quote suggests synecdoche *pars pro toto*, as "tree trunks and dead roots" represent nature more broadly. Parts of trees are not only present as physical materials, but also as markers of damage, disconnection, and efforts to restore man's relationship with nature. By mentioning stems and roots, the text presents the entire ecological problem more concretely. This kind of figurative language is effective because the reader is not given the concept of "nature" in the abstract, but is confronted with a part of nature that has died and is separated from its habitat.

The connotative meaning of the quote is also reinforced by the word "**redeem**". This word contains ethical and spiritual nuances, namely the existence of mistakes or debts that need to be repaid. In the context of the relationship between humans and nature, "redeem" implies an awareness that modernity and technology have created distances, even ecological wounds, that must be repaired. Study Ramli & Nagara (2025) shows that contemporary art can serve as a medium for critiquing ecological and social issues. In this data, the synecdoche serves as a compaction strategy for ecological criticism: a small part of nature is used to represent the broader relationship between humans, technology, modernity, and the environment.

The synecdoche in the quotation also shows that figurative language can reinforce the symbolic power of materials. Tree trunks and dead roots are not only the material of the work but also a sign of a deeper relationship between humans and nature. Thus, the synecdoche helps the text present ecological ideas in a concrete, dense, and visual way.

The Stylistic Function of Figurative Language in the Discourse of Description of ARTJOG 2025 Works

Based on the overall findings, figurative language in the discourse of descriptive artworks of ARTJOG 2025 has a fairly complex stylistic function. First, figurative language serves as a **bridge between visual and verbal**. Works of art are basically present through form, color, space, materials, and visual composition. However, not all visual meanings can be immediately understood by the audience without textual support. In this context, figurative language helps translate visual

objects into narratives that can be read, perceived, and interpreted. Ravelli (2006) affirms that museum texts have a communication framework that connects objects, institutions, and visitors. The findings of this study show that figurative language is an important tool in the communication framework.

Second, figurative language reinforces **the audience's emotional experience**. Personification makes statues, money, materials, earth, and paper seem alive. Metaphors condense historical, visual, social, and psychological experiences into powerful expressions. Simile clarifies the relationship between nature and mind, while synecdoche makes ecological issues more concrete by referring to parts of nature. Thus, figurative language helps the audience not only understand the work's meaning but also experience the atmosphere and emotions it creates. This is in line with the view Khalidi & Yaakob (2022) that figurative language can strengthen the emotional element and reader involvement.

Third, figurative language functions as a **curatorial strategy to activate artwork as a subject of discourse**. The dominance of personification shows that the artwork in the description of ARTJOG 2025 is not positioned as a stationary object, but as an entity that can carry out a mission, warn, dialogue, take over, give birth to possibilities, and spread stories. This strategy aligns with the theme "Motif: Practice," which understands art as an act and practice with social involvement. ARTJOG, as a contemporary art exhibition, has also been understood as a space for the formation of art discourse, not just a space for displaying works (Tunikmah, 2018). Therefore, figurative language in the descriptive text is part of curatorial work that shapes how the audience reads the work.

Fourth, figurative language serves as a **link between abstract ideas and concrete images**. Concepts such as dark history, collective memory, inner experience, ecological criticism, human disconnection from nature, or the role of women in virtue are abstract ideas. Through metaphors, personifications, similes, and synecdoches, these ideas are presented in images that are easier to understand, such as a silent witness, a visual flood, a main pillar, an inner echo, or a dead tree trunk and root. From the perspective of conceptual metaphor, mapping from the concrete realm to the abstract realm allows the reader to understand complex experiences through experiences that are closer to the body and the everyday world (Kövecses, 2010; Lakoff, 1993).

Fifth, figurative language adds aesthetic value to **the description text**. The text description

of the artwork not only conveys factual information but also must have an aesthetic quality to be in harmony with the work's character. Figurative language makes texts more imaginative, suggestive, and open to interpretation. Thus, the descriptive text in an art exhibition is not only a caption, but also part of the aesthetic experience itself. These findings expand the study of figurative language that has been more widely done in novels, poems, or films (Albab et al., 2025; Anwar et al., 2023), by showing that the discourse of art-descriptive works is also a rich object for stylistic study.

Based on this analysis, it can be emphasized that figurative language in the ARTJOG 2025 description discourse not only embellishes the text but also carries out communicative, interpretive, emotional, and ideological functions. Personification became the dominant form because it aligned with the text's tendency to bring the artwork to life as an active subject. Metaphors serve to condense social, historical, ecological, and psychological meanings. Simile helps explain inner experience through explicit comparisons, while synecdoche condenses ecological criticism by representing parts for the whole. Thus, the use of figurative language in the description of ARTJOG 2025's work is an important stylistic strategy for bridging visual works, artists' ideas, curatorial narratives, and audience understanding.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of descriptive discourse at the ARTJOG 2025 exhibition, it can be concluded that figurative language serves as a crucial communication bridge between the artist's vision and the audience's perception. This study identified 16 quotations that contain figurative language, as classified by Gorys Keraf, including similes, metaphors, personifications, and synecdoches. In particular, personification emerged as the dominant style, suggesting a conscious attempt to give life to art objects in line with the exhibition theme "Motif: Practice". Figurative language in this context not only serves as a textual ornament but also generates a deep connotative meaning to reinforce the description of the visual object on display. Through these materials, the descriptive discourse can translate abstract concepts into concrete imaginative experiences, helping the audience capture the emotional and philosophical dimensions of each contemporary artwork at ARTJOG 2025.

It is recommended that art writers and curators continue to use figurative language to enrich the narrative of the work's description. For future researchers, this research can be developed by comparing the use of figurative language across

different exhibitions or by employing more varied analytical methods to gain a broader understanding of communication strategies in the art world.

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